

**AGENDA FOR THE EXECUTIVE**

**Date:** Monday, 18 March 2024

**Time:** 6.00 pm

**Venue:** Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

***Executive Members:***

Councillor S D T Woodward, Policy and Resources (Executive Leader)

Councillor I Bastable, Streetscene

Councillor Miss J Burton, Health & Public Protection

Councillor D G Foot, Housing

Councillor S D Martin, Planning and Development

Councillor Mrs S M Walker, Leisure and Community

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Minutes (Pages 5 - 12)**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 04 March 2024.

**3. Executive Leader's Announcements**

**4. Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of interest from members in accordance with Standing Orders and the Council's Code of Conduct.

**5. Petitions**

**6. Deputations**

To receive any deputations, of which notice has been lodged.

**7. References from Other Committees**

To receive any references from the committees or panels held.

**Matters for Decision in Public**

*Note: Where an urgent item of business is raised in accordance with Part 3 of the Constitution, it will be considered with the relevant service decisions as appropriate.*

**8. Housing**

**Key Decision**

**(1) Affordable Housing at Welborne Garden Village (Pages 13 - 22)**

A report by the Director of Housing.

**(2) Multi-dwelling unit acquisition for affordable housing purposes (Pages 23 - 34)**

A report by the Director of Housing.

**9. Planning and Development**

**Non-Key Decision**

**(1) Welborne Delivery Progress Update (Pages 35 - 62)**

A report by the Director of Planning and Regeneration.

**(2) Environment Update (Pages 63 - 92)**

A report by the Director of Planning and Regeneration.

**(3) Planning Performance Monitoring Update (Pages 93 - 106)**

A report by the Director of Planning and Regeneration.

**10. Policy and Resources**

**Key Decision**

**(1) Renewable Energy Scheme: Hook Recreation Ground Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Development Feasibility (Pages 107 - 254)**

A report by the Director of Planning and Regeneration.

**(2) Solent Enterprise Zone - Retained Business Rates and Infrastructure Investment Plan (Pages 255 - 278)**

A report by the Director of Planning & Regeneration.

**Non-Key Decision**

**(3) Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plans - Options (Pages 279 - 340)**

A report by the Director of Planning and Regeneration.

**(4) Updated Complaints Policy (Pages 341 - 412)**

A report by the Assistant Director (Democracy).



A WANNELL  
Chief Executive Officer

[www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk)

08 March 2024

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# FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Executive

**(to be confirmed at the next meeting)**

**Date:** Monday, 4 March 2024

**Venue:** Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

**Present:**

S D T Woodward, Policy and Resources (Executive Leader)  
I Bastable, Streetscene  
Miss J Burton, Health & Public Protection  
D G Foot, Housing  
Mrs S M Walker, Leisure and Community

**Also in attendance:**



**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S D Martin, Executive Member for Planning and Development.

**2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 05 February 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**3. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Executive Leader announcements.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

**5. PETITIONS**

The Assistant Director (Democracy) confirmed that an online petition has been submitted on the Council's website in respect of the closure of the Ashcroft Centre. The petition asks that the Council step in and work with Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Cultural Trust, the Ashcroft Arts Centre and residents in finding a solution to keep the Ashcroft Arts Centre open.

The petition closed on 2 March with 303 signatures.

It was confirmed that Trafalgar Entertainment, has begun dialogue with the Ashcroft Arts Centre to ensure that community groups and organisations, who wish to move across to Fareham Live, can be accommodated when the Ashcroft Centre closes later this year. These discussions are taking place as the intention for Fareham Live has always been to provide a community hub with a well-balanced programme of events.

Hampshire County Council's consultation on the provision of future services is currently running and closes on 31 March. The results of this petition will be made known to the Culture, Communities and Strategic Programmes Lead Officer at the County as part of that consultation.

The Executive Member for Leisure & Community will write to the lead petitioner to confirm that action and to explain the situation with regard to Fareham Live and the Ashcroft Arts Centre closure.

**6. DEPUTATIONS**

A deputation was received in respect of item 10(2) on the agenda from Claire Powell, local business owner and lead petitioner of the petition requesting that parking at Middle Road car park, Park Gate be extended to 3 Hours.

**7. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

**Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Panel - 24 January 2024**Minute 7 – Petition - Middle Road car park, Park Gate

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Environmental Health in respect of a petition received requesting that the 2-hour maximum stay at Middle Road car park, Park Gate be extended.

A deputation was received in respect of this item from the Lead Petitioner, Claire Powell.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor I J Bastable, ward member for Parkgate, addressed the Panel on this item.

In considering this item the Panel felt that too big an increase in the length of the maximum stay in the car park would encourage parking by people working in the District Centre and people parking and travelling on elsewhere to work. This would create over demand for parking spaces and have an impact on businesses that rely on a quick customer turnaround such as the convenience stores, bakery and card shop.

The Panel recognised however that some of the businesses in the District Centre such as the hairdressers, the estate agent and the funeral parlour deliver services that create a genuine need for their customers to park for longer than 2 hours. Members therefore felt that the increase in maximum stay to 3 hours would strike a balance between the different needs of the businesses and would not be long enough to create over occupancy in the car park.

RESOLVED that the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive that the maximum stay in Middle Road car park be increased from 2 hours to 3 hours.

This was discussed at item 10(2) on the agenda.

Minute 9 – Air Quality Update

The Panel received a report by the Head of Environmental Health which provided members with an air quality update and a review of Gosport Road and Portland Street Air Quality Management.

The Panel discussed how, with the Air Quality Management areas being revoked, the Council will be aware if air quality objectives for different pollutants are unlikely to be achieved. Members were advised that there will still be monitoring tubes around the Borough which will measure levels of pollutants. Members of the public with concerns about excessive levels in a particular area can also request that monitoring take place. Going forward, the Council will also be required to implement an Air Quality Strategy next year which will cover in detail how the Council will manage Air Quality across the Borough.

RESOLVED that the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive that the two AQMA's be revoked by

approving the Order as Scheduled at Appendix A to the draft report to be considered by the Executive at the meeting scheduled to take place on 04 March 2024.

This was discussed at item 10(1) on the agenda.

### **Daedalus Scrutiny Panel - 21 February 2024**

#### Minute 6 - Daedalus Vision and Outline Strategy – 2024 Update: Progress and Next Steps

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Planning and Regeneration on the Daedalus Vision and Outline Strategy, which provided an update on progress made to date, and the next steps for the strategy.

Members all agreed that the Daedalus 2024 Update was a fantastic ‘brochure’ document which highlighted the positive progress that has been made at Daedalus to date. They were keen for Officers to ensure that this is well publicised as they felt that there is a lack of public knowledge of all of the facilities that are available on the site.

The Chairman addressed the Panel and suggested that a recommendation is made to the Executive that reference is made in the Next Steps section of the Daedalus 2024 Update which highlights the key continued role of the general aviation sector at Solent Airport, alongside work to attract other aviation sectors. In particular the published Government policy on Flightpath to the Future; a Strategic Framework for the Aviation Sector was seen as highly relevant to Solent Airport as the policy focuses on how local government and industry can work together to deliver a successful aviation for the future.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor S D T Woodward, Executive Member for Policy and Resources, addressed the Panel on this item. He informed members that the Council is a member of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group which is made up of local authorities and is a forum for them to discuss strategic aviation policies and major issues.

Councillor Needham enquired as to whether there are any opportunities for commercial flights at Daedalus in the future. Councillor Woodward addressed the Panel to confirm that this could be possible in the future, firstly however they need to install both the Aeronautical Ground Lighting and the Performance Based Navigation system, which will allow pilots to be able to see where to land their aircrafts and will provide certainty that they will always be able to land despite poor weather conditions.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Panel recommends that the Executive add an additional reference in the Next Steps section of the Daedalus 2024 Update which highlights the key continued role of the general aviation sector at Solent Airport.; and
- (ii) Recommends that the Executive endorse the recommendations set out in its report at its meeting on 4 March 2024.



This was discussed at item 11(1) on the agenda.

## **8. LEISURE AND COMMUNITY**

### **(1) Padel Tennis Proposal**

RESOLVED that the Executive considered the proposal and agrees:

- (a) subject to any representations received following statutory advertisement and subject to planning approval and any necessary assessments, to agree in principle to the disposal of 1500 sqm of public open space for a 4-court padel tennis centre at Park Lane Recreation Ground as shown on the map marked Appendix A and to agree to the financial terms as set out in the confidential Appendix B to the report;
- (b) to authorise the Head of Asset Management to advertise the proposed disposal of above public open space for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper circulating in the locality in accordance with the requirements of s123 Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and to approve the disposal, subject to no representations being received. If representations are received, to note that a further report will be presented to the Executive for determination and for a final decision to be made as to the disposal;
- (c) subject to the above, to delegate authority to the assistant Director (Democracy), following consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Community, to agree the terms of the disposal as set out in the report including the Heads of Terms and to enter in to contractual and all necessary arrangements to give effect to the proposals in the report if there are no representations from the disposal of the open space; and
- (d) in the event of there being representations, to note that a further report will be presented to the Executive.

## **9. STREETSCENE**

### **(1) Introducing Simpler Recycling in Fareham**

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) confirms this Council's commitment to implementing the proposed Environment Act 2021 Recycling Regulations to deliver significant improvements to our waste and recycling services and reduce our impact on the environment as cost effectively as possible;
- (b) agrees that £970,000 be added to the Capital Programme for the introduction of a food waste collection service across the Borough;
- (c) subject to the outcome of the current analysis of the optimal collection approach to dry mixed recyclables, agrees to assert that this Council's preferred option is a co-mingled recycling collection service collecting a wider range of materials and that Hampshire County Council be advised accordingly; and

- (d) agrees that future detailed reports on additional recycling collection services, trade waste services and the introduction of a food waste collection service be brought forward once the Regulations are published.

## 10. HEALTH AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

- (1) Air Quality Update and Review of the Gosport Road Air Quality Management areas

The comments of the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

RESOLVED that the Executive approves the Revocation of the two Air Quality Management Areas as detailed in the report.

- (2) Petition regarding car parking at Middle Road car park, Park Gate

A deputation was received in respect of this item from Claire Powell, local business owner and lead petitioner of the petition requesting that parking at Middle Road car park, Park Gate be extended to 3 Hours.

The comments of the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item. In doing so, the Executive expressed concern about making further changes to the parking restrictions, given the history of amendments made, as set out from paragraph 7 of the report, which were made in response to requests from the local traders.

In presenting the item, the Executive Member for Health & Public Protection proposed a compromise of introducing a new Traffic Regulation Order of a two hour time limit (with no return) between the hours of 8am and 6pm. This would, in effect, provide unrestricted parking from 4pm until 8am.

In considering the amendment, the Executive concluded that it would not agree with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Panel on this occasion due to new information coming forward regarding the parking habits of current customers using the car park.

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees:

- (a) to maintain the current two hour maximum stay period at Middle Road Car Park, Park Gate, having considered the petition and the recommendation from the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel on 24 January 2024; and
- (b) to authorise the Executive Member for Health and Public Protection to approve the statutory representation process and subsequent decision on an amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order of a two hour time limit (with no return) between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

## 11. POLICY AND RESOURCES

- (1) Daedalus Vision and Outline Strategy - 2024 Update: Progress and Next Steps

The comments of the Daedalus Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) considered the progress made in delivering the adopted Vision and Outline Strategy for Daedalus;
- (b) agrees the next steps identified in the 2024 Update; and
- (c) requests Officers to undertake a range of actions to publicise the Council’s continued delivery progress and next steps.

(2) Citizen of Honour Nominations 2024

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees that:

- (a) no more than two candidates are selected, from the nominations attached at Appendix A to the report, to be formally recognised as Citizens of Honour 2024;
- (b) no more than one candidate is selected from the nominations as attached at Appendix B to the report, to be formally recognised as a Young Citizen of Honour (under 18) 2024; and
- (c) candidates 1 and 5 be selected to receive the annual Citizen of Honour and candidate 3 be selected to receive the Young Citizen of Honour (under 18) Awards 2024.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.30 pm).

..... Chairman

..... Date



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Affordable Housing at Welborne Garden Village</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Providing Housing Choices

**Purpose:**

To provide the Executive with an overview of the potential opportunity for the Council to be involved as the Registered Provider of affordable housing at Welborne Garden Village, how that involvement might work, and broad financial and operational considerations associated with the potential opportunity.

**Executive summary:**

Welborne Garden village will deliver 6,000 new homes. In accordance with the S106 for the outline planning approval, a minimum of 600 homes will be affordable (a mix of Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership), with the potential for a total of 1,800 affordable homes (subject to viability).

On the 09 October 2023 the Executive agreed the principle of further investigation and due diligence around the potential for Fareham Borough Council to be involved in the ownership and management of the affordable homes at Welborne, and for funding to be made available to seek appropriate advice on the matter.

Consultancy advice has now been obtained which highlights the positives and risks of potential models. This advice highlights that the initially proposed Joint Venture approach is unlikely to be attractive for the Council, and although other models for Council involvement could be more favourable, they would need to be considered in the wider context of risk, appetite and benefit.

This report explains why it is not considered appropriate for the Council to enter into the proposed Joint Venture approach for the ownership and management of the affordable homes at Welborne, but that alternative models might (subject to further legal and financial considerations) still offer some potential.

**Recommendation/Recommended Option:**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) notes the content of the report;
- (b) agrees that the proposed Joint Venture model is not pursued by the Council; and
- (c) agrees that should Welborne Land Limited wish to consider discussion on the Council's potential involvement as owner/manager of the affordable homes, that further discussion takes place on the potential for a Development Agreement approach through the Council's Housing Revenue Account, and thereafter and as necessary, further work be undertaken to consider the legal and financial implications to the Council. Noting that if this were to progress positively then a further report will be brought back to the Executive before any agreements are entered into.

**Reason:**

To support the Corporate Priority of providing Housing Choices.

**Cost of proposals:**

The cost of the external advice has already been agreed and met through existing Welborne Capacity Funding. Any further advice required will be in accordance with the Executive decision on 09 October 2023.

**Appendices:** A – \*Confidential Appendix

\*It is not in the public interest to publish the information within Confidential Appendix A as, in the absence of Welborne Land Limited being in an agreement with a Registered Provider for the affordable homes at Welborne, the detail is commercially sensitive and could detrimentally impact the Council's negotiating position.

**Background papers:** None

**Reference papers:** 09 October 2023 - Executive Report: Affordable Housing at Welborne (relating to further investigation and feasibility on potential role in ownership and management of affordable homes)

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Affordable Housing at Welborne Garden Village
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The outline planning consent for 6,000 new homes at Welborne was granted permission in 2021. Ground and enabling works are underway and reserved matter planning applications for the first phase of new homes are with the Council as Local Planning Authority.
2. Fareham Housing have been involved in discussions on Welborne for many years, ensuring that an appropriate mix of type and size of affordable homes is provided and that the clauses in the s106 appropriately reflect how the affordable homes should be delivered, secured, and allocated.
3. As a minimum 600 new affordable homes should be provided at Welborne, with the potential for this to rise to 1,800 (subject to viability). The delivery of these homes will be phased over time as individual parcels of the site are developed.
4. Fareham Housing (the housing department) owns and manages over 2,400 affordable homes across Fareham Borough through the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This includes a mix of general purpose and sheltered housing homes. Fareham Housing also manage leaseholders and have a small number of Shared Ownership properties.
5. A report to the Executive on 09 October 2023 outlined the potential opportunity for the Council to be involved in the ownership and management of the affordable homes at Welborne, and it was agreed that this would be explored further.
6. The Council have since obtained expert advice from Redloft LLP. Redloft provided strategic advice on the Joint Venture (JV) approach proposed by Welborne Land Ltd., including the broad financial implications and key risks to the Council. The advice also identified potential alternative models for the delivery and management of the affordable homes at Welborne.
7. As no agreement has currently been reached between Welborne Land Ltd. and an affordable housing provider (whether that be the Council or another Registered

Provider), the expert advice provided by Redloft is confidential at this time. This report summarises and gives an overview of the current recommended position for the Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

8. Officers understand that a key objective for Welborne Land Ltd. is to ensure a consistent approach to the affordable housing management across the multiple phases of development at Welborne, and for the long-term quality and stewardship at the site. In this respect they would prefer a single partner for the affordable homes.
9. For the Council, one of the key objectives is that the new affordable homes reflect the affordable need in Fareham Borough (size/mix/type), and that the Social/Affordable Rent homes are made available for persons on the Council's Housing Register.

## **THE PROPOSED JOINT VENTURE APPROACH**

10. The proposed approach from Welborne Land Ltd. is for a Joint Venture (JV) for the ownership and management of the affordable units at Welborne.
11. Further detail is provided in the accompanying confidential appendix around the proposed structure and proposed financing of the JV.
12. Redloft (appointed by the Council to provide advice) have reviewed the proposed JV approach. Key aspects of their considerations include: -
  - Regulation (with the Regulator of Social Housing)
  - Funding obligations of respective parties
  - Management and operational issues
  - Governance and control (board, management, reporting etc.)
  - Set up and on-going costs
  - Values for the affordable homes

(NB: The above is not an exhaustive list of the factors considered)

### ***Regulation***

13. The regulatory oversight of social housing is increasing in response to various sad and tragic events in recent years, such as the Grenfell fire tragedy and the death of Awaab Ishak (linked with damp and mould). This regulatory process ensures social housing providers meet various expectations and standards.
14. Registered Provider (RP) status is a stipulation in S106 planning agreements on sites that include affordable housing. The Welborne planning S106 includes this obligation. This approach ensures that only appropriately regulated parties have responsibility for affordable homes. The Council (as an affordable housing provider) is a Local Authority Registered Provider. The largest other Registered Providers currently active in Fareham Borough include VIVID and Abri.
15. The proposed JV approach would involve the affordable homes at Welborne being owned and managed by another body (i.e. the JV) and that tenancies would be between the JV and the customers. Officers are therefore of the understanding that the JV would need to become a RP and this has been supported through advice obtained from the Regulator of Social Housing.
16. The process of registration to become a RP is subject to increasing and detailed scrutiny, and although the Regulator of Social Housing indicates the process to achieve



a new RP status can take over six months, experience in the sector (as advised by Redloft) suggests it can now take 18-24 months. The process includes needing Business Plans, Policies on rent setting, allocations, whistleblowing, Board/governance details, cash flow forecasts, and much more.

17. The process to set up a new RP as part of the JV is therefore resource intensive and time consuming. A high proportion of applications to become Registered Providers are unsuccessful.
18. It is not considered appropriate to reconsider the S106 obligation for the affordable housing provider to be registered. The Council currently include this S106 requirement consistently on developments that include affordable homes, and ultimately the registration status and associated regulation is in the interest of affordable housing customers.

### ***Other considerations on the proposed JV***

19. Further detail is provided in Confidential Appendix A on other considerations which at this stage are commercially sensitive.

### **CONCLUSION IN RELATION TO PROPOSED JOINT VENTURE**

20. It is recommended that the Council does not pursue the proposed JV model. The various factors identified around the process for the JV to become a RP, and other factors identified in the Confidential Appendix, means this is not considered an appropriate option for the Council.
21. Of note is that the key objectives to the Council in paragraph 9 of this report (the size and mix of the affordable homes at Welborne and nomination rights to the homes) will not be detrimentally impacted or put at risk because of not entering a JV. These aspects are all secured as part of the S106 agreement.
22. The S106 for Welborne requires the RP of the affordable homes to sign the Council's Nominations Agreement. This will require 100% of first lets of the Affordable Rent homes to go to persons/families on the Council's Housing Register, and 75% of re-lets. Therefore, even if the Council were not involved in the ownership and management of the homes at Welborne, this will not detrimentally impact the provision of the affordable homes at Welborne for customers on the Council's Housing Register.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

23. Although it is recommended that the Council does not pursue the JV approach, Redloft have suggested a simpler and more favourable method for the Council that could be considered. A development agreement.

