

THE **RUSHMOOR**
LOCAL PLAN | SHAPING OUR
BOROUGH
UP TO 2032

The Borough's Landscape and Townscape Character

Update Note

May 2017

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Rushmoor Local Plan

Shaping our Borough up to 2032

The Borough's Landscape and Townscape character

Background

The landscape around us is an important part of people's lives, contributing to individual, community and national identity and offering a wide a variety of benefits in terms of quality of life, well-being and economic activity.

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. They also show how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people.

In Rushmoor, a Borough wide assessment was undertaken in 1994 and this was used to confirm details such as the boundary of the built up area and important open areas. Hampshire County Council produced an Integrated Character Assessment which includes Townscape Assessments for Aldershot and Farnborough. Together with an update of Rushmoor's Landscape Assessment in 2009 these were used to inform the formulation of the Core Strategy (adopted in October 2011). As a consequence, Policy CP2, the core policy relating to Design and Heritage, expects development proposals to include regard to the landscape assessment alongside a number of areas aimed at quality design.

For the LCA for Rushmoor we tried to capture the characteristics of the landscape including:

- topographic features
- flora and fauna
- land use
- cultural associations, history and memories

The result was a document detailing the character of the landscape with annotated maps showing the character types. We included photos, diagrams and survey results, and character areas are described and mapped in outline.

The 2009 LCA and HCC studies remain useful for monitoring change in the landscape and townscape, because there have been changes since they were written. However, an initial desktop survey suggests that the general character areas remain as defined in the earlier work but with changed content. These changes are highlighted in this update note.

National Planning Policy Framework

In 2012, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published, and this sets out policy towards local designations and landscape:

58. Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*

Under the section on ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’

109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*

In the section on ‘Plan Making’, under Local Plans

156. Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:

- *climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.*

It is therefore important that the Landscape Assessment of the Borough is kept under review so that up-to-date evidence is available for policy and decision making in line with current national policies.

Rushmoor’s Landscape and Townscape character

By its very nature, Rushmoor is a district that does not fit most typographies. It is one of the smallest districts by area size and only a handful of people live outside the urban area, yet there are significant areas of “countryside” which is primarily military training land and the Farnborough Airport. The eastern boundary is marked by the valley of the River Blackwater which is characterised by historic mineral workings and road and rail routes. The Aldershot Army Garrison (and the recently released Wellesley site) together with the Farnborough Airport and associated areas add another form of different landscape. Farnborough Abbey, Farnborough Hill and the Basingstoke Canal provide some historic landscapes, while the M3 and main railway towards Waterloo cut through the district.

The 2009 update has descriptions of the character areas, based upon the general type or character, for example, the town centres or employment areas. Following the 2009 format the Borough is characterised by the following types.

Blackwater Valley

- Hawley
- Frimley Interchange
- Farnborough North
- Farnborough South
- Hollybush Lane

- Aldershot Park
- Aldershot South

Heathland and forest

Pasture and woodland

Military Town

- Wooded ridge
- Married quarters
- Aldershot Urban Extension
- Army barracks
- Army playing fields