#### **Development Agreement Approach**

24. A Development Agreement is the more typical practice for RPs to secure/acquire S106 affordable housing. In simple terms this type of agreement sees the purchaser (i.e. the RP) agree a package price for the affordable housing based on a red book value using a discounted cashflow model.
25. The development agreement approach would mean that an existing Registered Provider acquire the affordable homes, and own and manage those homes as part of their pre-existing RP status. This could be an option for other Registered Providers likely to already be operating in the area, or it could be an option for the Council through

Housing Revenue Account borrowing and additional HRA stock, utilising the Council's existing status as a Local Authority Registered Provider.

26. Subject to the agreement of the recommendations in this report, further discussion between Officers and Welborne Land Ltd. will take place around a more traditional development agreement approach.
27. Other parties (such as other RPs) may also be interested in a development agreement approach to take on the S106 homes at Welborne. Paragraph 22 highlights that this would not alter the amount or type of affordable housing that will be available to customers in the Borough.
28. At this stage the timely delivery and availability of new affordable homes at Welborne remains a priority. Having an appropriate agreement in place with a RP to own and manage the homes will be an essential part of this. It should therefore be recognised that the Council may not be the end provider of the affordable homes at Welborne.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

29. Of note is that had the Council pursued a Joint Venture arrangement with WLL, then the borrowing will have been through the Council's General Fund. The alternative Development Agreement approach would involve Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing as the affordable homes would be an asset held under the HRA.
30. Before the Council could consider the potential for entering into a Development Agreement for the ownership of the affordable homes at Welborne (if agreeable to WLL), further investigation would be needed as to the capacity of borrowing against the HRA and ensuring that any borrowing is prudent and would not stifle, or limit, potential Council housing led regeneration or new build opportunities elsewhere in the Borough.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

31. The subject matter of this report and the recommendations are not anticipated to have an impact on the Council's carbon footprint, nor expected to have a detrimental or beneficial impact to the wider environment.

#### **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Robyn Lyons on (01329) 824305

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Multi-dwelling unit acquisition for affordable housing purposes</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Providing Housing Choices

**Purpose:**

To enable the acquisition of a multi-dwelling unit (block of flats) close to Fareham Town Centre for the purpose of providing additional affordable homes by Fareham Housing.

**Executive summary:**

An unusual opportunity has arisen for the Council (in its role as housing provider) to acquire the freehold of a Multi-Dwelling Unit (MDU) block, with vacant possession.

The site is well located, close to the town centre, shops, facilities, and public transport. The properties within the MDU are ready for occupation and finished to a good standard.

The acquisition can be funded through HRA borrowing, together with either Homes England Grant or 1-4-1 receipts, and it will provide a positive return to the Housing Revenue Account over the medium/long term. In the immediate/short term the acquisition would boost the provision of affordable homes for the benefit of Fareham Housing customers.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) agrees the principle of the acquisition for the value set out in the Confidential Appendix to this report, subject to the completion of due diligence by Officers; and
- (b) delegates authority to the Director of Housing, following consultation with the Executive Member for Housing, to agree the final terms of the purchase and to complete the acquisition.

**Reason:**

To enable the Council to proceed with the acquisition of a Multi-Dwelling Unit which will positively contribute to the affordable housing provision in the Borough.

**Cost of proposals:**

The acquisition cost, together with further detail about the sources of funding, are explained further in Confidential Appendix A to this report.

**Appendices:** \*Confidential Appendix A – Acquisition cost and funding details

\* Commercially exempt from publication

It is not in the public interest to publish this information as disclosure of any details prior to any exchange of contracts may result in a weak negotiating position for the Council and potentially jeopardise the successful completion of the transaction as other parties would then become aware of the acquisition opportunity.

**Background papers:** None

**Reference papers:** None

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Multi-dwelling unit acquisition for affordable housing purposes
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing

#### INTRODUCTION

1. There continues to be an on-going need for more affordable homes in the Borough. It is unusual for a vacant, freehold, Multi Dwelling Unit (MDU) to become available. Even more so when that MDU is well located, with shops, services, and public transport easily available for occupants.
2. Some short-term additional provision of affordable homes, to be owned and managed by Fareham Housing, will be beneficial for customers on the Council's Housing Register. It could allow for some immediate relief to pressures on temporary housing and emergency accommodation in the Borough.

#### BACKGROUND

3. As a snapshot, at the beginning of March 2024 there were 581 households on the Council's Housing Register and nearly 200 households in accommodation classed as temporary or emergency.
4. Although there are many new affordable homes on the horizon, both in terms of provision directly by the Council and also new homes provided by Registered Providers, there remains a benefit from a short-term boost in further affordable home supply, particularly when it is in a highly accessible location such as near Fareham town centre.

#### THE PROPERTY

5. The property that has become available is a project completed by an owner/developer. The original intention of the owner had been to sell the flats individually, or a lease arrangement with properties for rent. With wider market changes there is now a unique opportunity for the Council to acquire the entire block of flats, including the freehold for the site.
6. The individual flats are well appointed and meet national space standards. Many of the flats would suit those with mobility issues, and some could be easily altered in the future to be wheelchair accessible. All flats are EPC B or C and could be upgraded to EPC A

& B in due course (subject to funding) through the provision of additional photovoltaics. The flats include triple glazing, heat pumps and electric heaters, and there is good amount of car parking as part of the plot.

7. Officers will undertake appropriate due diligence before any exchange of contracts, obtaining external input when required. This will include matters such as ensuring the planning permission was adhered to/conditions discharged, appropriate certification on building safety matters, that all other appropriate warranties and certification are in place, and that all legal/land matters are appropriate.
8. The flats would most likely be provided at Affordable Rent (capped at Local Housing Allowance). Social Rent (the most affordable rent level) will only be possible should a substantial grant from Homes England be possible. Officers will continue to have dialogue with Homes England on this matter, but Affordable Rent is the most likely tenure.

### **COSTS**

9. Further detailed information relating to the acquisition costs, and the means of funding the purchase, is provided at Confidential Appendix A.
10. The Council's finance team have been involved, and are satisfied that when considering rent levels, acquisition/borrowing costs, and ongoing running costs, the acquisition would return a positive contribution to the HRA within industry expected timescales.

### **CONCLUSION**

11. There is a continued need for more affordable homes for customers in the Borough. This unusual opportunity to purchase a completed, ready to use, freehold MDU in an accessible location will be beneficial in helping to address affordable housing need whilst also being a sound financial decision. The ability to occupy these homes so swiftly will support affordable housing need and potentially contribute to reducing the pressures on available temporary and emergency accommodation.
12. The Executive is asked to agree the principle of this acquisition, and to delegate authority to Officers to undertake due diligence around the purchase and to conclude the acquisition as per the detail contained in Confidential Appendix A.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

13. There are not anticipated to be any detrimental environmental considerations in relation to the proposed property acquisition subject of this report. The property has a good EPC value and is heated in a modern, energy efficient, and environmentally sensitive way.

### **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Robyn Lyons (01329) 824305



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Planning and Development
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Welborne Delivery Progress Update</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Provide Housing Choices, Respond to Climate Change and Protect the Environment, Strong, Safe & Healthy Communities, Promote Economic Development, Leisure Opportunities for wellbeing and Fun Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

**Purpose:**

To present an update on progress of the Welborne Garden Village.

**Executive summary:**

Outline planning permission was granted for the Welborne Garden Village on 30 September 2021. Since then, good progress has been made on the delivery of the Welborne Garden Village, with the Borough Council having a significant strategic leadership role in the development as well as its role as Local Planning Authority.

The Executive Briefing Paper provides the Executive with an update on the developments permitted, the works being carried out at the site and those proposals expected shortly. The report also provides an overview of the governance arrangements to ensure that Welborne is delivered as a well-planned high-quality development.

The key elements of the Executive Briefing Paper have been captured and set out in a brochure titled 'Building Welborne Beautiful', which provides the local community and other interested parties with an overview of the progress made on the Welborne Garden Village to date.

Once this report has been considered by the Executive, the 'Building Welborne Beautiful' publication will be shared in late March. Social media and local media opportunities will also be used to raise awareness of the progress and next steps outlined in the Update.

The Welborne Delivery Progress Update and Building Welborne Beautiful publication were reported to the Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024, and the comments of the Panel will be presented to the Executive for their consideration.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) considers the progress made on the delivery of the Welborne Garden Village; and
- (b) requests that Officers undertake a range of actions to publicise the 'Building Welborne Beautiful' publication which sets out the delivery progress and next steps.

**Reason:**

To set out the progress made against one of the Council's corporate priority actions and seek Executive approval for publicity of the publication.

**Cost of proposals:**

The costs relating to the 'Building Welborne Beautiful' document will be met within existing budgets.

**Appendices:** A: 'Building Welborne Beautiful'

**Background papers:** None

**Reference papers:** Fareham Corporate Strategy 2023-2029  
The Welborne Plan 2015

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Welborne Delivery Progress Update
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Planning and Development

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Outline Planning permission was granted for the Welborne Garden Village in September 2021. The outline planning permission established the principle of the development with all matters reserved for future determination, except for the works to M27 Junction 10, three highway junctions and related works to the A32. Up to 6,000 dwellings will be built along with a new district and village centre, retail and community facilities, a public house, a hotel, over 100,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment space, health and veterinary facilities, pre-schools, a secondary school, three primary schools, new amenity spaces, woodland areas, allotments, and wildlife corridors.
2. The Council's vision for Welborne Garden Village set out in the Welborne Plan 2015 is now becoming a reality, with infrastructure works currently being undertaken on site in preparation for the first homes to be built.
3. Welborne's Master Developer, Buckland Development Ltd, has significantly extended their professional team in order to move the development forward at pace and drive the high quality placemaking required to make Welborne an exemplar amongst the many new communities being developed nationally.
4. The following report explains what has been approved at Welborne so far, what further proposals are expected to be submitted in the near term, along with details of construction underway. The report provides further updates on the governance arrangements and future management arrangements at Welborne.

#### PLANNING

5. The Council's Planning Service has been continually engaged with the development of Welborne since The Welborne Plan was adopted in 2015. Extensive pre-application discussions culminated in the submission of an outline planning application in 2017 which was approved in September 2021.
6. The outline planning permission establishes the principle of development at Welborne and fixes the general location of a range of uses around the development. The outline planning permission is also accompanied by an extensive Section 106 planning legal

agreement which secures the delivery of large amounts of on-site and off-site infrastructure.

7. Whilst the outline planning permission secured the detailed design of the Junction 10 works and other junctions onto the A32, the detailed design of the majority of development to be undertaken at Welborne requires the further approval of this Council.
8. Over the last year or so, approximately 30 planning applications have been received associated with the development of Welborne. This has included detailed designs of development to be undertaken along with the necessary details to discharge planning conditions attached to the outline planning permission.
9. The focus of the first phase of development at Welborne is immediately to the north of Knowle Road, to the east of Knowle Village. Significant applications that have been approved in the last year include a new roundabout on Knowle Road to serve the first phase of housing; a foul pumping station; a new electricity substation and heat exchange energy centre to the north of the Welborne Business Park (formerly Pinks Sawmills); and the undergrounding of the existing overhead electricity lines along with the removal of the existing pylons, and erection of new terminal towers.
10. The Strategic Design Code for Welborne, which sets out the design principles that will shape the development of the entire Garden Village, together with the Welborne Streets Manual, which sets out the regulations that will govern the development of Welborne's streets, were approved by the Planning Committee in December 2023. Both documents will ensure the quality of the places and spaces that are to be created and give certainty to developers and as to how the Council expects these elements to be delivered.

## **HOUSING**

11. Buckland Development Ltd. have appointed three regional housebuilders to build Welborne's first homes. The housebuilders are C G Fry & Son, Thakeham and Pye Homes. Each of these three companies have entered into Joint Ventures with Portchester Equity, which owns Buckland Development Ltd.
12. These housebuilders have submitted three reserved matters planning applications, for 111, 153 and 210 homes respectively, making a total of 474 homes. A further application for the Village Centre, which will include 77 homes, along with commercial floor space, community uses and healthcare provision, is expected imminently. Subject to planning approval being granted, all three housebuilders intend to begin housing construction in 2024.
13. Welborne Land Limited are also seeking an appropriate body to have an ownership stake in, and to undertake the management of the affordable homes at Welborne. Fareham Borough Council has been approached to establish if it would wish to undertake this role. A study to assess the viability of a joint venture model to deliver Affordable Housing has been commissioned by the Council and a report is presented to the Executive elsewhere on this meeting agenda.

## **GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT**

14. The Section 106 legal agreement which forms part of the outline planning permission, ensures a number of Steering Groups are established to consider and oversee key aspects of the development of Welborne Garden Village. The M27 Junction 10 Steering Group and the Education Steering Group have now been in place for several years, and more recently Affordable Housing, Health and Employment & Training Steering Groups

have been established.

15. In addition, the Council's Senior Officers meet the Master Developer's Team on a very regular basis to discuss issues relating to the scheme and to ensure progress is maintained on the delivery of Welborne. Buckland Development Ltd. has also begun discussions with the Council about establishing a senior leadership-level group, a Welborne Place Board, whose primary focus would be to champion and oversee the achievement of a high-quality place and the growth of a successful new community.
16. Once laid out, the communal parts of the Garden Village will be managed and maintained by the Welborne Garden Village Trust Ltd (WGVTL). The WGVTL will have Directors appointed from both Fareham Borough Council and the County Council (amongst others). The Trust is also required to employ a Community Development Worker before any homes are occupied.
17. The Council's Welborne Community Forum, which provides the opportunity for local authorities, the master developer, residents, neighbouring communities and other interested parties to engage regularly on the delivery Welborne Garden Village has been well supported and welcomed.
18. Buckland Development Ltd hosted a successful public engagement event at their Dean Farm offices in February 2023 to showcase their approach to the design of the new development, and their plans for the delivery of the first phase of homes, green space and the Village Centre. This event was prior to the submission of the infrastructure and housing reserved matters applications.
19. Buckland Development Ltd also hosted a visit from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Michael Gove in June 2023, accompanied by the Rt Hon Suella Braverman, MP and the Leaders of Fareham Borough and Hampshire County Councils.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **M27 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme**

20. Hampshire County Council agreed to become the delivery body for the M27 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme in July 2021, subject to all funding being in place and appointed Volker Fitzpatrick as their design and build contractor to deliver the scheme. Volker Fitzpatrick and their lead designer, Ramboll, have worked closely with the County Council and National Highways to finalise the design for the scheme.
21. Significant funding has already been secured from the Master Developer for Welborne and the Government, for the construction of the Junction 10 improvements. The cost is expected to be known shortly and will be subject to formal acceptance by both the County Council and Volker Fitzpatrick. Once the costs have been agreed and it is confirmed that all the required funding is in place, construction will commence.
22. The M27 Junction 10 currently has restricted access, only allowing partial movements for traffic westbound off and eastbound on. The proposed improvements involve the provision of a new motorway underpass to the west of the existing M27 Junction 10, three new slip roads and the construction of a new dual carriageway to link the new slip roads to the A32.
23. To help integrate the development to the wider area a dedicated Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) link and facilities for walking, cycling or using a mobility aid will be provided

alongside the new link roads. This includes crossing points and a link through the underpass under the M27 to connect Welborne to the rest of Fareham, including key facilities such as the rail station, schools, and the town centre.

24. It is essential that Junction 10 is upgraded to cater for the predicted new traffic movements which will be generated by Welborne. The upgraded Junction will help to ensure that the site will be well connected to the wider south coast strategic transport network to help attract business and investment into the area. Local residents will also benefit from the Junction 10 upgrade which aims to alleviate the congestion on local roads.

### **First Primary School**

25. The first of the three primary schools at Welborne, is planned to be delivered immediately alongside the housing, currently before the Council for approval.
26. The first primary school will cater for two forms of entry, providing 420 places, and is currently expected to open for September 2027 (dependent on the predicted pupil demand).

### **Welborne Rail Halt**

27. The existing Fareham to Eastleigh line, known as the Botley line, runs along the Western edge of the Welborne Garden Village site.
28. There is no requirement for the developer to provide a railway station at Welborne, although land must remain available to accommodate one, unless it is demonstrated that it is not technically viable or feasible to deliver such a facility.
29. In December 2022 the Council contracted SLC Rail Ltd. to set out the Strategic Outline Business Case for a railway station on the Botley line at Welborne Garden Village. At this stage SLC Rail Ltd. found that there is a moderate case for a railway halt at Welborne.
30. SLC Rail Ltd advised that best value for money would be achieved if a rail halt at Welborne opened in the 2030s rather than 2020s, given the location allocated is in the south west corner of Welborne, which is likely to be developed for housing late in the development. The consultants also advised that any station built should initially use a single-track solution, implementing a station platform constructed in such a way as to be easily moved out should a second track be deemed important at a later date.

## **UTILITIES**

### **Low carbon heat network**

31. The delivery of a large-scale new community presents a unique opportunity to factor in key aspirations right from the outset. One such aspiration at Welborne, shared by both the Master Developer and Fareham Borough Council, is to deliver low and zero carbon energy.
32. In May 2021, Fareham Borough Council was awarded funding from the Government's Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) towards the production of a detailed techno-economic feasibility study of low carbon district heat network options at Welborne, in partnership with Buckland Development Ltd.



33. A study comparing two network options undertaken by energy consultants Sustainable Energy reported in April 2022. The options were a sitewide thermal network, and a cluster-based closed loop ambient network. Sustainable Energy concluded that the ambient cluster network would be the preferred solution as it offers the lowest carbon emissions and can be built at the same rate as the housing development, thereby lowering the risk and ensuring no need to futureproof for the whole development.
34. Details such as energy efficiency through design and layout, the use of low or zero carbon technologies, and innovative building methods for each specific proposed neighbourhood will need to be considered for each build phase.

### **Electricity**

35. Planning permission was granted in December 2023 for electricity pylons to be undergrounded at Welborne Garden Village to maximise development potential and to achieve a high quality of design across the northern edge of Welborne. As part of the same proposal, planning permission was granted for the construction of a primary substation and a heat exchange energy centre.

### **FAREHAM OWNED PROPERTIES ON WELBORNE**

36. Members will recall that the Borough Council purchased three properties on the site in 2016 and 2017. These properties were acquired in light of their very close proximity and possible implications for the Junction 10 improvement works.
37. These properties were originally tenanted following their purchase, although all are now vacant to minimise any impacts upon Junction 10 Improvement works. The Borough Council has entered into an Option Agreement with Welborne Land Ltd. for them to purchase the properties.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

38. The subject matter of this Update report is decided under other statutory and/ or regulatory processes. The matters before the Executive now for consideration are not anticipated to have an impact on the Council's carbon footprint, nor is it expected to have a detrimental or beneficial impact to the wider environment.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

39. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

### **CONCLUSION**

40. Good progress is being made on the delivery of Welborne Garden Village on the ground. Infrastructure to support the first houses at Welborne has been permitted and is under construction. Planning permission has also been granted for more substantial elements of infrastructure which have not begun yet but will do so in the near future. It is anticipated that the Planning Committee will consider the first applications for houses very shortly.
41. The Strategic Design Code and Welborne Streets Manual have been approved and will ensure the delivery of high-quality design at Welborne. The Council and Master Developer have established Steering Groups to ensure that key aspects of Welborne are informed by thorough discussions with all relevant parties.
42. The actions taken by this Council to date, working closely with the Master Developer, ensure that Welborne will come forward as a well-planned and well-designed place

throughout its development.

**Background Papers:** None

**Reference Papers:** Fareham Corporate Strategy 2023-2029

The Welborne Plan 2015

Application documents listed on the Council's website

**Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Lee Smith, Head of Planning. (Tel: 01329 824427)

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# BUILDING WELBORNNE BEAUTIFUL

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2024 UPDATE

**FAREHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL





4	BUILDING WELBORNE BEAUTIFUL
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14	WELBORNE RAIL HALT
15	WELBORNE'S FIRST SCHOOL
16	UTILITIES
18	NEXT STEPS

## A WARM WELCOME FROM EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, COUNCILLOR SIMON MARTIN

The proposal that was to become Welborne Garden Village emerged over 20 years ago when Councillor Seán Woodward was in his early years as leader of the Council. Councillor Woodward wished to ensure that the majority of Fareham's new homes would be provided at scale in a single location, guaranteeing that all required community facilities such as schools, primary healthcare, playing fields and open spaces, employment, village centres and transport infrastructure would be fully funded and delivered alongside new homes of the highest quality.

Since then there has been an incredible amount of hard work and perseverance from various Executive Members and Council officers, working alongside many like-minded individuals and organisations, to make this vision a reality. I am therefore extremely pleased that we are progressing with this exciting development at pace, and I would like to thank the many individuals and organisations that have had a part in moving things forward.

2024 will be a momentous year for Welborne with the first new homes being built. In fact within the next year, we expect the first residents to have moved in!

New homes in Fareham are sorely needed, but Welborne will offer so much more than houses. This distinct community will provide around 6,000 additional employment opportunities for the Borough through its employment spaces, shops, schools, and other amenities. It will also be a place of beauty, like so much of Fareham, with an abundance of green spaces, gardens, parks and woodland incorporated into its design.

This publication demonstrates just how much work it has taken to get us this far, what's in store for the delivery of the first phase of the development and what to expect for the long-term future as these works progress.

It is an extremely long and complex process to build a whole garden village, and this is as it should be to ensure we get it right. After all, we are seeking to create a place that people will be happy to call home today, and in one hundred years' time. I have every faith in our Master Developer, Buckland Development Ltd, and am looking forward to seeing Welborne Garden Village take shape, both in the near future and in the years to come.

**Cllr Simon Martin**



WELBORNE GARDEN VILLAGE IS THE MOST AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT THAT FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL HAS EVER PLANNED.

# BUILDING WELBORNE BEAUTIFUL



THE COUNCIL BEGAN TO PROMOTE THE IDEA OF A DISTINCT NEW COMMUNITY NORTH OF FAREHAM TWO DECADES AGO, TO MEET THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR ESSENTIAL HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH. AS A RESULT, A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AREA FOR A MAJOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME OF 10,000 HOMES WAS INCLUDED IN THE SOUTH EAST PLAN IN MAY 2009.

The allocation of land for this new community finally came together in the Welborne Plan in 2015. The Council's vision was for a new community set apart from, but connected to Fareham, with up to 6,000 dwellings, rather than the 10,000 originally proposed. This would be supported by a host of amenities (all of this to be developed over a period of 20 years) such as:

- DISTRICT AND VILLAGE CENTRES
- RETAIL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES
- A PUBLIC HOUSE
- A HOTEL
- OVER 100,000M2 OF EMPLOYMENT SPACE
- HEALTH AND VETERINARY FACILITIES
- PRE-SCHOOLS, A SECONDARY SCHOOL AND THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS
- FORMAL AND INFORMAL OPEN AND AMENITY SPACES
- WOODLAND AREAS
- ALLOTMENTS
- WILDLIFE CORRIDORS
- A HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE
- A REMODELLED M27 J10, WORKS TO THE A32, CYCLEWAYS AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS AND ALL SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Following the acquisition of over 90% of the site by one of the existing landowners in September 2017, the Council has supported and worked alongside them, and the company that they appointed as Master Developer, the family-backed local company Buckland Development Ltd.

In 2017, the Government launched the Garden Communities Programme to champion and support ambitious councils who placed garden communities at the centre of their plans for housing and growth. Welborne was one of 14 new developments initially granted Garden Village status by the Government and has since become known as Welborne Garden Village. The programme has since expanded to 43 garden villages with the collective potential for the provision of hundreds of thousands of carefully planned new homes across the country with an emphasis on good design and sustainable living.

Buckland has significantly extended their professional team in order to move the development forward at pace and drive the high quality placemaking required to make Welborne an exemplar amongst the many new communities being developed nationally.

The Council's vision for Welborne Garden Village is now becoming a reality, with the outline planning application being approved in July 2021 and infrastructure works now underway on site in preparation for the first homes to be built.





THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING SERVICE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF WELBORNE SINCE THE WELBORNE PLAN WAS ADOPTED IN 2015. OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO, AROUND 30 PLANNING APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF WELBORNE. IT IS A COMPLICATED AND METICULOUSLY DETAILED PROCESS.

# PLANNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW GARDEN VILLAGE DOES NOT HAPPEN OVERNIGHT

Some of these applications are more visible than others, and significant applications that have been determined in the last year or so include the Knowle Road roundabout and a foul pumping station, a heat exchange energy centre, an electricity substation, and moving the existing pylons underground for the first phases of the Welborne development.

The Strategic Design Code for Welborne, which sets out the design principles that will shape the development of the entire Garden Village, together with the Welborne Streets Manual, which sets out the regulations that will govern the development of Welborne's street network were approved in January 2024.

These two documents will underpin the whole character and layout for Welborne, determining the design, look and feel of the development from the first house to the last. They help underpin the quality of the spaces that are to be created and give certainty to developers and the Council that these elements can be delivered.

Planning applications for a total of 474 homes at the Chesterfield and Dashwood neighbourhoods were submitted to the Council in August 2023 by regional Housebuilders and you can find out more about this in the following pages. These applications are currently under consideration and, if they are found to be aligned with the exacting design standards set out in the design codes, the building of the first homes should start in Spring 2024.

**You can find details of all planning applications relating to Welborne at [www.fareham.gov.uk/welborne](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/welborne)**



# CREATING BEAUTIFUL HOMES TO LIVE IN

WORK TO PREPARE THE AREA FOR THE FIRST HOMES AT WELBORNE STARTED IN 2023 AND THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGINEERING WORKS ARE WELL UNDERWAY.

Buckland Development Ltd has appointed three regional housebuilders: CG Fry & Son; Thakeham and Pye Homes; to build Welborne's first homes. Buckland then set up Joint Ventures with each of the housebuilders to be their 'build partners'.

Each of the three housebuilders has submitted planning applications for a total of 474 homes, which are now under consideration against policies in The Welborne Plan and set out in the outline planning application.

The homes are in the Dashwood and Chesterfield areas of Welborne and you can learn more about this first phase in the following pages.

A fourth application for the Village Centre, complete with a community hall, cafes, shops, pub and 71 homes is expected imminently, with a view to start construction in 2024, if approved.

All planning applications can be viewed at: [www.fareham.gov.uk/welborne](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/welborne), as they are received.



THE FIRST TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS TO BE DEVELOPED AT WELBORNE ARE CHESTERFIELD AND DASHWOOD.



# CHESTERFIELD AND DASHWOOD

## INCLUDED IN THIS FIRST PHASE

- UP TO 600 HOMES
- THE FIRST HALF OF THE VILLAGE CENTRE WITH LOCAL FACILITIES SUCH AS A COMMUNITY HALL, NURSERY, HEALTHCARE SERVICE, CAFÉ, SHOPS AND PUB
- NEW PARKS: WELBORNE PARK AND DASHWOOD PARK WITH OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES
- WIDER ACCESS TO DASHWOOD WITH A NEW 2.8KM CIRCULAR WOODLAND PATHS
- THE FIRST PRIMARY SCHOOL
- UPGRADE TO JUNCTION 10 OF THE M27
- BUS SERVICE BETWEEN WELBORNE AND FAREHAM

Chesterfield and the Village Centre will be an important destination within Welborne. Designed to draw direct inspiration from traditional Hampshire towns that have grown organically over time, the layout, landscape and built form will closely reflect local precedents such as Wickham and the historic parts of Fareham.

The Village Centre is a commercial centre set around a public square that will provide a place to shop, work and meet. Dashwood Avenue passes through the neighbourhood with residential streets leading off it. Chesterfield Primary School is also located within the neighbourhood.



Dashwood neighbourhood is at the north-western corner of Welborne on the rural fringe, taking its name and character influences from the existing mature woodland 'Dashwood'. Dashwood is a neighbourhood that is surrounded by woodland and parks, and benefits from views outwards to the backdrop of existing mature trees.

Welborne homes will all be sensitive to the surrounding area and villages and unashamedly traditional in their architecture. Homes will be beautiful, regardless of size, type or tenure and streets will be diverse, lively and pedestrian friendly.

The inclusion of ample, well-designed green spaces and trees to create a sense of place, increased bio-diversity and well-being is vitally important. That's why around 50% of Welborne will incorporate green space – from gardens and allotments to community orchards, woodland, formal parks and natural open space.

The design features also include an interconnected network of public footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways, green ways and 5km and 10km walking/running loops.

Buckland Development Ltd has been working with Hillier Garden specialists to select specific trees to be planted as part of this phase of the development. Wickham based Strategic Landscape Architect, Kim Wilkie, and Landscape Designer, Deacon Design, have guided the planting preparation and species selection towards native parkland trees. These will mature into legacy specimens for future generations to enjoy.

THE PLANNING LEGAL AGREEMENT FOR WELBORNE GARDEN VILLAGE REQUIRES SEVERAL STEERING GROUPS TO CONSIDER AND OVERSEE KEY ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND ENSURE THAT ALL INTERESTED PARTIES HAVE A REGULAR COLLABORATIVE DIALOGUE TO INFORM SOLUTIONS.

# KEEPING WELBORNE PART OF THE FAREHAM COMMUNITY

The Council's Welborne Community Forum, established in 2022, provides the opportunity for local authorities, the master developer, residents, neighbouring communities and other interested parties to engage regularly on the delivery of Welborne Garden Village. The Welborne Community Forum helps to raise awareness of the progress of the development within the wider community, build understanding and maintain trust. It also provides an opportunity for key interested parties to have a regular collaborative dialogue, tapping into local knowledge with a focus on generating solutions. The forum has been well supported and warmly welcomed and presentations and notes from the meetings are available on the Council's website.

Buckland will establish a Welborne Garden Village Trust (WGVT), a not for profit limited company, to ensure the long term stewardship of Welborne for the benefit of its residents. The Trust will coordinate the management and maintenance of Welborne's communal areas. The WGVT will be overseen by a board comprising representatives from Buckland, the Borough Council and County Council. The Trust is required to employ a Community Development Worker before any homes are occupied.

The Council's senior officers continue to meet the senior team at Buckland Development Ltd regularly to provide a strategic overview and address any problems that may arise.

Buckland hosted a successful public engagement event at their Dean Farm offices in February 2023 to showcase their approach to the design of the new development and their plans for the delivery of the first phase of homes, green space and the Village Centre. The information boards on display at the event can be viewed at [www.welborne.co.uk/information](http://www.welborne.co.uk/information)

They also hosted a visit from Secretary of State for Levelling UP, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Michael Gove in June 2023, accompanied by the Rt Hon Suella Braverman, MP and the Leaders of both Fareham Borough and Hampshire County Councils.





# INFRA

**INTEGRAL TO THE SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR WELBORNE GARDEN VILLAGE ARE THE IMPROVEMENTS WHICH ARE BEING PLANNED FOR JUNCTION 10 OF THE M27.**

Hampshire County Council agreed to become the delivery body for the M27 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme in July 2021, subject to all funding being in place and appointed Volker Fitzpatrick as their design and build contractor to deliver the scheme. Volker Fitzpatrick and their lead designer, Ramboll, have worked closely with the County Council and National Highways to finalise the design for the scheme.

Significant funding has already been secured from the Master Developer for Welborne and the Government, for the construction of the Junction 10 improvements. The cost is expected to be known shortly and will be subject to formal acceptance by both the County Council and Volker Fitzpatrick. Once the costs have been agreed and it is confirmed that all the required funding is in place, construction will commence.

The M27 Junction 10 currently has restricted access, only allowing partial movements for traffic westbound off and eastbound on. The proposed improvements involve the provision of a new motorway underpass to the west of the existing M27 Junction 10, three new slip roads and the construction of a new dual carriageway to link the new slip roads to the A32.

To help integrate the development to the wider area a dedicated Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) link and facilities for walking, cycling or using a mobility aid will be provided alongside the new link roads. This includes crossing points and a link through the underpass under the M27 to connect Welborne to the rest of Fareham, including key facilities such as the rail halt, schools, and the town centre.

It is essential that Junction 10 is upgraded to cater for the predicted new traffic movements which will be generated by Welborne. The upgraded Junction will help to ensure that the site will be well connected to the wider south coast strategic transport network to help attract business and investment into the area. Local residents will also benefit from the Junction 10 upgrade which aims to alleviate the congestion on local roads.

Infrastructure works to support the first phase of development are now underway with overnight road closures recently put in place to facilitate advanced clearance works. You can find more details at: [www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportchemes/m27junction10](http://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportchemes/m27junction10)

# STRUCTURE



# RAILWAY PLANS FOR WELBORNE STILL ON TRACK

**THE COUNCIL HAS ALWAYS RECOGNISED THE POTENTIAL AND SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS THAT A RAIL HALT COULD BRING TO WELBORNE GARDEN VILLAGE AS WELL AS THE WIDER LOCAL AREA. HOWEVER, THE FINAL DECISION DOES NOT SIT WITH THE COUNCIL.**

In 2017, a feasibility study was undertaken by Network Rail to identify the best location for a future rail halt. The objective is to provide Welborne residents with access to train services between Portsmouth and London Waterloo by developing a rail halt on the Fareham to Eastleigh line, also known as the Botley line.

An area at Welborne has been safeguarded for a potential rail halt and Network Rail were consulted on the outline planning application. They raised no objection and have pledged to continue to work with the Council to consider the possibility of a new rail halt at Welborne.

Following the feasibility study in 2017, Fareham Borough Council appointed SLC Rail in 2022 to deliver a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the proposed rail halt. The work was funded by the Government's Garden Communities Fund, and £65,000 was awarded to help progress plans.

SLC Rail has a solid track-record of delivering new railway infrastructure and the SOBC reviewed items such as potential costs, passenger demand, and the practicalities of introducing new services, as well as examining the wider social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposed scheme.

SLC Rail's findings were presented to stakeholders in 2023 and suggested that any rail halt built should initially use a single-track solution, with a platform constructed in such a way as to be easily moved out should a second track be required at a later date.

It was notable that their assessment of the cost of such a project was significantly lower than the estimated costs reported by the previous feasibility study. Best value for money would also be achieved if a rail halt was opened once all the homes at Welborne are built, given that the land safeguarded for the potential development will be among the final areas to have homes completed.

This SOBC will now be used as a first step towards engaging potential investment partners in the proposal.



# PROVIDING EDUCATION AND DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY

We know that schools accelerate a community like nothing else. New friendships are forged at the school gate as well as in class or on the sports field and local outreach programmes by schools into the community do wonders for both young and old.

That's why the schools at Welborne Garden Village are going to be built alongside the houses, rather than waiting until they are complete.

Welborne will have four new schools in total: three primary and one secondary, all of which will have abundant access to green spaces and playing fields.

Chesterfield Primary School will be the first of the three primary schools to be built and will cater for two forms of entry, providing 420 places. We are working with Hampshire County Council to deliver the school, which is currently expected to open for September 2027. This, however, does depend on the predicted pupil demand and remains subject to change.

By developing schools along with homes in this way, new communities will emerge, and new lifelong friendships will be born as more people move into their homes.





# WELBORNE'S LOW CARBON CREDENTIALS

WELBORNE IS BEING BUILT  
SUSTAINABLY AND TO LAST.

The delivery of a large-scale new community presents a unique opportunity to factor in key aspirations right from the outset. For example, Welborne is taking a nature-led design approach, with a focus on biodiversity and the creation or restoration of natural habitats from previously intensively farmed agricultural land.

Another such aspiration at Welborne, is to deliver low and zero carbon energy to both residents and businesses. In May 2021, Fareham Borough Council was awarded £36,850 funding from the Government's Heat Networks Delivery Unit towards producing a detailed study of low carbon heat network options at Welborne, in partnership with the Master Developer, Buckland Development Ltd.

The study compared the feasibility of two heat network options: a sitewide thermal network, and a cluster-based closed loop ambient network.

The study, which was completed in April 2022, concluded that a cluster-based ambient network would be the best solution as this technology emits 90% less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than a gas boiler and 50% less than air source heat pumps. It is also cheaper for residents and businesses, saving an average three-bedroom house around £160 per year compared with an air source heat pump.



This type of heat network not only offers the lowest carbon emissions, but can be built at the same rate as the housing development, and will not need to be future proofed for the entire development. At first it will provide heating and cooling to the first 700 of Welborne's new homes, commercial premises, and community buildings in the first phase of the development. As Welborne expands, it will be able to supply all 15,000 residents in 6,000 new homes with heat, hot water and cooling.

Buckland's energy strategy for each of Welborne's neighbourhoods, will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval before the relevant neighbourhood can be developed. This will include details such as energy efficiency through design and layout, the use of low or zero carbon technologies and innovative building methods for a specific proposed neighbourhood.

WELBORNE GARDEN VILLAGE HAS PASSED THROUGH MANY LAYERS OF CONSULTATION AND CONSIDERATION TO REACH THE POSITION WE ARE IN TODAY. REGULAR MEETINGS ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE CLEAR ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH ALL PARTIES THROUGHOUT THE DELIVERY OF THE GARDEN VILLAGE.

# NEXT STEPS

The journey towards creating the Garden Village has been long and has required a great deal of focus and work from all involved. All of this hard work means that the point has been reached at which the first homes will shortly be under construction.

The focus at all times has been on creating a desirable place for people of all ages to live, work, study and raise their families and to be truly proud of. Around 50% of the Welborne Garden Village will be green, whether through parkland and communal green space, woodland and ponds, or the circuit of broad pathways for walking and cycling.

The key design approaches to the Welborne Garden Village are set out in the Strategic Design Code and Welborne Streets Manual, approved in January 2024. Each house builder will develop their proposals following the agreed design approaches, to ensure that high quality design and a cohesive design approach are achieved throughout the Garden Village.

The infrastructure to support the first phase of house building is well under construction. The first three planning applications for housing, showing the design, location and finish of the proposed houses have been submitted to the Council. It is anticipated that these applications will be decided shortly, and construction of the houses will be underway through 2024.

Proposals for a new Village Centre, immediately adjacent to the first phase of house building, will be submitted to the Council shortly. This will ensure that facilities are provided to meet the needs of the first residents and that from the outset new residents will have a clear focal point for their new community.







# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Planning and Development
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Environment Update</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Respond to Climate Change and Protect the Environment

**Purpose:**

To present to the Executive the full range of work that the Council has undertaken in recent years to protect and enhance the environment of the Borough, and to seek approval to prepare an Environment Strategy which will provide a co-ordinated programme of environmental work going forward.

**Executive summary:**

Improving our environment is a key priority for Fareham Borough Council. In 2019 the Council committed to becoming carbon neutral in its operations by 2030. To achieve this a Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) was put in place. The CCAP focuses mainly on carbon reduction to help mitigate climate change. However, there are many elements other than carbon reduction which have an environmental impact.

The report also highlights the other project areas that the Council works on which have also helped to protect and enhance the environment.

A Fareham's Greener Future document (Appendix A) is attached to this report and contains information in a magazine style format on the different projects that the Council has undertaken over the past few years that have had a positive environmental impact.

The report then goes on to set out the need for an Environment Strategy which will bring the different environmental elements together to formulate one cohesive strategy. The strategy will guide decision making going forward and ensure the Council continues to protect and enhance Fareham's environment.

Once this report has been considered by the Executive, the 'Fareham's Greener Future' publication will be shared in late March. Social media and local media opportunities will also be used to raise awareness of the progress achieved and next steps on environmental matters.

The report will be presented to the 14 March Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel for pre-scrutiny. Comments from the Panel will be presented to the Executive.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) approves the preparation of an Environment Strategy to guide decision making and priority projects going forward; and
- (b) requests that Officers undertake a range of actions to publicise the 'Fareham's Greener Future' publication which sets out the delivery progress and next steps.

**Reason:**

To enable residents to see the work the Council has been doing on protecting and enhancing the environment and to enable the Council to guide decision making going forward.

**Cost of proposals:**

The costs of the Fareham's Greener Future document (Appendix A) have been met within existing budgets.

**Appendices:**                    **A: Fareham's Greener Future**

**Background papers:**   **None**

**Reference papers:**        **Corporate Strategy 2023-2029**  
   **Climate Change Action Plan (June 2021)**



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Environment Update
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Planning and Development

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Improving our environment is a key corporate priority for Fareham Borough Council. This report first sets out the work that has been taking place focused on reducing our carbon footprint as part of our Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP).
2. However, 'environment' incorporates much more than just carbon management and reduction, so this report brings together all the different strands of work the Council delivers that have had a positive impact on the environment. It sets out a position where the Council will look to formulate an Environment Strategy which will incorporate these strands into one cohesive strategy.