Farnborough Aerodrome

Basingstoke Canal

Southwood Amenity Open Space

Farnborough Green

Aldershot Town Centre

Farnborough Town Centre

Urban Residential

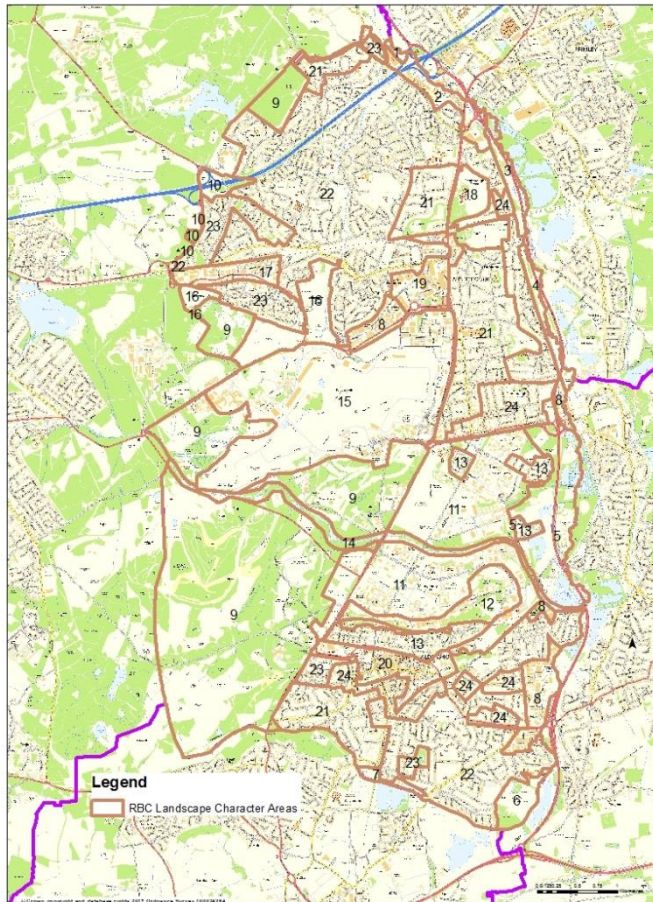
- Type A – Low density
- Type B – Mixed medium density
- Type C - Mixed newer
- Type D – Victorian/Edwardian Terraced

Industrial

Commercial /Business Parks

Green corridors

This resulted in thirty plus character areas shown on the attached plan.



2009 Landscape and Townscape Areas

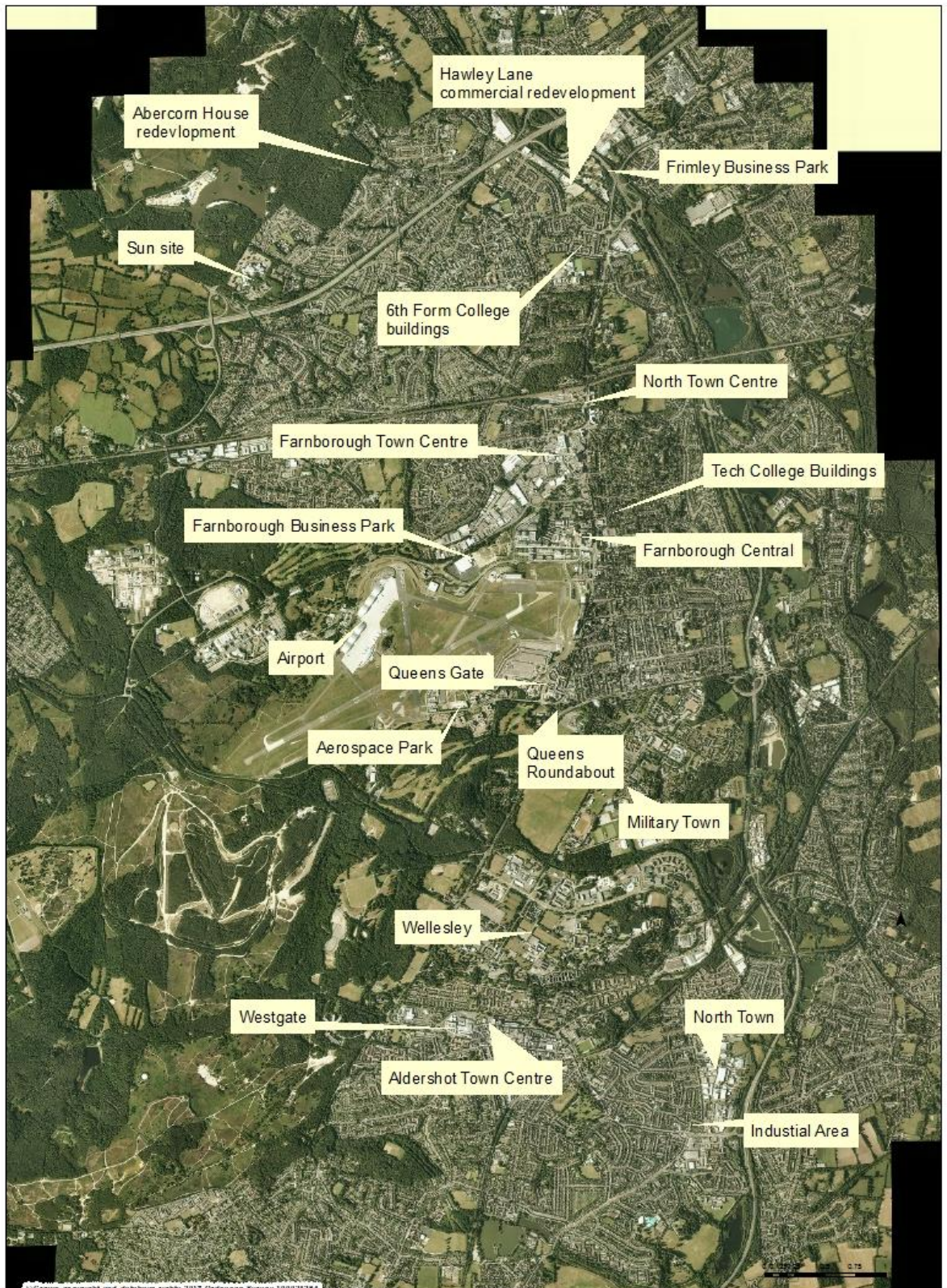
NUMBER	LEGEND
1	Blackwater Valley - Hawley
2	Blackwater Valley - Frimley Interchange
3	Blackwater Valley - Farnborough North
4	Blackwater Valley - Farnborough South
5	Blackwater Valley - Hollybush Lane
6	Blackwater Valley - Aldershot Park
7	Blackwater Valley - Aldershot South
8	Industrial
9	Heathland and Forest
10	Pasture and Woodland
11	Military Town
12	Military Town - Wooded Ridge
13	Military Town - Married Quarters
14	Basingstoke Canal
15	Farnborough Aerodrome
16	Southwood Amenity Open Space
17	Commercial/Business Park
18	Farnborough Green
19	Farnborough Town Centre
20	Aldershot Town Centre
21	Urban Residential Type A
22	Urban Residential Type B
23	Urban Residential Type C
24	Urban Residential Type D