#### Climate Change Action Plan

3. At the 26 September 2019 Executive meeting the Leader pledged a commitment for the Council to be carbon neutral in its operations by 2030. To achieve this a CCAP was formulated and approved at the June 2021 Executive meeting.
4. Since declaring our commitment to carbon neutrality, the Council has undertaken several projects which have helped see the operational carbon footprint of the Council reduce from 1,926 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019/20 to 1,505 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022/23 which is a 22% decrease.
5. Carbon reduction is focused on mitigating climate change which in turn has environmental benefits. However, there are also other strands of work which the Council undertakes which also have environmental benefits but through different means than carbon reduction.

#### Further Environment Projects

6. Alongside carbon reduction there are a further five key areas that the Councils' work impacts which have a positive effect on the environment. These are:

**Sustainable Development:** Mitigating and managing the impact of the development throughout the Borough is an essential part of protecting our environment and is at the

core of Planning Service delivery. However, notably Fareham Housing also has a key role in ensuring development is both sustainable in design and also in how it interacts and impacts the wider environment. These are projects such as our new sheltered housing schemes which are being developed with sustainability as a one of the main priorities. For example, the new Assheton Court development in Portchester will have two communal air source heat pumps to provide heating and hot water.

**Land Stewardship:** These are projects focused on protecting our green spaces and enhancing biodiversity in the Borough. For example, the Abbey Meadows site in Titchfield which opened in 2021 comprises of wildflower meadows, and an active apiary (beehive area). These all help improve biodiversity in the area.

**Air Quality:** Air pollution effects both human health and the natural environment. Therefore, the Council monitors certain sites for high levels of pollution and takes action to reduce levels when necessary.

**Coastal Management:** Fareham Borough Council's coastal management service, delivered through Coastal Partners, have several projects in place that both protect and enhance our coastlines.

**Waste and Recycling:** There are several projects focused on reducing the impact waste has on the environment. For example, the Council's Garden Waste service has increased the amount of waste that goes to compost.

7. Following the structure set out above, Appendix A to this report provides readers with a cohesive magazine style document that provides information on all the projects that the Council has undertaken over the past few years that have had a positive environmental impact on the Borough.

### **Environment Strategy**

8. As can be seen in Appendix A to this report, the Council has put a huge amount of work into preserving and improving our environment over the years and we will look to continue this focus going forward.
9. Therefore, the next step is to create a formal Environment Strategy which will guide us in all our decision making to continue to protect and enhance Fareham's environments for future generations. The strategy will bring together all the different environmental elements into one cohesive strategy.

### **Environmental Considerations**

10. The main environmental considerations associated with this report are to do with the production of the magazine in Appendix A to this report. To mitigate any potential impacts, hard copies will only be printed when necessary.

### **Financial Considerations**

11. The costs associated with this report can be met within existing budgets.

### **Conclusion**

12. This report sets out the work the Council has done to protect and enhance the Borough's environment and how it plans to continue to do so with the formation of an Environment Strategy.

**Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Alex Jolley (01329 824470)



# Fareham's Greener Future





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## A warm welcome from Executive Member for Planning and Development, Councillor Simon Martin.

Improving our environment is something that Fareham Borough Council takes very seriously. After all, the vast majority of our staff are also residents of Fareham and want it to be the best that it can be.

We have already committed to becoming carbon neutral across all our buildings and services by 2030, but 'environment' incorporates so much more than carbon reduction.

A huge amount of work and effort goes into preserving and improving our lived-in environment and this ethos underpins many of the projects we undertake. Whether that be the management and upkeep of our many green and open spaces, the preservation and expansion of our habitats, or how we go about building and improving our homes, environmental matters are always carefully considered.

“  
the Council is working hard to ensure that Fareham is a place we can all be proud of

The next step is to create a formal Environment Strategy which will guide us in all our decision making to continue to protect and enhance Fareham's environments for future generations.

In the meantime, this publication has been designed to highlight the considerable work that has been put into our

environment in recent years and just some of the achievements we have made to date.

Of course, we need the help and support of all Fareham residents to do their bit for our environment but, as you can see, the Council is working hard to ensure that Fareham is a place we can all be proud of both today and long into the future.



# Carbon Reduction



Fareham Borough Council has committed to being carbon neutral in its operations by 2030. This is an ambitious target, but we are proud of the progress we have made in reducing our carbon emissions so far. Many projects have been implemented to reduce the Council's own carbon emissions as well as helping our wider community with education and support.

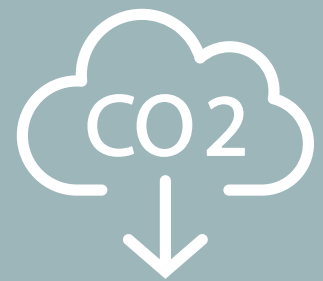
## Delivery of our services

In February 2022, we converted our garden waste collection vehicles to operate using a biofuel, hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) instead of diesel. Following the success of the trial, we also converted our small diesel vehicles to operate using HVO.

Diesel is a significant contributor to the Council's carbon emissions with fleet fuel contributing over 47% of our direct emissions in 2022/23. HVO produces

significantly less carbon than diesel and continuing to run the garden waste and small vehicles on HVO in 2022/23 reduced the Council's annual carbon footprint by approximately 299 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent).

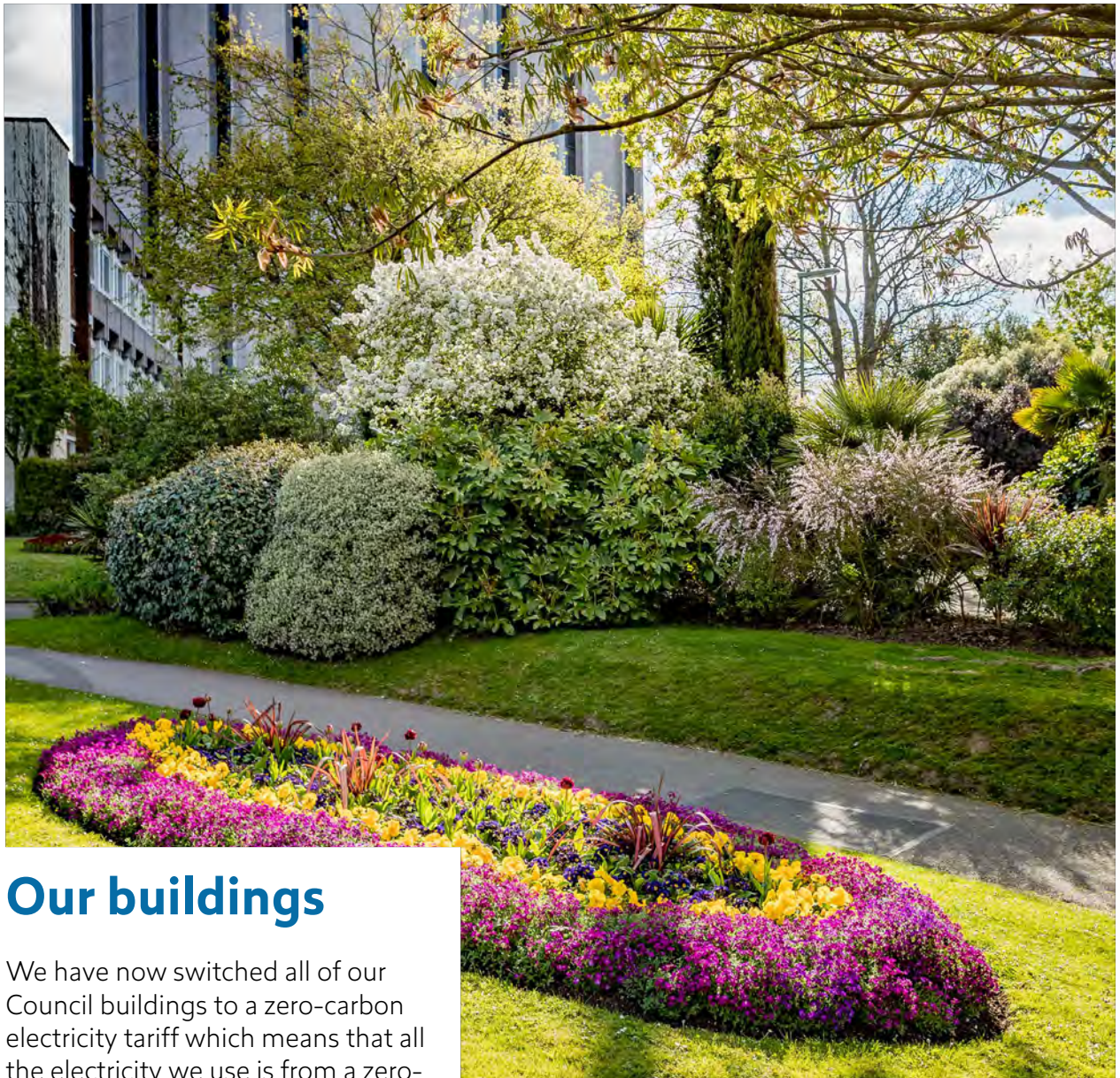
We have approved a rolling vehicle replacement



HVO use in 2022/23 **reduced** the Council's carbon footprint by approx **299 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**

programme for the Council's vehicle fleet over the next five years. As part of the programme the Council will look to procure 15 electric vans and one electric small Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV). To accommodate these, we will look to install a number of electric vehicle charging points at our Depot site as well as explore the feasibility of distributing some of these at strategic sites across the Borough.





## Our buildings

We have now switched all of our Council buildings to a zero-carbon electricity tariff which means that all the electricity we use is from a zero-carbon source.

We also launched a staff campaign, 'Small Change Big Difference', which focused on getting employees to think laterally about climate change and how small changes in our individual behaviour can collectively make a big difference.

Some of the changes have focused on turning devices off at the end of the day and using the stairs where possible. This has contributed to a 9.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction in electricity emissions in our Civic Offices. We also used less gas in the Civic Offices compared to previous years.

Implementing these measures as well as others outlined in this document have contributed to the Council's operational carbon footprint of 1505 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022/23. This is 421 tCO<sub>2</sub>e less than 2019/20, and represents a 22% reduction.

The redevelopment of the Osborn Road Multi Storey car park into a surface car park will see the electricity emissions of the site reduce by an estimated 54 tCO<sub>2</sub>e each year.

During 2023 the Council put together a funding bid asking for £1,498,665 from Sport England's Swimming Pool Fund. The funding is for each of the Councils' Leisure Centres and consists of several carbon reduction measures including rooftop solar panels at both sites. The outcome of the bid will be determined in Spring 2024.



## Solent Airport

In 2022/23 the airport's mower ran on HVO with this rollout being expanded to the airside vehicles in 2024, meaning that all operational vehicles will use HVO going forward. This will reduce the airport's carbon footprint by around 16 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.

We have worked closely with our airport operator to develop a carbon reduction plan for the airport. The plan sets out potential projects that could be undertaken to reduce the airport's carbon footprint.

One project that has been implemented is a staff engagement plan which focuses on reducing the control tower's emissions through simple measures such as turning off lights and computers when not in use.



## Supporting residents

The Council has successfully implemented a total of 177 energy efficiency improvements to 159 properties in our housing stock to date. Funded in part by a government scheme, the measures focused on solar panels, loft insulation, and upgrading electric storage heaters, helping to improve the comfort and reduce energy bills of Council tenants.

The Council started working with a number of other councils as part of the Warmer Homes consortium in 2022/23. The scheme provides free energy saving measures to low-income households with poor performing homes. The scheme has been delivered to 109 private low-income households so far, with energy saving measures worth nearly £450,000.

We have continued to work with the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) who offer low income and vulnerable residents free energy and debt advice alongside a range of measures such as free small energy saving devices and funding for insulation.

We have also delivered the Solar Together scheme for a number of years now, alongside Hampshire County Council and iChooser. This innovative programme has provided cleaner, greener and more sustainable power for over 200 Fareham residents so far, by offering high-quality solar panels and battery storage through a group-buying scheme, to ensure the most competitive prices.



## Supporting community locations

In May 2022, £30,000 of funding was allocated to carbon reduction measures across the Council's community centres. The measures installed range from small energy saving products such as LED lightbulbs, radiator reflectors and water tanks, to larger measures such as replacing old energy inefficient appliances. Titchfield Village Trust were also successful in a bid to our Community Fund for the installation of solar panels on the Titchfield Parish Room new roof.

We have also joined The Solent Cluster – the first major decarbonisation initiative to substantially reduce CO2 emissions from industry, transport and households across the Solent and southern England.

## Supporting Local Business

We are using funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and partnering with industry experts to support local businesses to calculate their carbon footprints and put in place plans for carbon reduction.

The Council has created a dedicated webpage [www.fareham.gov.uk/climatechange](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/climatechange), which includes business, community and resident-specific areas with a range of information and advice as well as helpful resources and toolkits. There is also a carbon footprint calculator so you can see what your current footprint is and how you can reduce it. There is further information about community initiatives throughout this publication.





# Supporting Sustainable Development

## Housing

With around a quarter of the UK's carbon emissions coming from our homes, Fareham Housing, the housing team at Fareham Borough Council, is actively working on both retrofitting improvements and ensuring that new homes are energy efficient. In line with the Fareham Housing Greener Policy (2019) and new Building Regulations, all new developments undergo an appraisal to ensure implementation of the most suitable energy efficient measures, both now and in the future. This may include solar panels and/or Air Source Heat Pumps and electric vehicle (EV) charging points.

These actions help mitigate the effects of climate change, assist in keeping energy costs low for our tenants and combat fuel poverty.

You can find information at [www.fareham.gov.uk/housing](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/housing)





### **Assheton Court, Portchester**

In January 2023, Fareham Housing secured planning permission for a new purpose-built, 60-bed affordable housing development for the over 55s. As well as providing much needed affordable housing specifically for older people, the new development will deliver high levels of energy efficiency to help mitigate climate change and the impact of soaring fuel prices.

### **Queens Road, Fareham**

Fareham Housing secured planning permission to redevelop this site by delivering two three-bedroom homes. Work on the site started in June 2022 and the homes were completed in May 2023. The homes incorporated solar panels and air source heat pumps to provide heating and hot water.

### **Capella Close, Hill Head**

Fareham Housing delivered 11 new affordable, shared ownership homes in March 2023. The installation of solar panels on each home has made the homes more energy efficient, with the aim of reducing bills for residents.

### **Oak Tree Close, Sarisbury Green**

Fareham Housing delivered five family homes on this site in July 2020, including solar panels on each property.

## **Retrofitting**

The Council is part way through a project at Fort Fareham Housing Estate, which takes a whole house approach to address both thermal and structural deficiencies in the houses. Two homes were completed in December 2023 with works on a third started. The remaining properties will be complete by the end of 2024/25.

Work has started in the Bishopsfield Road area to improve the thermal efficiency of poorly insulated fly-over flats. This includes replacing the existing insulation on the front, rear and underside with a more effective product, and new windows. One block has now been completed and the programme will continue over 2024/25.

Additionally, the design and operation of the heating system at Sylvan Court has been improved. The original install required mechanical changes for how the water flows around the building in order to run the system more efficiently. The upgrades allow it to reduce the flow temperature and use of gas, all without the residents losing any heat.

Looking forward, the Planned Maintenance team are also in the inception stages of a number of projects to improve energy efficiency. These include upgrading cavity wall insulation and replacing windows and doors in blocks of flats throughout the Borough. The programme of replacements will start in the new financial year.

As part of a wider work with Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), we have applied for funding to deliver water efficiency measures in our existing housing stock. Where wastewater treatment works have a permit limit, the reduction in water use has an associated reduction in nutrient pollution. This will allow us to use the reduction in nutrient pollution as mitigation to support Council-led affordable homes programmes. Additionally, this project has benefits in terms of water resource management and lower water bills for residents where they are metered.

This will be delivered in 2024/25.



## Welborne Garden Village

Welborne Garden Village is the most ambitious development that Fareham Borough Council has ever planned. Welborne will be a sustainable garden village with a community of 15,000 people. Taking a nature-led design approach, Welborne will have a focus on biodiversity and the creation or restoration of natural habitats from previously intensively farmed agricultural land.

One of the main aspirations is to deliver low and zero carbon energy to both residents, and businesses. In May 2021, Fareham Borough Council was awarded £36,850 funding from the Government’s Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) towards the production of a detailed techno-economic feasibility study of low

carbon heat network options at Welborne in partnership with Buckland Development.

This resulted in a carbon ambient heat network solution to initially provide heating and cooling to the first 700 of Welborne’s new homes, and community buildings in the first phase of the development. As Welborne expands, it is planned that the network will supply all 15,000 residents in 6,000 new homes with heat, hot water and cooling. The technology emits 90% less CO2 emissions than a gas boiler and 50% less than air source heat pumps. It is also cheaper for residents and businesses, saving an average three-bedroom house around £160 per year compared with an air source heat pump.

## Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a new mandatory

requirement for new development to increase biodiversity and ensure that post completion, the habitat for wildlife is at least 10% better than it was before development. While this improvement should be delivered on site, we know this can’t always be achieved and off-site solutions are also needed.

In July 2023 our Executive agreed to the principle of using Council land for the creation of biodiverse habitats off site for both private developers and to support Council led schemes. We have been working closely with an ecologist from Hampshire County Council to consider Council sites which may be suitable to support BNG projects.

## Nutrient Neutrality

When nutrients, such as phosphates and nitrates, enter into waterways they can reduce the quality of



water, harm wildlife and cause excess algae growth.

In 2019 Natural England introduced guidance requiring nutrient neutrality as a requirement for all overnight accommodation (new homes and visitor accommodation) in the Solent. This was because increased levels of nutrients in the Solent has a significant impact on the feeding habitats of internationally important bird species.

As a result, all applications for new housing within the Borough, as well as 74 other planning authorities across the country, must either be nutrient neutral or mitigate the impact by reducing nutrients elsewhere in the same catchment area.

Understanding the opportunities, for both the environment and for sustainable growth, that nutrient neutrality requirements provided, Fareham Borough Council has been at the forefront of delivering effective solutions. In fact this Council, alongside the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, developed the first cross boundary mitigation solution in the country. Fareham Borough Council has gone on to support this valuable mitigation market by allowing developers to access multiple mitigation schemes across the catchment area. In total, these schemes have both significantly contributed to reduced nitrogen

entering our coastal areas as well as providing much needed sustainable growth.

As well as the ground-breaking work undertaken specifically by Fareham Borough Council, the Council also works with PfSH on mitigation schemes across the catchment area, and hosts a Strategic Environmental Planning Team who work across the entirety of south Hampshire on environmental issues. This team has facilitated a nutrient mitigation market across south Hampshire. In total, these schemes have removed over 23,000kg of nitrogen out of our water system, and mitigated development of over 10,000 new homes.

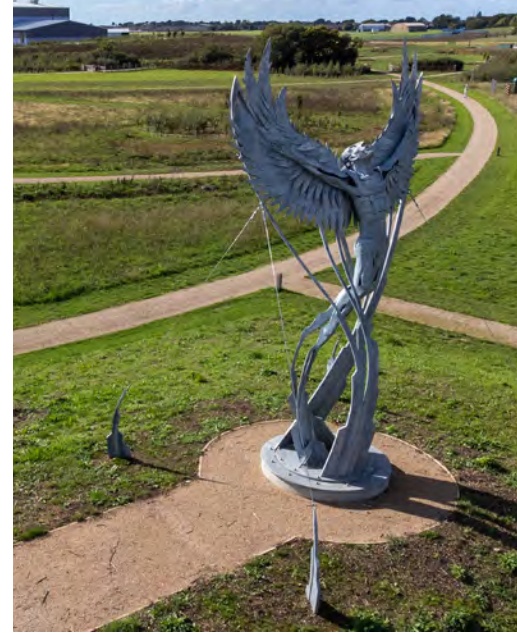
## New Forest Recreation Impact

The New Forest is one of Europe's most important locations for nature and conservation. Its unique mix of landscapes including ancient woodlands, wetlands and bogs, and open heathlands means it is home to many rare species of plants and wildlife long since lost from the rest of the UK and Europe. As new development takes place, more and more people are visiting the New Forest, which is placing greater pressure on protected wildlife sites there.

The Council is working closely with New Forest Council and the New Forest Park Authority to mitigate the impact of new homes in Fareham on the New Forest.

There is currently approximately £150,000 available from new developments to help pay for the improvement and creation of more greenspaces in Fareham to act as alternatives to a visit to the New Forest. Our Open Spaces team are working to develop projects to deliver over 2024/25.





# Land Stewardship

**Fareham Borough Council manages a wide range of open spaces, forest and woodlands, parks and gardens. We are committed to the creation and enhancement of habitat rich, well-maintained and beautiful spaces for all our residents to enjoy as well as supporting the wider natural environment.**

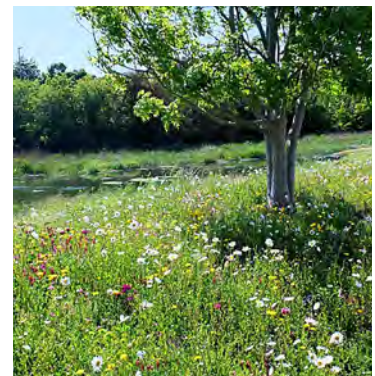
This approach makes us more resilient to a changing climate, increases biodiversity and it demonstrates how smaller incremental changes in approach can have a significant and ongoing impact.

## Planting and re-wilding

In past years the Council planted extensive seasonal floral displays at key sites and locations across the Borough. Over the past three years however, the Council has changed our approach to seasonal displays. We now design these schemes to provide more sustainable annual and perennial

meadows alongside other perennial planting schemes to roadsides, on roundabouts and within cemeteries to assist the Council to balance the effects of climate change.

We currently have five roundabouts that feature annual wildflowers and another two roundabouts that feature pollinator friendly perennial planting. There are also some verge areas with wildflowers, all of which is beneficial to wildlife using both nectar and pollen rich cultivars. This planting mix also



removes the need for ongoing watering and the unnecessary use of a precious resource.

The Council has also been trialling the reduction of grass cutting in selected areas to see what wildflowers establish with a view to supporting and increasing biodiversity.

We no longer use peat in our landscaping and gardening works as harvesting peat releases huge amounts of stored carbon dioxide. Additionally, peat contains little to no nutrients and growing in peat-based mixes requires the use of fertilisers to keep plants healthy.



## Anson Grove

We have undertaken a re-wilding project in Anson Grove open space to help restore a 900 square-metre area of chalk grassland. Funding was granted from Portsmouth Water and the work was completed using a local contractor and members of the Fareham Conservation Volunteers. The site was cleared of invasive species and a mixture of grasses and wildflower seeds were sown to support an increasing level of species diversity on an already rich site.



## Abbey Meadows

The Council officially opened Abbey Meadows in Titchfield to the public in 2021. It comprises around 20 hectares of land including footpaths, wildflower meadows, dog-walking areas, educational wildlife areas and an active apiary (beehive area). Served by a central footpath, Abbey Meadows offers a tranquil place to visit within Fareham and forms a key part of the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area.

Since taking over the site in 2018, the Council has been working to establish new meadows filled with wildflowers and plants. There are also future plans to create a new community orchard as well as planting native trees to help grow and support local wildlife.

The Council has also planted two copses of 180 trees at Abbey Meadows to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee. The Queen's Copse and the Platinum Copse were planted in 2023 and were specially created to provide secluded and protected wildlife habitats to encourage biodiversity in the area.

## Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Park

The 16 hectare Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Park was opened to the public in 2023. Featuring a network of accessible paths and cycle routes, a dog exercise area and various habitats, around 21,000 trees have already been planted and tree and shrub planting will continue as the seasons allow to further enhance the park.

The mix of planting was carefully considered to be attractive to wildlife and create biodiverse habitats with ongoing management minimising impacts to the adjacent airport at Daedalus.

## Trees

Trees contribute to our environment in many ways; they improve the quality of the air removing dust particles and harmful gas emissions such as carbon dioxide. Trees in urban areas help to reduce the heat island effect, reduce soil erosion and flash flooding by slowing down and capturing fast flowing water. In addition, our

trees help to improve biodiversity and provide landscape character whilst also adding a sense of place to our town centre, neighbourhoods and parks. These benefits all help to improve our health and wellbeing and in turn improve the quality of life for those who live and work in Fareham.

The Council is responsible for between 210,000 to 220,000 trees on more than 870 hectares of public open space, woodlands, including ancient woodlands and housing areas. Over 22,000 of these trees located in parks, frequently used open spaces, cemeteries and adjacent to houses are inspected regularly as part of the Council's proactive tree safety inspection programme.

The Council has an annual tree planting programme, which focuses on replacing mature trees that have had to be removed due to disease or for safety reasons.



## Community Involvement

The Council has worked with Gosport and Fareham Friends of the Earth to install a new wildlife meadow at Fareham Cemetery and more recently a new bog garden has been planted at the Park Lane Leisure Centre site. The garden was designed by the group and they also assisted in the planting.

We also worked with the Wallington Village Community Association to install a wildflower meadow by the banks of the Wallington River.

In 2023 the Council's Tree Team worked with the Hampshire Forest Partnership, The Tree Council and a proactive local community group to plant over 500 native trees and shrubs on the open space next to Porchester Castle.

The project took place in two phases with community planting days in February and October to plant native tree and shrub species, in informal groups, around the north and east margins of the open space at Castle Street. The areas were formerly short mown amenity grass, which will be managed less intensively to enable wild grasses and flowers to thrive with the groups of trees and shrubs planted within them. The new planting connects with the existing naturalised vegetation along the bank of the sea defence and drainage ditch. This project will improve the quality of the open space for local people, increase biodiversity and ecology benefits; and as a consequence, capture and store carbon in the long term and improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Our Countryside Team works very closely with a wide range of volunteers including community groups, private landowners such as farmers, local companies, schools and individuals to help manage and maintain our wildlife habitats. This includes invasive species removal, installing dead hedging and pond management.



# Coastal Management

**The Borough’s coastline has a diverse range of landscapes and seascapes, including estuaries, salt marshes, soft cliffs and shingle beaches. It is defended along much of its length, reflecting the substantial urban population living within the coastal zone.**

Fareham Borough Council’s coastal management service, Coastal Partners, is responsible for managing coastal flood and erosion and is in the process of conducting a number of projects including:

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## Coastal Management Study at Hook Lake

In 2021 Hook Lake was chosen as an area to investigate the feasibility of creating new intertidal (coastal) habitat. The creation of new compensatory habitat is a legal requirement to offset the losses experienced across the wider Solent as a result of sea level rise and more frequent storm events. This new habitat must be reinstated at a number of suitable sites to enable future coastal defence schemes in the area to progress.

Coastal Partners has worked in partnership with Hampshire County Council, who own and manage Hook Lake, the Environment Agency and other key stakeholders to undertake the Hook Lake Coastal Management Study. This study, which was funded by Defra Grant-in-Aid, will be concluding in spring 2024.



# Launch of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Studies



Coastal Partners has secured funding from the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Fareham Borough Council to assess and develop long-term coastal management options at Fareham Quay and at Alton Grove to Cadour Drive.

At both sites, sections of the sea wall are in very poor condition and reaching the end of their serviceable life. If no coastal defences were in place, 49 properties across both areas would be at flood risk from an extreme tidal event. This increases to 400 properties at risk during a similar event in 100 years' time.

Further to this, both sites contain areas of former landfill and continued erosion of defences in these locations could potentially pollute the environmentally important Portsmouth Harbour.

Given the high costs associated with ongoing maintenance and repairs of current defences, a more sustainable, longer-term solution is required.

The Fareham Quay and Alton Grove to Cadour Drive Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) studies were launched in October 2022 and will take approximately two years to complete. The projects will also actively explore opportunities to integrate wider Council initiatives to improve the public realm, amenity, recreation and access, and, where possible, enhance community health and wellbeing.

The project team will identify, appraise and cost options for coastal management, investigate potential funding sources for delivering schemes and develop outline designs for each location.

For more information about Coastal Partners, please visit <https://coastalpartners.org.uk>



# A safe haven for birds

The Solent is internationally important for its wildlife. Each winter, it hosts over 90,000 waders and wildfowl including 10% of the global population of dark-bellied Brent geese. A number of Special Protection Areas have been designated across the Solent to protect these birds and the habitats that support them.

Bird Aware Solent is a partnership of authorities, including Fareham Borough Council, funded by fees paid by developers of new housing and overseen by the Partnership for South Hampshire. The partnership seeks to mitigate potential impacts from increased local housing development near the Solent coast. It also raises awareness on the importance of the Solent for overwintering birds and tries to reduce the amount of disturbance caused by recreation through a team of dedicated rangers.

We have used the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy since March 2018 for all new residential development within 5.6km of the Special Protection Areas.

In the past three years, nearly £500,000 has been secured from qualifying development in Fareham and used to fund a range of projects. Hill Head beach is one such important place for protected birds including dunlin, sanderling and brent geese, which migrate here from as far as Siberia to feed and roost on the rich sand and mud flats. They need to be able to feed and rest without being disturbed in order to survive the winter and return to their summer breeding grounds.

In recent years, birds have frequently been disturbed on this part of the beach, with over 80% being related to a dog's presence or behaviour. Following a public consultation in 2023, Fareham Borough Council introduced an additional seasonal dog exclusion zone at Hill Head to safeguard protected birds. The new protected zone will create a safe haven for migrating birds at the western end

of the beach, between October and March each year.

Fareham Borough Council has also purchased a site at Mill Lane to provide compensatory habitat for wintering birds, primarily Brent Geese, following a partial habitat loss at Solent Airport.

The Mill Lane site is part of a string of floodplain grassland sites along the river and is immediately adjacent to similar habitats to the East of the Meon at Abbey Farm.

The provision of suitable habitat in this location constitutes a significant enhancement of the habitat network. The site is now being managed to create suitable foraging habitat for overwintering waders and wildfowl and to provide additional biodiversity benefits for many other species.

# Air Quality

The air you breathe can impact on your health and wellbeing. We currently monitor over 40 sites across the Borough and it is reassuring to know that since we began measuring, air pollution levels have continued to decline across Fareham.

Through our monitoring we highlighted two areas; Gosport Road at the junction with Newgate Lane and Redlands Lane; and Portland Street, by Market Quay car park that were exceeding the Air Quality Standards set by the government for levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). A major factor was the high number and type of vehicles travelling in and out of the Gosport peninsula each day.

These locations were designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). To tackle the closely connected spots, an Air Quality Action Plan was put into place in 2008. This contained a range of measures such as improving public transport and encouraging cycling.

In 2018, we worked in partnership with Hampshire County Council and secured £500,000 of Government



funding to implement measures such as providing real time information at bus stops.

With NO<sub>2</sub> levels within both the Gosport Road and Portland Street AQMAs being consistently below the Air Quality Standards, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) instructed the Council to revoke both AQMAs and these are now no longer in place.

There are still some areas of elevated air pollution within the Borough however, the stretch of road from the A27 by the Delme roundabout, down to the Quay Street roundabout, part of Gosport Road and along the A27 is the main location. We are continuing to monitor these locations and are

reporting to DEFRA on an annual basis. We do anticipate that these areas will soon be below the Air Quality Standards also.

## Future Generations

We are aware of the transboundary nature of air pollution and of the difficulties that solving this issue present us. Hopefully soon, all locations will be compliant with Air Quality Standards. We will continue to monitor across the Borough and will be focusing our efforts to reduce other air pollutants such as particulate matter.

Find out more about air quality in Fareham and what you can do to help at [www.fareham.gov.uk/airquality](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/airquality)





# Waste and recycling

**The Council collects around 35,508 tonnes of household waste, recycling and garden waste, filling around three million bins each year! The good news is that very little is sent to landfill.**

## Recycling

Our current recycling and composting rate is around 35% a year.

All of the recyclable materials from Fareham's kerbside collections (cans, plastic bottles, paper, card, tins and empty aerosols) are sent to one of two Material Recovery Facilities in the county, in Portsmouth and Alton.

The materials are separated before being baled up and sent to private companies for recycling into new products.

## General Waste

The Council not only collect all of your household bins, but all of the waste from litter and dog bins too – all 627 of them. Around 686 tonnes of waste is collected from our litter bins and through litter picking of streets, parks, seafronts and open spaces each year – that's like 98 elephants or 381 average cars!

Most of the non-recyclable waste we collect is taken to one of three Energy Recovery Facilities located in Marchwood, Chineham and Portsmouth. These facilities safely incinerate the waste and use the heat from this process to create steam, in turn generating electricity which is fed to the National Grid.



## Garden Waste

All of the waste disposed of as part of our Clip and Collect garden waste subscription service is taken to one of two composting sites: Herriard near Basingstoke and Chilbolton near Stockbridge. The finished product is 'Pro-Grow', a high quality soil conditioner that is available to buy at every recycling centre.

Residents also have the option to compost garden and food waste at home, and information about the introduction of weekly food waste collections can be found on page 23.



## Fly-tipping

The Council is also responsible for the removal of illegal fly-tipping. The total cost of the removal of litter and fly tipping each year is over a million pounds.

In 2020, an expanded Parking Enforcement Team took on environmental enforcement duties such as littering, dog fouling and control, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO). This approach offers greater flexibility and resilience to deal with fly-tippers, encampments, dog fouling, drug paraphernalia etc.

## What can you do to help?

Recycling and waste reduction is not just the Council's responsibility - everyone has a role to play. Fareham Borough Council has a dedicated webpage where you can find a range of tools and guidance to help you.

Head to **[www.fareham.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling)**





# Next steps

As you can see, we have done some great work so far to help protect the Borough's wider environment. A major next step will be to create a comprehensive strategy to pull together all of these strands and to create a forward working plan. An Environment Strategy will guide us in all our decision making when it comes to future development and will serve to continue to protect and enhance Fareham's environments for future generations.



## Upcoming projects:

One of the most important projects over the next 12-months will be developing timelines for reducing our emissions. This will include the costs involved in achieving our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. Also on the agenda are:

### Reducing vehicle emissions

We will continue to use HVO in part of our fleet as a low emission fuel. However, due to the relatively high cost of the fuel, we are not able to roll out

HVO across the whole fleet. We will, however, continue to introduce more electric vehicles, together with the supporting infrastructure required. We will also roll out electric vehicle charging provision at key locations across the Borough.

### Decarbonising our buildings

Our buildings such as the Civic Offices and Depot represent a significant proportion of our emissions. Therefore, in 2024/25 we plan to apply for Government funding to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings.

The new Fareham Live development will use four Air Source Heat Pumps to provide heating and ventilation, and solar panels on the roof of the Flytower. The new surface car park will also have four electric vehicle charge points installed with the capability to increase the number if needed.



## Generating renewable energy

A feasibility study and detailed business case is being developed for a Solar Farm on Council owned land. The site has significant generation potential and could generate more electricity than the Council currently consumes in its operations. While this would help reduce our carbon footprint, particularly over the short term, it would also generate much needed income.

Alongside the Solar Farm project, we are continuing to explore other options for generating our own renewable electricity such as:

- Assess the potential of other Council controlled sites for renewable generation.
- Continue with solar energy schemes on existing Council buildings and new capital projects.



## Climate Adaptation

Since approving our Climate Change Action Plan in 2021 we have completed several climate adaptation projects to ensure that the Borough can respond to climate change. We will continue to identify and undertake climate adaptation projects going forward. For example, we will look to:

- Install a bog garden at Park Lane in partnership with Friends of the Earth to increase biodiversity in the area.
- Identify Biodiversity Net Gain projects within the Borough.
- Review our Local Level Strategic Flood Risk Assessments.

## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Fareham officers, alongside ecologists from Hampshire County Council, will be working jointly using existing Council land to create and enhance habitats which can then be used as BNG units to support both local developers and our own housing and commercial development programmes.



## Continuation of upgrades to our housing stock

Our Planned Maintenance team are in the inception stages of a number of projects to improve energy efficiency in our housing stock. These include upgrading cavity wall insulation and replacing windows and doors in blocks of flats throughout the Borough. The programme of replacements will start in the 2024/25 financial year.

## Nutrient Neutrality

The Council, as part of PfSH, will work with the Strategic Environmental Planning Team to deliver grant funded projects of approximately £9m to develop and provide nutrient solutions for the wider catchment.

## Increasing our rates of waste and recycling

We have received funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to begin our preparations to introduce weekly kerbside food waste collections from 1 April 2026.

Capital funding of £969,223 has been allocated for the purchase of food bins, including internal kitchen caddies, external kerbside caddies and communal bins as well as food waste collection vehicles.

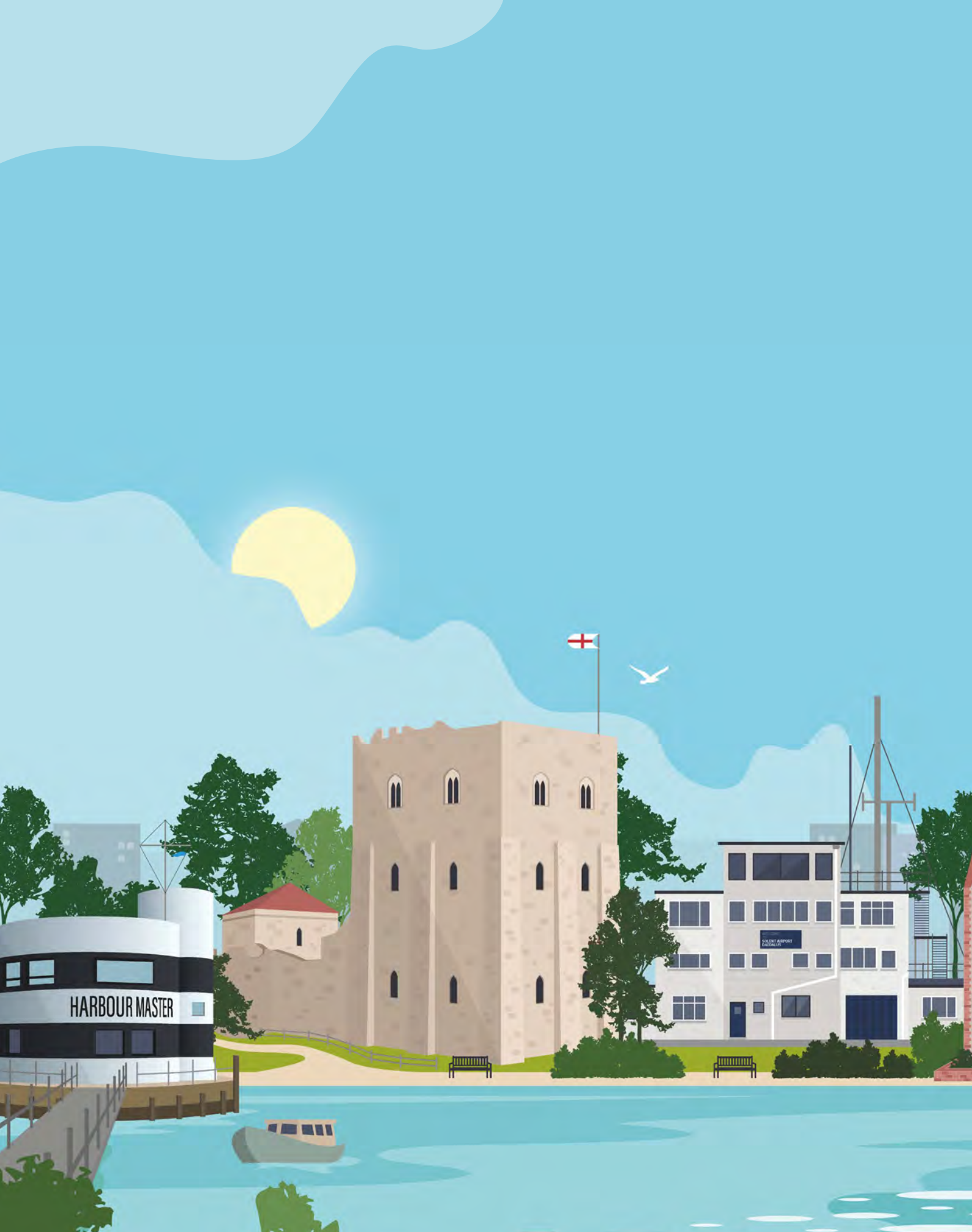
Weekly food waste collection is required for all households under the Environment Act 2021. This act aims to increase household recycling rates by introducing simplified recycling requirements, with people able to recycle the same materials without needing to check what their council will accept.