Changes since 2009

The townscape has continued to change over the years. In Rushmoor this is mainly through redevelopment and regeneration of 'brownfield sites'. From 2009 to 2016 some 2350 new homes have been completed, with around 1700 on large sites (ten and more dwellings). Significant developments are listed below, but there small schemes have resulted in intensified use of land. There has been a trend to convert office to residential use. This can be seen in Aldershot town centre (e.g Gordon House in Gordon Road) and, by way of contrast, in Farnborough at the former IBM offices (originally the Hillside Convent).

Since 2009, there have been a number of developments which have changed the appearance of the area, creating new landmarks and townscape features.

- The Aldershot Urban Extension (AUE) site is located in the southern part of the Aldershot Military Town to the north of Aldershot Town Centre. The AUE is one of the largest and most significant brownfield regeneration sites in South East England. The Ministry of Defence, has vacated the majority of the site and relocated to other parts of the Military Town. The MoD's partner is Grainger Plc who are creating the Wellesley neighbourhood with 3,850 new homes and the first new home were completed in 2016. The development proposals include two primary schools, retail and employment opportunities. Open space and 'suitable alternative natural green space' is provided mainly to the west of the A325.
- The housing at Farnborough Central on the old "Factory Site" adjacent to Farnborough Airport and its historic buildings, has been completed.
- A substantial part of the Farnborough Business Park has been built around the iconic reconstructed frame of an airship hangar.
- Farnborough Airport building has progressed with a second landmark hangar to compliment the terminal and control tower.
- The Westgate development in Aldershot opened on October 2012, delivering a seven screen cinema, eight restaurants, a Travelodge hotel and a Morrisons supermarket.
- In Farnborough, the Northern Queensmead redevelopment is partially constructed. This has already delivered a new Sainsburys supermarket, and new retail floorspace and residential accommodation. A formal agreement for Vue Cinemas to deliver a seven screen cinema in this area was signed in September 2012 and the cinema opened in May 2015 and the first of unit of the food court open later in 2015. A Premier Inn opened in 2016 and construction of an extension to Princesmead was completed in March 2017.
- To the north of Farnborough town centre, the redevelopment of the mirror glazed Concept House has been completed. The 'Ham and Blackbird' has been demolished awaiting redevelopment.
- The North Town estate in Aldershot, at one-time identified as an area of multiple deprivation, is being regenerated. Some 470 flats will be demolished and replaced by nearly 700 new homes.
- Towards the end of 2016, the site centred on the former PC World store on Solartron Road and adjoining offices, was cleared for redevelopment. In the spring of 2017 the erection of new retail warehouses commenced.
- The Queens Gate area of the 'aerodrome' has been developed for housing, with the historic centrifuge retained.
- The world famous "airshow" site is being consolidated with the construction of a permanent exhibition hall.