## Air Quality

A new Air Quality Strategy is being developed that will aim to help improve air quality conditions throughout the Borough and to maintain low concentrations of NO2 in the longer-term.

We have a dedicated set of climate pages on our website [www.fareham.gov.uk/climatechange](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/climatechange) where you can find a range of advice and support.



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Planning and Development
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Planning Performance Monitoring Update</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Provides Housing Choices, Respond to Climate Change and Protect the Environment, Strong, Safe & Healthy Communities, Promote Economic Development, Leisure Opportunities for wellbeing and Fun Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

**Purpose:**  
To present an update on the Council’s planning application performance and to seek the Executive’s approval on an Action Plan which will sustain the Council’s present high level of performance on Quality of planning decision making.

**Executive summary:**  
The planning performance of all Councils in England is assessed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The focus of the performance monitoring is on the speed of decision making and the quality of decision making (the latter being linked to the number of appeals allowed against the Council’s decisions). The briefing paper attached to this report provides an update on this Council’s latest performance in respect of speed and quality of decision making.

In December 2023, the Council’s planning service was designated by DLUHC due to the number of appeals allowed against the decisions of this Council on major planning applications. The majority of these allowed appeals related to applications decided between April 2020 and March 2021. The number of major planning applications allowed on appeal since March 2021 has significantly reduced.

The Council is required to prepare and agree an Action Plan with DLUHC which addresses the reasons that led to the number of major applications being allowed at appeal. The Executive is invited to agree a Planning Designation Action Plan.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) notes the progress made in respect of the quality of decision making on planning applications;
- (b) approves the Action Plan, having regard for any comments received from Members of the Planning Committee following their consideration of the draft Action Plan on the 13 March;
- (c) requests that Officers submit the Action Plan to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for approval; and
- (d) delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development and the Chairman of the Planning Committee, to make amendments to the Action Plan in response to any comments made by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the Action Plan.

**Reason:**

To set out the progress made in respect of the quality of decision making on planning applications and to approve the relevant aspects of the Action Plan which will sustain, and endeavour to further improve, the Council's current high level of performance.

**Cost of proposals:**

The cost of implementing the Actions set out within the draft Action Plan can be met from within existing budgets.

**Appendices:** A: Planning Designation Action Plan December 2022 onwards

**Background papers:** Improving planning performance: Criteria for designation (updated 2022)

Letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities dated 19 December 2023

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Planning Performance Monitoring Update
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Planning and Development

#### INTRODUCTION

1. All local planning authorities in England are required to submit information relating to their Development Management function to the Government on a quarterly basis. The type of information local planning authorities are required to submit includes the following:
  - Number of planning and related applications on hand at the beginning of each quarter, received, withdrawn, called in or turned away during the quarter;
  - The number of decisions and delegated decisions;
  - Number of consents Council's grant to themselves for development which either they will undertake themselves or will be implemented by others
  - Number of decisions on applications for prior approval
  - Development types
  - Whether permission/consent was granted or refused; and
  - The time taken from application submission to decision.
2. All of the information received from local planning authorities is collated into tables and published on the Government's website.

#### MEASURING PLANNING PERFORMANCE

3. The Government separately measures the planning performance of each local planning authority in England. The Government measures the performance in four main areas:
  - The speed of decision making for major planning applications
  - The speed of decision making for non-major planning applications

- The Quality of decision making for major planning applications
  - The Quality of decision making for non-major planning applications
4. The following section of the report looks firstly at the speed of decision making at Fareham Borough Council followed by the quality of decision making.

***Speed of decision making***

5. The Government specifies the period of time within which decisions should be made on planning and related applications. If the Council and an applicant agree, the period of time for deciding a planning application can be extended beyond the period specified by the Government.
6. For major applications, the time specified by the Government within which decisions should be made is 13 weeks from the date of receipt of a valid application. (Major applications include those which propose 10 or more dwellings; where a site is 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known how many houses are proposed; the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created is 1,000 square metres or more; or a development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more).
7. For non-major applications, the time specified by the Government within which decisions should be made is 8 weeks from the date of receipt of a valid application.
8. The Government's assessment of speed of decision making is undertaken over a two-year period from the beginning of October to the end of September. The last assessment completed by the Government looked at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
9. The Government sets out the criteria as to how it assesses the performance of local planning authorities in terms of speed of decision making. The Government's current criteria is that:
- at least 60% of major applications must be decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant;
  - at least 70% of non-major applications must be decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant;
10. For the period of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Fareham Borough Council was assessed as follows:
- **Major applications:** 97.6% decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant.
  - **Non-major applications:** 97.3% decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant.

For both major and non-major applications, the Council's speed of decision making substantially exceeded the Government's minimum requirements.



### ***Quality of decision making***

11. The Government measures the quality of decision making by looking at the percentage of the total number of decisions made by the authority on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal. Major and non-major applications are assessed separately.
12. The Government's assessment of quality of decision making is undertaken over a two-year period from the beginning of April to the end of March.
13. The Government sets out the criteria as to how it assesses the performance of local planning authorities in terms of quality of decision making. The Government's current criteria is that:
  - No more than 10% of an authority's total number of decisions on major applications made during the assessment period should be overturned at appeal;
  - No more than 10% of an authority's total number of decisions on non-major applications made during the assessment period should be overturned at appeal;
14. The most recent assessment period for quality of decision making is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Following the end of the assessment period the Government allows a further 9 months for any planning appeals in the system to be decided before completing the assessment.
15. The 9 month 'lag' period runs up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have advised that the next set of statistics on the quality of decision making will be published by the Department in March 2024. Based upon the data available, Officers forecast that the quality of decision-making statistics will show the following:
  - **Major applications:** Two of the total number of major applications dealt with by this Council between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2023 have been subject to appeals which were allowed. This means that 4.2% of this Council's total number of decisions on major applications made during the assessment period have been overturned at appeal, which is substantially below the Government's threshold.
  - **Non-major applications:** In the assessment period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, this Council made approximately 1,900 non-major decisions, of which 25 were appealed with 6 appeals being allowed. This resulted in 0.3% of this Council's total number of decisions on non-major applications made during the period being overturned at appeal.
  - For the current assessment period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 a very similar number of appeals have been allowed in respect of non-major applications. Whilst there has been a slight reduction nationally in the number of planning applications received over the assessment period, Officers do not anticipate any material change in the total number of decisions on non-major applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

The Council's total number of decisions on non-major applications made during the period being overturned at appeal, will be substantially below the Government's threshold.

***Designation in respect of major applications under Section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990***

16. In December 2022, Fareham Borough Council was contacted by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) (on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)). PAS advised this Council that it was at risk of designation in light of the amount of major planning applications which had been subsequently granted planning permission on appeal (referred to as 'Quality' of decision making by the Government) between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2022.
17. In early 2023, an independent review was undertaken of the Council's Planning Committee by the Planning Advisory Service. The Planning Advisory Service found that the Council's Planning Committee and associated procedures were sound, the Planning Committee was well run, and decisions were taken appropriately.
18. In July 2023, DLUHC formally wrote to this Council and advised that the Council was at risk of designation as 9 appeals had been allowed in respect of major applications considered by the Council between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2022. The Council dealt with 45 major applications during the assessment period- this means that 20% of this Council's total number of decisions on major applications made during the assessment period had been overturned at appeal. The Council was invited to set out any exceptional circumstances that had affected the authority's performance which would make a designation under section 62A unreasonable.
19. The Council submitted an extensive response to DLUHC later in July which set out the exceptional circumstances which had affected the Council's performance during the assessment period. The Council highlighted that all the appeals allowed, related to housing developments on greenfield sites at a time when the Council did not have an up-to-date Local Plan, a five-year housing land supply and was endeavouring to address the issue of nitrate mitigation. Since that time the Council has adopted a Local Plan, established a five-year housing land supply and secured nitrate mitigation measures to enable housing development to take place across the Borough. The Council also highlighted that Planning Inspectors had not found the Council's decisions 'unreasonable' in 7 of the 9 appeals, with one full award of costs against the Council and one partial award of costs. The Council further drew attention to the fact that the number of major planning applications decided by this Council since April 2021 which were subsequently granted planning permission on appeal had substantially reduced.
20. On the 19 December 2023, Fareham Borough Council was advised by the Government that it was being designated in respect of applications for planning permission for major developments. There had been no contact from DLUHC between the Council submitting its exceptional circumstances to DLUHC in July and the Designation in late December 2023.
21. The effect of the designation means that applications for major development can continue to be submitted to Fareham Borough Council or submitted directly to the Planning Inspectorate. At the time of preparing this report no major applications have been submitted directly to the Planning Inspectorate.

**Current performance on ‘Quality of decision making’ and the preparation of a Designation Action Plan**

22. Since the period between April 2020 and March 2021, there has been a substantial and sustained reduction in the number of major planning applications which have been granted planning permission on appeal. The following tables sets out the number of major applications dealt with by year and the number of applications granted permission on appeal:

Time period	Number of major applications considered by the Council	Number of major applications decided during that period subsequently allowed on appeal
1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021	22	7
1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022	23	2
1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023	25	1
1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024*	20	0

\*Position as at 4 March 2024. There are currently no major planning appeals before the Planning Inspectorate.

23. As part of the designation of the planning service made by DLUHC, this Council is required to prepare an Action Plan, ‘identifying actions that address the areas of weakness that led to the Council being designated.’
24. Following contact by the Planning Advisory Service in December 2022, the Council commenced work on an Action Plan which was further supplemented by the independent review of the Council’s Planning Committee in early 2023. A detailed Action Plan is set out at Appendix A which incorporates the actions undertaken since December 2022 and adds to these where appropriate.
25. The Planning Committee is being invited to comment on the Action Plan at their meeting on the 13 March in so far as it relates to the matters within their remit. Any comments on the Action Plan by the Planning Committee will be brought to the Executive’s attention.
26. The Executive is invited to approve the draft Action Plan in respect of those matters which fall within its remit. Following approval of the draft Action Plan, this Council will need to approve the Action Plan with DLUHC. Should DLUHC request any amendments to the Action Plan, delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Regeneration to make amendments, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development and the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

27. If the Council does not achieve the Government's minimum thresholds in respect of speed of decision making or exceeds the Government's maximum thresholds for quality of decision making, the Government can consider continuing to designate the Council as 'underperforming'.
28. If the Council were to remain designated as underperforming, applicants would continue having the choice of submitting applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate rather than to the Council for the type of applications for which the Council had been designated (major or non-major).
29. When applicants submit applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate the planning application fee is also paid to the Planning Inspectorate. This will result in a reduced planning income to this Council.

## **CONCLUSION**

30. This Council has strong measures in place to ensure that applications are determined within the Government's specified time periods or within periods agreed with applicants.
31. The Council seeks amendments to many planning applications which are not acceptable at first submission. This approach ensures that the Council deals with applications once where possible and reduces the number of planning appeals which are submitted.
32. As a result of the Council's approach to deciding planning applications, the number of planning appeals the Council receives each year as a percentage of the total number of non-major applications it decides is very small (less than 2%).
33. The total number of major planning applications the Council decides each year typically varies between 20 and 25 in number. Because the total number of major applications is modest, a relatively small number of appeals being allowed can result in the Government's 10% threshold being exceeded.
34. A number of exceptional circumstances lead to a much higher number of major planning applications received between April 2020 and March 2021 being allowed on appeal. Since those exceptional circumstances have been addressed the number of appeals allowed in subsequent years has substantially reduced. A detailed Action Plan puts measures and monitoring in place which cumulatively will significantly reduce the risk of the Council's performance on the 'Quality of decision making' failing to meet the Government's minimum requirements.
35. Based on the data available, this Council's performance on Quality of decision making for the period April 2021 – March 2023, is projected to be substantially below the Government's threshold for designation.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

36. The subject matter of this report is not anticipated to have an impact on the Council's carbon footprint, nor is it expected to have a detrimental or beneficial impact to the wider environment.

**Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please Lee Smith, Head of Planning (01329 824427 / email: [lsmith@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:lsmith@fareham.gov.uk) )



Description	Lead	Notes and Actions	Action Target Date	Status
<b>OBJECTIVE: Identify sufficient sites and supply to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply</b>				
<b>Ensure that Fareham Borough Council has an adopted up-to-date development plan</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration  Head of Planning  Executive	The Fareham Borough Local Plan 2037 was formally adopted by the Council on the 5 April 2023.	April 2023	
<b>Ensure that the Council has a demonstrable 5-year supply of housing land</b>	Head of Planning	At the Planning Committee in January 2023, a report was published demonstrating the Council had a 5.49 year supply of housing. As a result of the changes made to the NPPF in December 2023, the Council is not required to publish an annual 5 year housing land supply position as it has an up-to-date adopted local plan.	January 2023	
<b>OBJECTIVE: Ensure Members have best available information for decision making</b>				
<b>Ensure Members are aware in advance of major planning applications being reported to the Planning Committee and encourage Members to submit questions in advance</b>	Team Leaders (Development Management)	To provide certainty for Members that they have all relevant information available to them at the time of making their decision. Report to Planning Committee in April 2024 to agree procedure. Implementation within one month of approval by Members.  Action referenced in the PAS Planning Committee Review	May 2024	

<p><b>Use Case Officers to present planning applications at the Planning Committee and ensure the selective attendance of specialist officers where they are better placed to respond to specific technical issues that are likely to be discussed against an item.</b></p>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>Case Officers have greatest knowledge of the details of the application and likely to be the most familiar with the application site and its surroundings. Highway Engineers, Ecologists, Environmental Health Officers and other specialists to be invited to attend Planning Committee as appropriate.</p> <p>Implemented during second quarter of 2023.</p> <p>Action referenced in the PAS Planning Committee Review 2023.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	
<p><b>OBJECTIVE: Ensure Council's Planners aware of all planning appeal decisions, decisions are reviewed, and trends acted on</b></p>				
<p><b>Ensure that all Members of the Council's Planning Service are aware of all planning appeal decisions shortly after receipt</b></p>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>Planning appeal decisions typically circulated to Director of Planning and Regeneration, all Development Management Planners, all Planning Strategy Planners and Planning Solicitors (where legal issues or legal representation provided) within 24 hours of receipt.</p> <p>Action implemented pre-December 2022 &amp; ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p><b>Ensure that planning appeal decisions are monitored on a monthly basis by Senior Officers within the Planning Service and any trends are highlighted with the Service</b></p>	<p>Head of Planning Team Leaders (Development Management)</p>	<p>All planning appeal decisions are discussed between the Head of Planning and the Team Leaders within Development Management and any themes within decisions identified. Themes and necessary actions to address to be highlighted with Planners and Members of the Planning Committee.</p> <p>Action implemented pre-December 2022 &amp; ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p><b>Ensure that a spreadsheet is maintained which records the Council's quality of decision making on major</b></p>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>Ensures any trends in decision making highlighted at the earliest opportunity. Implemented in Quarter 1 of 2023 and ongoing.</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly</p>	



planning applications on a monthly/ quarterly/ and 2 yearly basis				
<b>OBJECTIVE: Ensure Planning Committee Members aware of all planning appeal decisions, decisions are reviewed, and trends acted on</b>				
<b>Ensure that all Members of the Planning Committee are aware of all planning appeal decisions shortly after receipt</b>	Head of Planning	Planning appeal decisions typically circulated to Members of the Planning Committee within 24 hours of receipt.  Action implemented pre-December 2022 & ongoing	Ongoing	
<b>Ensure that details of planning appeals and all decisions are regularly reported to the Planning Committee and any trends are highlighted to Members and actions recommended</b>	Head of Planning	Details of all planning appeals outstanding, the decision maker, whether the appeal resulted from an overturned recommendation and all planning appeals decisions received, are reported to every meeting of the Planning Committee. Discussions on the report focus on the decisions received and the reasons why Planning Inspectors decided appeals in the way they did.  Action implemented pre-December 2022 & ongoing	Ongoing monthly	
<b>Identify instances with the Planning Committee where costs have been awarded in favour of or against the Council</b>	Head of Planning	Implemented and ongoing. The Planning Committee advised as part of the Planning Appeal report presented each month, where costs have been awarded in favour of or against the Council and the reasons why the Planning Inspectorate found unreasonable behaviour. Action implemented pre-December 2022 & ongoing	Ongoing monthly	
<b>Establish a regular programme for performance reporting to the Planning Committee, using the DLUHC performance statistics to monitor against national government targets</b>	Head of Planning	Implemented and ongoing. Officers to provide regular reports (ideally quarterly) to the Planning Committee on planning performance using DLUHC performance statistics. Implementation of performance reporting to Planning Committee commenced in third quarter of 2023  Action referenced in the PAS Planning Committee Review 2023.	September 2023  Ongoing quarterly	

<b>OBJECTIVE: Increase Member involvement earlier in the planning process/ ensure Members regularly brief on existing and emerging planning matters</b>				
<b>Review Council's pre-application service to increase opportunity for member involvement in major proposals.</b>	Head of Planning	This approach will help to increase Members' awareness of major proposals in advance of formal consideration by the Planning Committee. Whilst the involvement of Members in pre-application discussions has increased in the last 12 months, proposals will be presented to the Planning Committee in April 2024, setting out options for increasing Member involvement in pre-application proposals for major proposals. Implementation within one month of approval by Members. Action referenced in the PAS Planning Committee Review 2023	May 2024	Orange
<b>Introduce a programme of topic-based Planning Committee member training sessions to supplement the existing compulsory training.</b>	Head of Planning	Implemented and ongoing. These sessions will take place throughout the year with a focus post-election.  Action referenced in the PAS Planning Committee Review 2023	January 2023	Green
<b>OBJECTIVE: Officer and Member Governance Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing this Action Plan</b>				
<b>Ensure progress against actions identified within the Action Plan is regularly reviewed</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration	Director of Planning and Regeneration and Head of Planning to review progress against all actions in the Action Plan on a monthly basis.	Upon approval of Action Plan with DLUHC-March 2024	Orange
	Head of Planning	Formal report setting out progress against the actions in the Action Plan, presented to the Planning Committee on a quarterly basis.		
	Planning Committee	Formal reviews to commence upon approval of the Action Plan.		

Status key: **Green** – Implemented and ongoing

**Orange** – Partially implemented

**Red** – Not yet implemented

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Renewable Energy Scheme: Hook Recreation Ground Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Development Feasibility</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Respond to Climate Change and Protect the Environment; Promote Economic Development; Responsive, Inclusive, and Innovative Council

**Purpose:**  
To brief the Executive on the potential for a solar photovoltaic (PV) scheme at Hook Recreation Ground and to seek funding for the next feasibility stage of the project.

**Executive summary:**  
Hook Recreation Ground is a former landfill site currently used as an informal recreation ground, mainly by dog walkers and model plane flyers. This report advises the Executive on the potential to develop a 3.5MW solar PV scheme on the site. There are two main benefits of a solar PV scheme:

- **Financial:** From the financial modelling undertaken thus far a solar PV scheme has significant revenue generating potential and could also be used to reduce the Council’s electricity bills.
- **Environmental:** The Council would produce renewable electricity. As a minimum it would generate enough electricity to power the Civic Offices, Depot, and Housing communal areas which would in turn reduce the Council’s carbon footprint. Renewable electricity would also be returned to the wider electricity network, contributing toward ‘greening of the grid.’

Understanding if and when a solar PV scheme could connect into the grid network is essential to progressing to the next feasibility stage of the project and associated business case. The project cannot progress to further stages without securing a viable grid connection, and overall scheme viability would be questionable if this could not be obtained for some time. Accordingly, there is a time imperative to making the grid application.

To make an application for a grid connection and secure the offer should it be received, this report seeks a budget of £130,000. Between £25,000 - £30,000 would be used to make an application and commission associated studies. This is non-

refundable. The remaining £50,000 - £100,000 would be required as a deposit to accept a grid connection if an acceptable offer is received. The money would be refundable if the Council did not proceed with the solar PV scheme. It would not be committed without a further Executive approval.

It is acknowledged this type of development on Hook Recreation Ground would result in the loss of open space, albeit of poor quality. This will be addressed during later stages of the project once the initial feasibility work around a grid connection has been undertaken. The project is dependent on a viable grid connection and therefore, it is not worthwhile undertaking further work until this has been assessed.

Furthermore, development of this type involves risks. This is being carefully considered against the benefits, a process that will continue into the next stages of the project.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive approves a budget of £130,000 for a grid connection application and for a deposit to secure the connection should an acceptable offer be received.

**Reason:**

To be able to progress with the next feasibility stage of the project and associated business case.

**Cost of proposals:**

The budget required to secure a grid connection offer is £130,000, incorporating a £25,000 - £30,000 non-refundable element. If the connection offer was accepted a £50,000 - £100,000 deposit would be required. This would be refundable if the project did not eventually proceed.

There is currently no budget provision for this project. This project is part of the Opportunities Plan as a potential invest to save proposal. The funding for this project will therefore need to be taken from the Council's unallocated General Fund reserves. There are sufficient funds to cover this request. However, use of the reserves for this purpose will reduce the availability to cover future budget shortfalls in the short-term. An estimate of the pay-back period for the whole project is 10.8 years.

**Appendices:**

- A: Plan of Hook Recreation Ground
- B: Confidential Appendix\*

\* Commercially exempt from publication

It is not in the public interest to disclose the contents of Appendix B as doing so could negatively impact the progression of the project.

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Renewable Energy Scheme: Hook Recreation Ground Solar PV Development Feasibility
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources

#### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. This report is intended to brief the Executive on the potential to develop a 3.5MW solar scheme at Hook Recreation Ground. It summarises the business case prepared to date and requests the funding necessary to progress to the next feasibility stage, which is an application for a grid connection. Subsequent Executive decisions will be sought if the Council proceeds beyond a grid application.
2. The project started in 2022 with a desktop-based feasibility study by an external consultant, which identified Hook Recreation Ground as being suitable for a solar PV development. Consultants were then commissioned to prepare a more detailed business case. This advice was then verified by other experts. These reports are provided as confidential Appendix B, and the most 'realistic' business case is summarised in this report. It will be revisited/refined if the Council proceeds to subsequent stages of project. This is essential as the renewable electricity sector is constantly evolving.
3. Development of a solar PV scheme has two main benefits. These are:
  - **Financial:** From the financial modelling undertaken thus far a solar PV scheme has significant revenue generating potential and could also be used to reduce the Council's electricity bills.
  - **Environmental:** The Council would produce renewable electricity. As a minimum it would generate enough electricity to power the Civic Offices, Depot, and Housing communal areas which would in turn reduce the Council's carbon footprint. Renewable electricity would also be returned to the wider electricity network, contributing towards the 'greening of the grid.'
4. It is acknowledged that this type of development on the Hook Recreation Ground would result in the loss of open space, albeit of poor quality. Furthermore, development of this type involves risks. This is being carefully considered against the benefits and this process will continue into the next feasibility stages of the project.

## **THE SITE AND SOLAR PV SCHEME**

5. Hook Recreation Ground is in the ward of Warsash and is a former landfill site which ceased operation in 1979 and was capped in 1999. It is currently used as an informal recreation ground, mainly by dog walkers and model plane flyers. The site sees relatively low usage and there are currently no formal lettings. A Streetscene Service storage depot, serving the Western Wards, is located on the site and would be unaffected by the solar PV scheme.
6. Hook Recreation Ground extends to approximately 28 acres, and 12 acres would be required for the solar PV scheme (see plan at Appendix A). Of this approximately 11 acres is currently usable open space which would be lost. Surrounding the open space is woodland which would not be directly affected and where there are informal footpaths. They are of low quality but could be enhanced to help mitigate the loss of open space.
7. A solar PV scheme comprising approximately 8400 panels is being considered and 'deer fencing' would surround it (denoted by the purple line on the plan at Appendix A). This type of fencing is common for solar PV scheme and is designed to stop deer from entering the site. More substantial 'security' fencing may be required, which would add to the cost included in the current financial modelling. However, this would not significantly change the financial return.

## **BUSINESS CASE**

### **Owner/Operating Options and Financial Considerations**

8. There are several different operating and ownership options available, each having their own risk/reward profile. Definitive detail cannot be available until market testing which can only occur after both planning permission and connection details have been achieved.
9. Further business case modelling will be considered and presented to the Executive, following confirmation that an acceptable grid connection can be secured. As noted, a grid connection is needed regardless of ownership/operating arrangements. There is a time imperative associated with understanding if a grid connection can be obtained as a significant delay in securing the connection would affect viability.
10. For the current business case it is assumed the Council would own the solar farm development and appoint a consultant to deal with day-to-day operations. The main assumptions behind the business case are set out below along with the key financial indicators.

### **Key Assumptions**

- FBC develops the scheme.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party undertake day to day operations.
- Development costs £4.02m.
- Solar Farm has a 35-year lifespan.
- 17% of electricity used by the Council.
- 83% of electricity sold back to the grid.

## Financial Indicators

- Payback period 10.8 years.
- The project would generate significant annual revenues with these increasing year on year.
- If 100% of the electricity was sold to the grid, the net benefit to the Council over the first 5 years would be approximately £300,000 and would be expected to increase in subsequent years as electricity inflation tends to outpace general inflation over long periods.
- There is a strong likelihood that at least 17% of the electricity can be used by the Council in parts of its estate, with the residual 83% being sold to the grid. The 5-year net benefit to the Council would then increase to approximately £525,000. This is because the Council, rather than the energy company, would benefit from the profit margin on this 17% usage.

As can be seen above the financial business case is strong as the payback period is significantly shorter than the lifespan of the project. Profits received beyond the payback period would be returned to the general fund.

11. It should be noted that forecasting of this type is dependent upon multiple variables and becomes more volatile in later years. The financial modelling completed to date is however, considered to be the most realistic it can be at this stage and follows advice from a series of consultants. It will be revisited/refined if the Council proceeds to subsequent stages of the project and undertakes further due diligence.

## Environmental Considerations

12. The project has several environmental benefits. For the Council itself the financial modelling assumes 17% of the electricity generated by the solar farm would be used by the Civic Offices, Depot, and Housing communal areas. Assuming the Council retains the Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certificates the renewably generated electricity used at these sites should result in an estimated 66% reduction in its net scope 2 carbon emissions (based on 2022/23 figures). A larger carbon reduction could be achieved if more Council sites used the renewably generated electricity. The potential for this needs to be considered in the context of the existing contractual arrangements for electricity supply at these sites.
13. It must be noted that the value of the carbon emissions reduction is affected by greening of the grid. As the National Grid has increasing levels of renewable generation the carbon benefit of producing renewable electricity reduces. The Government has a target for the electricity network to be 100% renewable by 2035. If achieved the 'carbon accounting' benefit of the solar PV scheme would be nil.
14. The financial modelling also assumes approximately 83% of the electricity produced would be sold back to the grid. This would be enough to power an estimated 1,440 households a year with renewable energy. It would also contribute to the Government's target of 70GW solar generating capacity by 2035 and 'greening of the grid'. This is considered to be a significant benefit to the Council and contribution to sustainability.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

15. Aside from the financial and environmental considerations presented above, there are a variety of matters to address before a solar PV scheme could proceed on the site. The most significant is the loss of a public open space albeit Hook Recreation Ground is currently considered to be of low quality and underused. This along with any visual impact of the scheme needs to be compared against the benefits which have been outlined.
16. The Council would need to address these matters through the statutory processes associated with a change in the use of public open space and as part of the planning process. Examples of the type of matters which will need to be dealt with are noted below. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list.
  - Appropriate consultation required under the Local Government Act 1972.
  - Equalities Impact Assessment.
  - Technical planning studies, including any Environmental Impact Assessment and/or Habitat Regulations Assessments required.
17. As to timing they would be addressed once the viability of a grid connection has been understood. If a viable grid connection cannot be obtained the project could not move forward anyway and this type of consultation and/or assessment would not be needed.
18. Historically, there has also been some negative press associated with the development of solar PV schemes by local authorities. Thus far officers have sought to mitigate risk by appointing industry experts and ensuring the proposed scheme is commensurate with the Councils wider financial position. The eventual level of risk to the Council will largely be dependent on the ownership/operating model adopted. This is not decided, and it may be that the Council decides to transfer the risk to a third party if it is too high.

## FUTURE STEPS AND REQUIREMENT FOR GRID CONNECTION

19. Delivering a solar PV scheme is complex and a headline summary of the next steps (along with indicative timescales) is presented in 3 stages below:

**Stage 1 (Summer 2024):** Subject to Executive approval a grid connection application would be submitted. The project cannot progress without a grid connection and viability would be questionable if this could not be obtained for some time. Stage 2 and the timescales beyond assume an acceptable grid connection can be obtained and that an early connection date is available.

**Stage 2 (2025 - 2026):** From the date a grid connection offer is accepted, planning permission must be obtained within 24 months. At this stage of the project Executive approval would need to be sought for a budget to progress through planning. A business case review would also take place at this time.

**Stage 3 (2026 – 2029):** Once a grid connection and planning permission have been secured a decision would then be required on the operating model to be adopted. At this stage further Executive approval would need to be sought to decide how the project should progress. The project would then take an estimated three years to develop. This is the early earliest project completion date.



20. The Executive is being asked to approve funding for Stage 1. There are multiple parts to this Stage and the Council would first appoint a consultant to submit an application to SSEN. This would cost approximately £5,000 which is non-refundable. SSEN would provide a distribution grid offer within 65 working days. The Council would then have 1-3 months to accept this offer and place a deposit estimated at between £50,000 - £100,000. This would be refundable if the Council subsequently decided not to proceed with the project. If the Council did decide to proceed, these monies would be deducted from the eventual grid connection cost.
21. If a deposit is placed there may in turn be the need for a Transmission Network Impact Assessment (TIA). This assessment would consider the impact of project further upstream at the point where the electricity network connects with the National Grid. SSEN and National Grid would decide if a TIA were required. This would cost approximately £20,000 - £25,000 and is non-refundable. The TIA would take around 9 months to complete and at the end of the assessment, FBC would receive a revised grid connection offer. A decision may be required at this stage if the findings from the TIA present significant delays to the project.
22. The timescales from submitting the initial application to SSEN to receiving a final grid connection offer (assuming a TIA is required) is approximately 12 months. This reduces to approximately 3 months if a TIA is not needed.

### **CURRENT FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

23. For the scheme to be able to progress a budget of £130,000 is sought to make a grid connection application and secure the offer received if it is acceptable. Up to £25,000 - £30,000 would be non-refundable with the remaining £100,000 required to place a deposit to secure an offer going forward. This would be refunded if the project did not go ahead at a later stage. If the Council did decide to proceed these monies would be deducted from eventual grid connection cost.

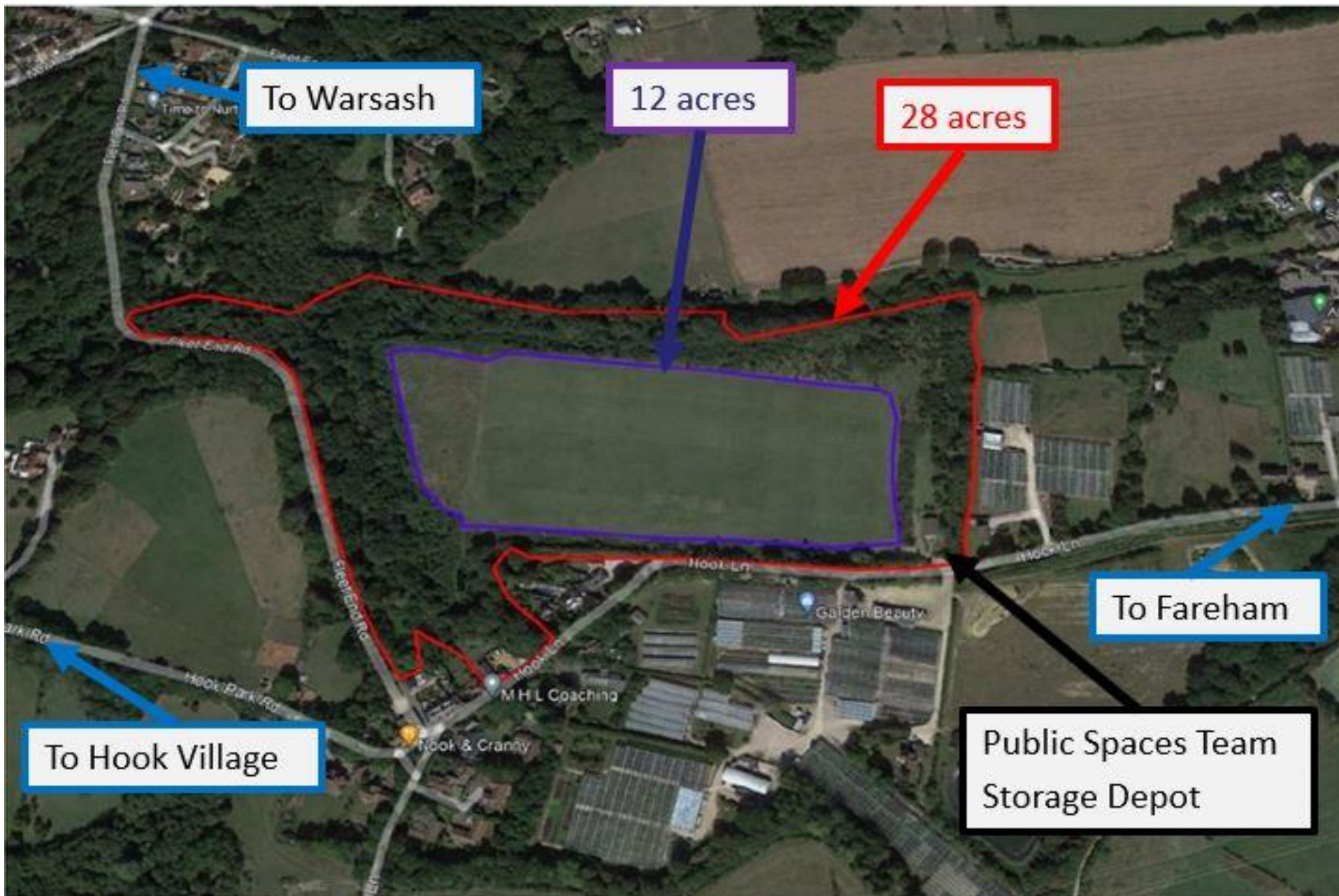
### **SUMMARY**

24. The current business case for a solar PV scheme development on Council owned land has been presented. The current business case suggests a good financial return and presents environmental benefits. These benefits have been considered against the negative aspects of the project and on balance officers currently feel it is appropriate to proceed to the next stage. Accordingly, this report seeks approval of a budget so that a grid connection offer can be obtained and secured. If an acceptable grid connection can be secured more feasibility work can then be undertaken before a final decision is made on the project.

### **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Alex Jolley (01329 824470)







By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Solent Enterprise Zone – Retained Business Rates and Infrastructure Investment Plan</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Promote economic development A responsive, inclusive and innovative Council

**Purpose:**  
To seek Executive approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of Retained Business Rates growth generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone with the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Gosport Borough Council. Also to advise the Executive of the current Infrastructure Investment Plan for that part of the Solent Enterprise Zone falling within Fareham Borough and for the associated costs to be included within the Council’s capital programme.

**Executive summary:**  
The Solent Enterprise Zone was established in 2012 with Fareham Borough Council as one of the partner members with a view to becoming the Solent’s premier location for advanced manufacturing and technology focused on the marine, aviation and aerospace sectors. This report advises on the merit for the Council to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of Retained Business Rates growth generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone with Gosport Borough Council and the Solent LEP by 31 March 2024.

The report also provides an update on development progress to date on that part of the Solent Enterprise Zone falling with Fareham Borough since the Council acquired the site in March 2015. The current Infrastructure Investment Plan for that part of the Solent Enterprise Zone falling within Fareham Borough is outlined together with costs estimates, in order to enable these to be added to the Council’s capital programme. Both existing and future retained business rates will then be used as a key source of funding for this capital programme going forward, in order to facilitate infrastructure investment at Daedalus.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive agrees:

- (a) to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of Retained Business Rates growth generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone as set out in Appendix A, noting that minor revisions are likely to be made before completion; and
- (b) that the delegation outlined in (a) is only to be exercised following consultation with the Executive Member for Policy and Resources and the Council's Section 151 Officer;
- (c) that the current Infrastructure Investment Plan for that part of the Solent Enterprise Zone falling within Fareham Borough be added to the Council's capital programme.

**Reason:**

The completion of the Memorandum of Understanding for the use of Retained Business Rates generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone with the Solent LEP and Gosport Borough Council needs to be entered into prior to the demise of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership on 31 March 2024.

**Cost of proposals:**

The current Infrastructure Investment Plan for that part of the Solent Enterprise Zone falling within Fareham Borough has an estimated cost of £37m. It is proposed that these Infrastructure Investment Plan costs be added to the Council's capital programme to enable the use of both existing and future retained business rates to be used to fund infrastructure at Daedalus as appropriate.

**Appendices:**

**A:** Draft Memorandum of Understanding for the use of Retained Business Rates growth generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone

**B:** Confidential Appendix - By virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person and category 7A (information which is subject to an obligation of confidentiality) of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

**Background papers:** None

**Reference papers:** None

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Solent Enterprise Zone – Retained Business Rates and Infrastructure Investment Plan</b>
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This Executive Briefing Paper seeks to set out the background to the Solent Enterprise Zone and the proposals for Retained Business Rates relating to the Solent EZ. It also provides an update on development progress to date for that part of the Solent EZ falling within Fareham Borough, together with a draft Infrastructure Investment Plan.

#### SOLENT ENTERPRISE ZONE – BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

2. The Solent Enterprise Zone was established in 2012 by a partnership between Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, Homes England and the Solent LEP. The site was a former military airfield and training base, comprising 197 hectares, of which 82 hectares were designated as an Enterprise Zone. The ambition for the Enterprise Zone was for it to become *'Solent's premier location for advanced manufacturing and technology focused on the marine, aviation and aerospace sectors.'*
3. The formal Stated Objectives of the Solent Enterprise Zone when designated were as follows:
  - create up to 3,700 additional jobs on the EZ by 2026, contributing more than one third of the Solent LEP's additional jobs target;
  - promote an advanced manufacturing and technology cluster focused on marine, aviation and aerospace;
  - provide a catalyst for the regeneration of Gosport, as the least economically viable area in South Hampshire; and
  - utilise the incremental growth in business rates to unlock the full potential of this and other Solent employment sites.
4. The designation of the Solent Enterprise Zone was progressed and took place within the context of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership's 'Transforming Solent - Solent

Strategic Economic Plan 2014-20'. The first priority of this Plan for supporting new businesses, enterprise and ensuring small and medium-sized business enterprises survival and growth, was:

*“To support continued growth of the Solent Enterprise Zone with view to delivering a world class advanced manufacturing (marine, aviation and aerospace) industrial hub delivering 3700 jobs by 2026.”*

5. This was appropriately reflected in the Solent LEP Bid for Enterprise Zone designation in June 2011. All business rates growth within an Enterprise Zone, for a period of at least 25 years, are to be retained by the local area, to support the relevant Partnership's economic priorities. The partnership bid advised the government that:

*“The principal objective of both Solent LEP and PUSH is to secure economic growth and increased well-being in South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The business rate increment would therefore be used in the first instance to support investment in Daedalus to unlock its full potential as a hub for an advanced manufacturing aviation/marine cluster and to secure its sustainable regeneration, and thereafter to support infrastructural investment throughout the PUSH/Solent LEP area in support of the agreed economic strategy.”*

6. The Government Guidance relating to Enterprise Zones at that time advised that they would benefit from:

- a 100% business rate discount worth up to £275,000 over a five year period, for businesses that move into an Enterprise Zone;
- all business rates growth within the zone for a period of at least 25 years will be retained and shared by the local authorities in the LEP area to support their economic priorities.