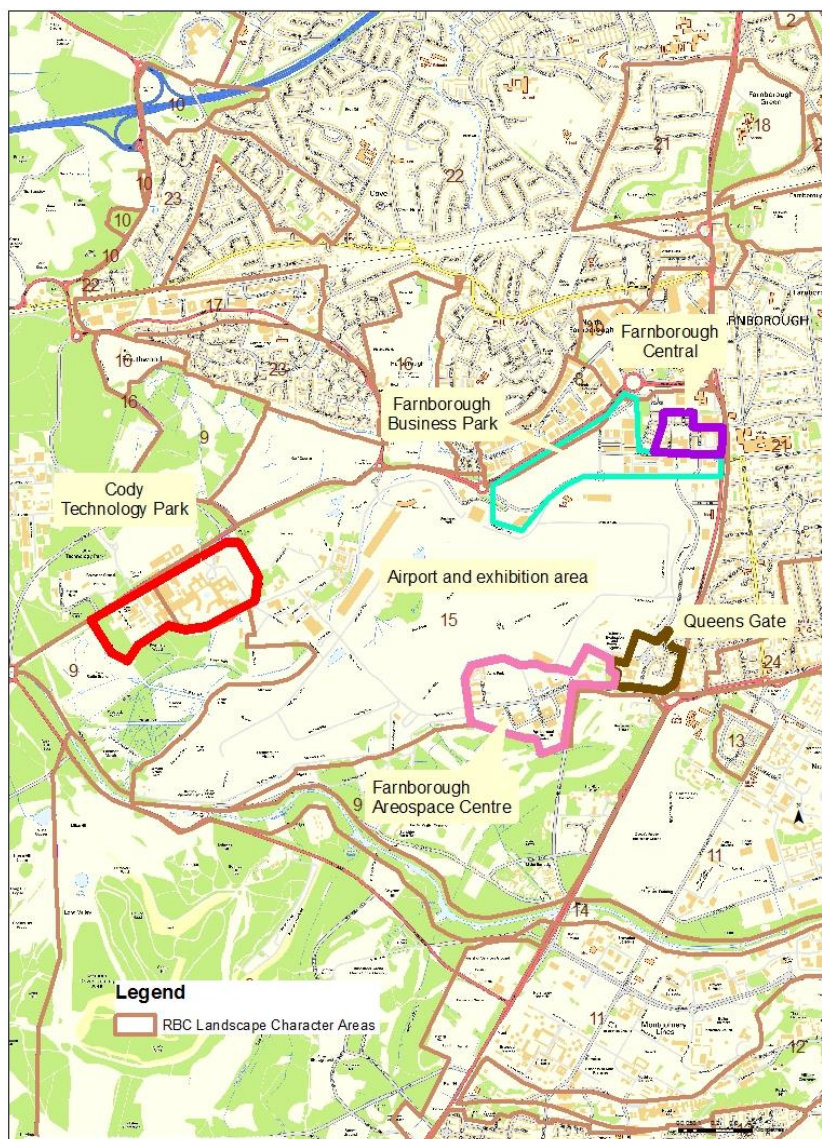


Changes to the Landscape of Rushmoor

New Character Areas

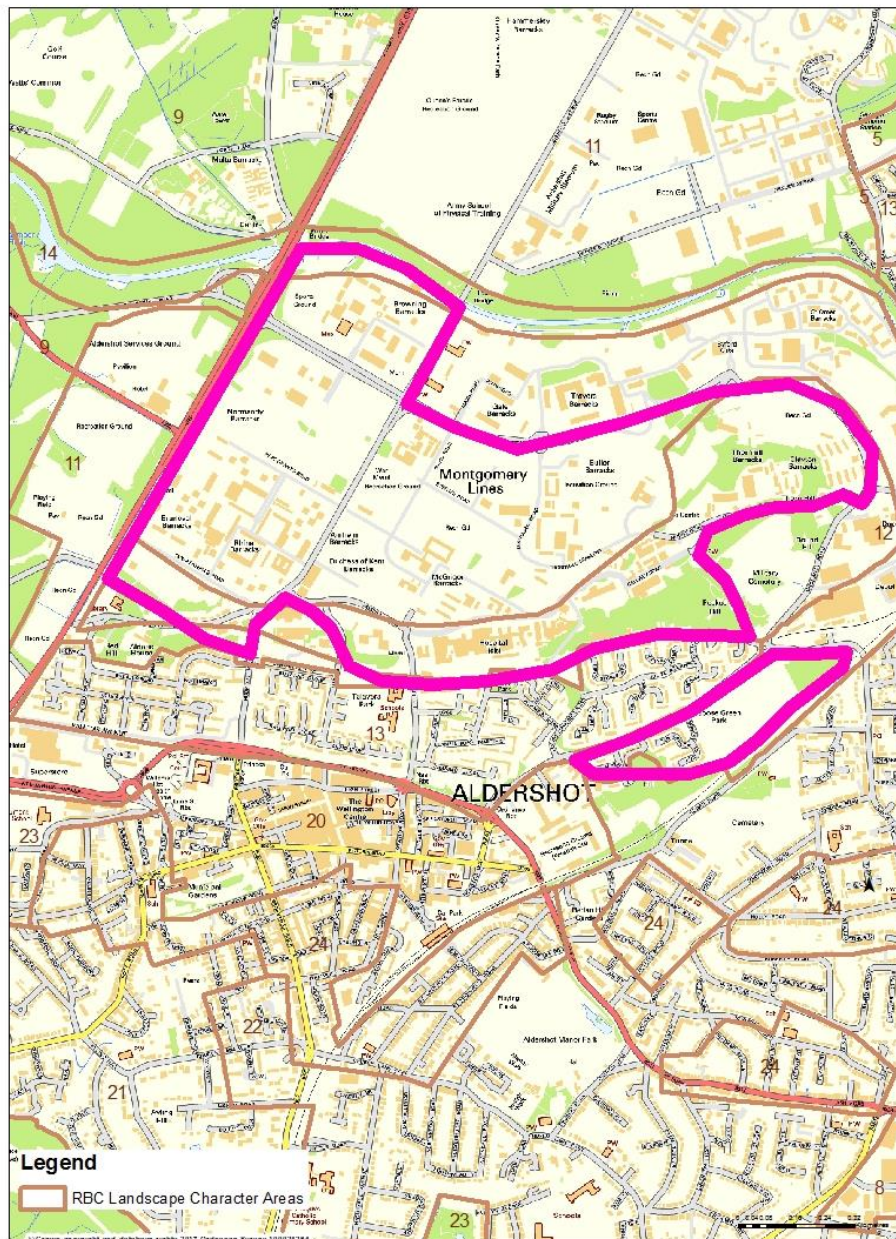
An assessment of the changes listed above lead to the identification of a number of new character areas of landscape types previously identified in Rushmoor.

- “Farnborough Aerodrome” in the 2009 assessment covered 400 hectares and included the airport, the Farnborough Airshow site and the Cody Technology Park, as well the historic core. As development has taken place, the various components have acquired distinct character in their own right. So it is proposed that the “Aerodrome” is shown as the
 - Airport and exhibition area
 - Farnborough Central (Urban Residential -Mixed newer)
 - Farnborough Business Park (Commercial /Business Parks)
 - Cody Technology Park (Commercial /Business Parks)
 - Queens Gate (Urban residential - Mixed newer)
 - Farnborough Aerospace Centre (Commercial /Business Parks)



Farnborough Aerodrome
New Character Areas

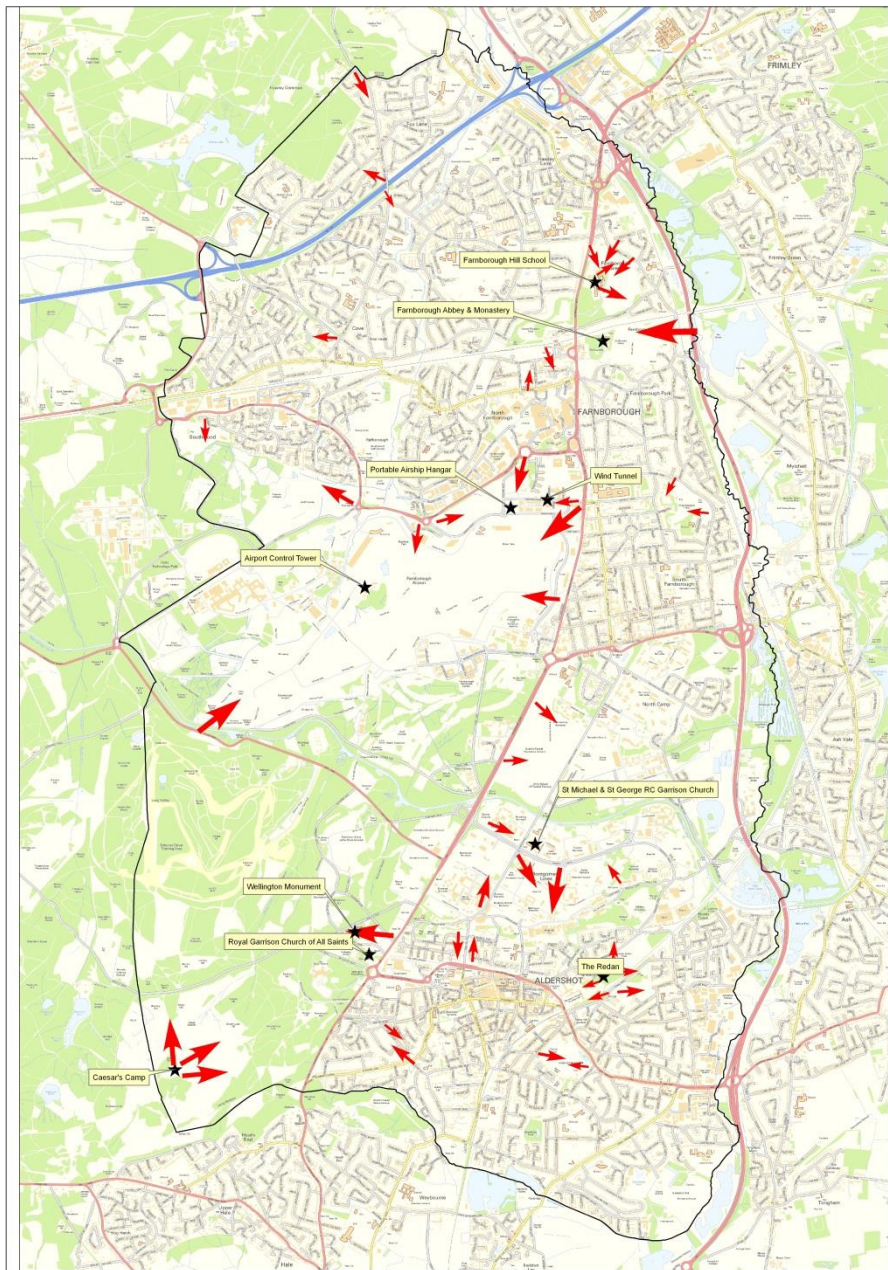
- As the Aldershot Urban Extension / Wellesley development takes shape it is appropriate to separate the area from the “Military Town” and class it as “Urban Residential -Mixed newer”. The area covered on the following plan includes areas which are awaiting development and which in a few years will assume the new character. It includes the school sites and retail site, but excludes the areas that are SANGS and the proposed employment site.



Wellesley Aldershot
New Character Areas

Locally Important Views

The 2009 Update identified a number of prominent features and important views



It is considered that these are still relevant, but some of the new buildings may merit inclusion as landmark features in the townscape.

Conclusions

The 2009 Update of the Rushmoor Landscape Assessment is still valid, with the additional “character areas” drawn on Farnborough Aerodrome and the Wellesley development on Aldershot Military Town.

Background References

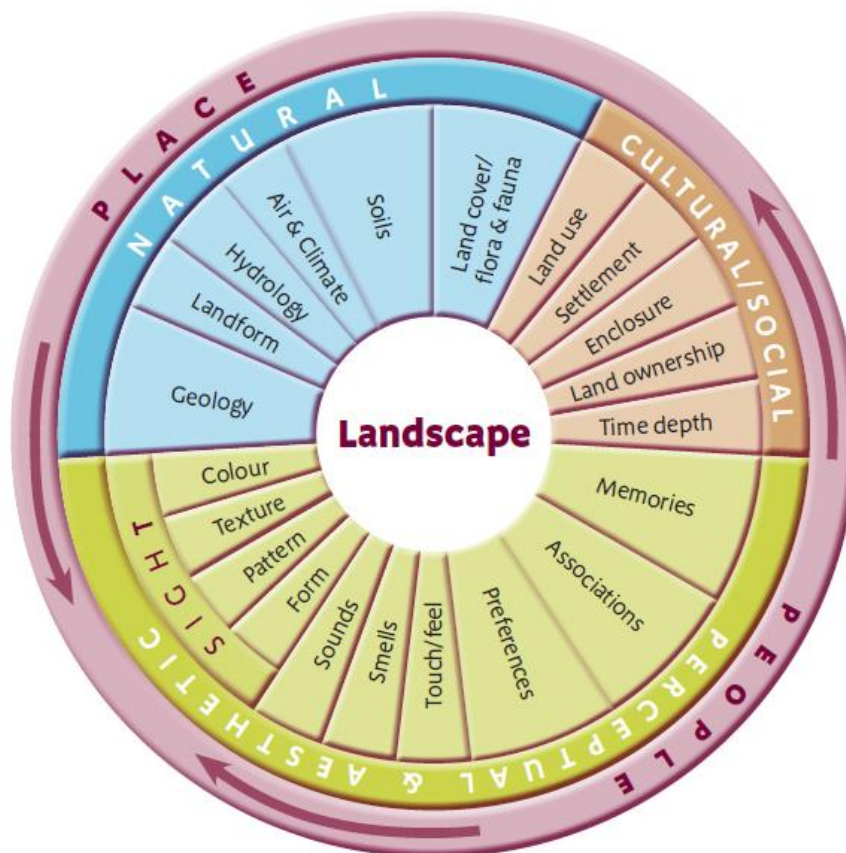
This paper is based upon the *Landscape Assessment of Rushmoor 2009 update* (<http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/article/2932/Background-evidence-on-landscape-character>).

Also relevant is the *Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment and Townscape Assessments* (<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/landscape-and-heritage/planning-the-landscape/landscape-character/hampshire-integrated-character-assessment/townscape-assessments>).

The *Local Landscape Character Assessments Toolkit* –from Hampshire County Council provides a community based approach the subject ([www3.hants.gov.uk/llca_and_local_distinctiveness_guidance_for_communities_less_than_3mb_hf000003366640 .pdf](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/llca_and_local_distinctiveness_guidance_for_communities_less_than_3mb_hf000003366640.pdf))

The current Rushmoor review acknowledges the procedures in *An approach to landscape character assessment* published by Natural England – 2 October 2014 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>)

This provides a context for “Landscape” descriptions based upon the following diagram



The separate appendices have the survey notes of the 2017 review covering the areas where change have led to new character areas.