7. Additionally, the Government's Enterprise Zone Prospectus advised that authorities considering Enterprise Zones would want to consider how the proposals to allow them to keep business rates and deliver Tax Increment Financing schemes could support the development of the Zone.

8. In terms of the legal framework pertaining to Enterprise Zones, no specific Enterprise Zone legislation has subsequently been forthcoming. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 made Local Rating Authorities responsible for the relevant business rates, and Government Information Letters at that time encouraged Local Authorities to work with the relevant LEP to ensure that retained funds generated by growth in the Enterprise Zone should be available to direct towards the local economic priorities. How exactly this money should be managed – if, for example, it is kept in a ringfenced account by the billing authority, transferred to the LEP or transferred to another authority to hold on the LEP's behalf – is a matter for local determination.

9. Accordingly, there is a clear benefit for the relevant parties to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of Retained Business Rates generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone.

10. Of particular relevance, in August 2023 the government issued guidance as to how the demise of LEP's is to affect Enterprise Zones, Freeports and Business Rates Retention as follows:

*“The future functioning, management, and governance of these should be agreed*



*locally, in line with any pre-existing arrangements. Where LEPs cease operations, areas should reach locally agreeable and workable solutions to ensure a smooth transition of functions.”*

11. Decisions, where appropriate, on the transfer of assets should be agreed by the relevant LEP, its Accountable Body, and respective local authorities by March 2024, though the government recognises that the practical integration and transfer process may stretch beyond that date.

## **SOLENT ENTERPRISE ZONE – RETAINED BUSINESS RATES GROWTH PROPOSALS**

12. The preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of Retained Business Rates growth generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone has been informed by the current position and a number of working assumptions as set out below:
  - there has been limited business rate growth for retention to date (£1.7m cumulative);
  - a Solent Enterprise Zone Partnership Group is in place to oversee and co-ordinate activities, comment on new development and investment proposals and inform decision making;
  - new momentum has been gained recently as Fareham Borough Council has increased project resources for Daedalus, and Gosport Borough Council now benefits from having both a masterplan and developer in place.
13. The following table summarises the outputs from financial modelling on the expected size and profile of the business rates programme. This is broken down by Enterprise Zone and Rating Authority. However, it should be noted that these figures remain forecasts only and will in practice be driven by the timing and pace of investment, rateable values and any future reform of the business rates system. This forecast will be updated periodically by the Local Rating Authorities, to inform investment decisions.

### ***Estimated Business Rate Growth***

Site	Rating authority	Estimated BRR over 25 years (£m)	Size of site (hectares)	£m BRR per ha
Daedalus West	Fareham Borough Council	3.7	14	265,047
Daedalus East	Fareham Borough Council	39.0	40	974,926
Waterfront Area and Daedalus Park	Gosport Borough Council	8.4	26	321,748
<b>Total</b>		51.1	80	

14. Separately, there are existing commitments pertaining to the Solent Enterprise Zone which are relevant. Firstly, there is an agreement between the Solent LEP and Fareham Borough Council for £7.3m of Retained Business Rates growth to fund enabling infrastructure work at Swordfish Business Park going forward. Secondly, there is a contractual obligation between Fareham Borough Council and Homes England to deliver development of the outline planning consent previously granted. An

Infrastructure Investment Plan is under development and further detail on this is provided below.

15. Set out in Appendix A is a copy of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the use of Retained Business Rates growth generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone between the parties of Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council and the Solent LEP. The general principles for the MoU are as follows:
  - the retained business rates are vested with Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council and these bodies are the final decision makers;
  - the two Councils respect the role of the Solent LEP in leading the economic strategy for the area and will work in partnership to make sure investment meets their objectives;
  - there is to be a prioritised spending plan which delivers the stated objectives of the Solent Enterprise Zone, as advised to government, in the following order:
    - Priority one - support investment in/around Daedalus to unlock the site's full potential and secures its sustainable regeneration;
    - Priority two – investment that is a catalyst for the regeneration of and supports the economy of the Gosport peninsula;
    - Priority three - support the wider Solent Economic Strategy, where there are demonstrable benefits to the Fareham and Gosport economies.
16. In terms of governance arrangements going forward, the following general principles are to apply:
  - retained business rates remain vested with the Local Rating Authority;
  - final investment decisions are made within the relevant local authorities existing governance structures (e.g. the Executive for Fareham Borough Council);
  - a Solent Enterprise Zone Strategic Partnership Group maintains an investment strategy and co-ordinates the delivery programme;
  - an advisory Solent Enterprise Zone Investment Board (Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council and Solent LEP) will oversee the investment strategy and consider investment proposals and make recommendations to Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Councils respectively.
17. It should be noted that some further minor changes are likely to be made to the MoU prior to finalisation and therefore an appropriate officer delegation is sought, albeit following consultation with the Executive Member for Policy and Resources and the Council's Section 151 Officer.

## **DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN**

18. In light of the above proposals, it is also appropriate to provide an update to the Executive on the current Infrastructure Investment Plan for that part of the Enterprise Zone falling with Fareham Borough.
19. Since acquisition of the substantive part of the Daedalus site by Fareham Borough Council in March 2015, development activity at Daedalus within Fareham Borough has been focused on Faraday Business Park and the newly recognised Skills and Innovation Sector to the south-east. It has been delivered either by the Council or by occupiers where land has been sold. In total just under 46,000 square metres has been developed, as summarised in the table below and noted on the plan attached at confidential Appendix B.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Approximate Area (sq m)</b>
Cemast and CETC Colleges, Meteor Way	5,011
Innovation Centre, Meteor Way	5,738
Proptech, Spitfire Way	2,297
Units 13-17 Vulcan Way (GA Hangars)	3,042
UTP, Vulcan Way	2,828
Units 4-9 Spitfire Way (Business Hangars)	3,396
HC Coils, Vulcan Way	3,287
Units 14-17 Spitfire Way	5,403
IFA 2, Vulcan Way	14,775
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45,777</b>

20. Looking forward the amount of development anticipated at Daedalus has increased since acquisition. Following adoption in April 2023, Policies E2 and E3 of the Fareham Local Plan 2037 now allocate Faraday Business Park to provide approximately 93,100 square metres of employment space and Swordfish Business Park 34,800 square metres. It is anticipated that the additional employment space at Faraday Business Park will be facilitated in the area between Spitfire Way and Daedalus Drive. The development area at Swordfish Business Park has also increased to the south. Aside from employment space, it is anticipated there will be facilities to support the site/occupiers such as a convenience food and beverage offer. Plans are still being developed for this.
21. Thus far development at Daedalus has been enabled by infrastructure that either existed when it was purchased or was funded by the Homes and Community Agency. Spitfire Way and Vulcan Way have enabled the northern section of Faraday Business Park. To the south Meteor Way facilitated development of the colleges and Fareham Innovation Centre in the Skills and Innovation sector. Not only do these roads afford highway access they also provide service connections for gas, electricity, drainage and water. Associated with this, a power allocation from the wider grid network had also been made by the Homes and Community Agency, albeit this has up upgraded by the Council.
22. With the development of Faraday Business Park progressing, the Council must now plan the future by establishing the remaining infrastructure requirements. It was always anticipated that infrastructure would be required to enable Swordfish Business Park as it is a single open space. However, added to this are further areas of Faraday Business Park where development is now proposed. Again, these are large single open spaces where it is anticipated roads will be required to create smaller development plots. Electrical network upgrades will also be required and there are a growing number of environmental regulations to adhere to. The site forms part of the Solent Wader and Brent Geese Network and mitigation land is required when any development takes place on defined parts of the site. Biodiversity Net Gain must also be provided as appropriate in relation to any development across the site moving forward.
23. Understanding future infrastructure requirements at Daedalus needs master-planning. Whilst the Council has always committed to this, the site currently has a key competitive advantage. As there is a significant amount of land available, the Council can adapt to occupier requirements whereas other 'pre-planned' sites cannot. This 'opportunistic'

approach should not be relinquished totally but needs to be balanced with strategic master-planning. Accordingly, the Council has been refreshing elements of the indicative masterplan and this is contained at confidential Appendix B. This plan will inevitably change and further iterations will be presented as time goes on.

24. Substantial capital investment will be required to implement any masterplan. As noted, many parts of Faraday and Swordfish Business Parks are single open spaces. Infrastructure upgrades will be required and the cost needs to be assessed. Detailed costs (following procurement rules) and associated business plans will be prepared as designs are confirmed and areas of the site come forward. These will be the subject of separate Executive approvals. However, the Council has prepared an initial budget for the Executive for consideration and inclusion in the Council's capital programme. These costs are summarised below and do not include any cost price inflation moving forward.

<b>COST CATEGORY</b>	
Infrastructure (roads and associated services)	£ 29,079,661
Junction Improvements (Spitfire Way and Daedalus Drive)	£ 1,500,000
Bird Mitigation	£ 278,790
Biodiversity Net Gain	£ 2,835,250
Power (Network Upgrades)	£ 3,500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 37,193,700</b>
<b>Approximation</b>	<b>£ 37,000,000</b>

## CONCLUSIONS

25. This report seeks Executive approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the Retained Business Rates growth generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone with the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Gosport Borough Council. The report also advises the Executive of the current Infrastructure Investment Plan for that part of the Solent Enterprise Zone falling within Fareham Borough and for the associated costs to be included within the Council's capital programme.

### Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Richard Jolley, Director of Planning and Regeneration - 07798 650506.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ 2024

**SOLENT LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP)**

And

**FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL (acting as Accountable Body for the Solent Enterprise Zone retained rates growth within the borough of Fareham)**

And

**GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL (acting as Accountable Body for the Solent Enterprise Zone retained rates growth within the borough of Gosport)**

And

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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**for the use of Retained Business Rates generated on the Solent Enterprise Zone**

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## PARTIES

- (1) THE SOLENT LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (Solent LEP)
- (2) FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
- (3) GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

(each a "Party" and together the "Parties")

## BACKGROUND

- (A) The Solent Enterprise Zone ('EZ') was one of 24 EZs launched in April 2012. It comprises four sites totalling 80 hectares in two local authority boroughs: Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council.
- (B) Under the EZ regulations, incremental business rates generated above a baseline within the EZ site boundaries are retained locally for 25 years. The designation period for the EZ commenced on the 1 April 2012 and will last up to 25 years.
- (C) Based on the current forecast (as set out in section X), it is estimated retained rates could generate up to £51m over the 25-year period, representing an important source of funding for local economic development in and around the Solent EZ.
- (D) The Parties have agreed to work together to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide clarity for the use of retained rates derived from the Solent EZ, and a mechanism to consider opportunities for collaboration between the Parties in support of the EZ objectives.

## THE PARTIES AGREE:

### 1. Interpretation

In this MOU the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

"**Accountable Body**" means Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council acting as Accountable Body for the retained rates growth;

"**Business Rates**" means the levy charged on non-domestic properties by local rating authorities;

"**Business Rate Growth**" means the increase in Business Rates collected by a Relevant Authority over and above the agreed baseline for a Tax Site;

"**Daedalus Site**" means the area of the former HMS Daedalus as shown in Annex B;

"**EZ**" means the Solent Enterprise Zone, being the area shown in Annex A;

"**Gosport Peninsula**" means the administrative areas of Gosport and Fareham.

"**Homes England**" means the executive non-departmental body sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The organisation was formerly known as the Homes and Communities Agency;

“Investment Programme” means a long term strategy and associated programme of work that enable the full potential of the Enterprise Zone to be unlocked;

**"Relevant Authority or Rating Authority"** means the two local authorities with responsibility for calculating, billing, collecting, holding and then expending the retained business rates generated at the Enterprise Zone, namely Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council. The Relevant Authorities also act as the Accountable and Responsible body for the use of the retained rates.

**"Retained Business Rates"** means the means:

Business Rates paid to Ratings Authorities in the Enterprise Zone Area by such end users (once eligibility for Business Rates Relief has expired) and by any other end users in the Enterprise Zone area for a period of up to 25 years from the commencement date (to the extent that such Business Rates exceed the baseline level of rates as established by the Rating Authority received at those tax sites prior to the commencement date); which, in each case, local authorities are entitled to retain to fund local investment and infrastructure projects for the purposes of furthering the Enterprise Zone Objectives;

**“Solent Enterprise Zone Investment Board” or “SEZIB”**, means the Advisory Board established to develop and oversee the EZ Investment Plan and to make recommendations to the Relevant Authority for use of the Retained Business Rates pertaining to their respective borough areas (Terms of Reference in Annexe C). The SEZIB brings together representatives from the Solent LEP, Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council.

**“Solent Enterprise Zone Strategic Partnership Group” or “SEZSPG”**, means the professional group, established to co-ordinate the delivery of the EZ investment plan, to provide advice to the SEZIB and to review progress on a regular basis of the EZ’s business and marketing plans (Terms of Reference in Annexe C). The SEZSPG brings together officers from the Solent LEP, Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council and Hampshire County Council.

**"Solent LEP"** means Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Limited;

**“The Parties”** are signatories to the MOU which are the Solent LEP, Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council.

## 2. Purpose of this MOU

In England, Enterprise Zones (EZs) are geographically defined areas in which commercial and industrial businesses can receive incentives to set up or expand. Alongside incentives for businesses, EZs also allow Rating Authorities to retain all business rate growth (i.e. over and above the baseline) within the designated EZ area for 25 years for the purposes of reinvesting in the area.<sup>1</sup>

The Solent EZ’s strategic objectives are to:

- promote an advanced manufacturing and technology cluster focused on marine, aviation, and aerospace;
- utilise the incremental growth in business rates to unlock the full potential of this and other Solent employment sites;
- provide a catalyst for the regeneration of the Gosport peninsula, defined as the administrative boroughs of Gosport Borough Council and Fareham Borough Council, with the former identified as the least economically viable area in South Hampshire; and

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Library, February 2023, Enterprise Zones, available here: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05942/>

- create up to 3,700 additional jobs, making a significant contribution to the Solent LEP's stated target of 10,000 new jobs in the Solent LEP area.

Retained Business Rates provide a source of funding for initiatives that are key to the Enterprise Zone's success, including enabling infrastructure, skills and innovation. The funds generated will be used primarily to support the delivery of the stated objectives for the SEZ, leading to sustainable growth and jobs creation in the target sectors and regeneration for the SEZ itself and the local area.

The purpose of this MOU is set to out the Parties' plans for managing the use of retained business rates generated on the Solent EZ (see map in Annex A). This includes:

(1) Strategic Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose and priority use of the Retained Business Rates</li> <li>• The eligibility of proposals requiring Retained Business Rates funding</li> </ul>
(2) Financial arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arrangements for collecting, holding and expending the Retained Business Rates over the life of the EZ</li> <li>• Approach to borrowing against retained rates, where applicable.</li> </ul>
(3) Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How decisions regarding the use of Retained Business Rates will be taken and the process for prioritising and selecting projects for funding.</li> <li>• Where ownership of the business rates policy lies and including how and when it will be reviewed and evaluated.</li> </ul>

### 3. Key principles

This MOU recognises that the Parties have certain shared priorities and outcomes, such as supporting local economic growth and skills development and it encourages the use of the retained business rates to support and promote these shared priorities and outcomes.

The MOU respects the independent standing of Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Councils as the Relevant Authorities, and as the ultimate decision-makers of how the retained rates are used.

The MOU also respects the broader roles of all Parties in promoting and enabling economic regeneration and prosperity in their respective administrative areas. In particular, it recognizes

- i. the leadership role of the Solent LEP in relation to the Solent area, and the contribution that the EZ makes to the Solent economy;
- ii. the function of Hampshire County Council in leading the Economic and Growth Strategy for Hampshire, in which the EZ resides, and the contribution it makes to delivering economic growth in the administrative area of Hampshire;
- iii. the function of Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council in leading and promoting economic wellbeing in their administrative areas, and the significant contribution the EZ makes to their local economic priorities.

The over-arching ambition of the EZ is to create and sustain jobs and economic growth locally, making it a destination of choice for engineering, manufacturing and technology businesses; especially those within the marine, aerospace and aviation sectors, but also emerging priority sectors over the life of the EZ.

The principal purpose of retained business rates is to unlock the full potential of the EZ. It is therefore anticipated that the majority of Retained Business Rates will be prioritized in the first instance to investment in/around the EZ area, on proposals that maximise the potential benefits of



the EZ. Secondly, Retained Business Rates will be used as a catalyst for economic growth across the Gosport Peninsula and thereafter should be made available to support the economic strategies for the Solent area and for the Hampshire area, where they contribute positively to the achievement of the objectives of the EZ.

Finally, it is appropriate to recognise that the Relevant Authorities should be 'no worse off' as a result of administering the retained rates, and that all reasonable costs arising from the administration and servicing of the rates, including associated governance, monitoring and reporting arrangements, should be met from the retained rates generated at the EZ.

## 4. Strategic focus

This section sets out the priority uses of the retained business rates in order, together with broad eligibility criteria against which projects will be assessed. This is not intended to be an exhaustive or indicative list, but will guide decision-making as proposals are brought forward.

### Priority One: Investment to Unlock the Full Potential of the Solent Enterprise Zone

The principle and primary objective for the use of Retained Business Rates is to unlock the full potential of the Enterprise Zone, through investment at the Daedalus site and in the immediate locale, where the investment makes a direct and positive contribution to achievement of the Solent Enterprise Zone objectives, as set out in Section 2 of this MoU.

Investment may take the form of capital or revenue expenditure, and will include:-

- Enabling infrastructure (onsite highways, drainage, utilities, environmental works, etc) required to bring forward plots for development;
- Utilities works, on and off site, to provide the required utilities capacity at the Daedalus site;
- Offsite Highways works, to provide necessary highways capacity and linkages to serve the Daedalus site;
- Other enabling works to facilitate the delivery of development plots (including on and off site environmental mitigation, site abnormalities, contamination, etc)
- Speculative commercial development schemes to accelerate the delivery of jobs and economic development and to support the financial viability of the Daedalus site;
- Investment to improve the carbon footprint of development proposals, or the wider Daedalus Site;
- Activity that enhances productivity through developing and enhancing skills and innovation;
- Marketing and promotional activity that raises the profile of the Enterprise Zone;
- Professional services to accelerate delivery of the Enterprise Zone objectives
- Training and development to support economic and skills growth at the Daedalus site

### Priority Two: Investment as a Catalyst for the Regeneration of the Gosport Peninsula

The second priority use of Retained Business Rates is to support proposals that contribute positively to the economic activity in the Gosport Peninsula. This includes capital or revenue expenditure both at the Daedalus Site and in the wider peninsula, that demonstrably leads to the creation of new jobs and economic growth on the Gosport Peninsula.

It is anticipated that Priority Two investment will only be considered once all the necessary enabling infrastructure required at the Daedalus Site has been fully funded.

## Priority Three: Support Delivery of Economic Strategies for the Solent and Hampshire

Once Priority One and Two objectives have been fulfilled, the remaining Retained Business Rates will be made available to support investment that makes a positive contribution to the complementary priorities as set out in the Economic Strategies of the Solent LEP and Hampshire County Council.

It is anticipated that any Priority Three investment will make a demonstrably positive contribution to the boroughs of Fareham and Gosport but recognising that it may not lead directly to job and economic growth in the boroughs.

### Project Eligibility

The principal purpose of retained business rates is to support a suite of investments designed to deliver the Solent EZ's strategic objectives set out Section 2 of the MOU.

This MOU recognises that, in the short to medium term, the investment programme will mainly comprise Priority One projects. Priority Two projects are likely to be brought forward later in the Investment Programme, into the medium to longer term. Priority Three projects provide for longer term opportunities and are unlikely to feature in the Investment Programme until the full potential of the Enterprise Zone has been realised.

Notwithstanding the above, all proposals will be required to demonstrate how the investment contributes to the delivery of the Enterprise Zone objectives. Through the development of a comprehensive business case, each investment proposal will be considered against the following criteria, where appropriate:

- Rationale:** The contribution to addressing relevant market failures associated with the EZ;
- Strategic fit:** Demonstrating the contribution to the delivery of the EZ's strategic objectives, especially in the target sectors for the EZ;
- Deliverability:** Ensuring that the initiative is deliverable within an agreed timescale, with the appropriate level of procurement strategy, project management and governance in place.
- VFM:** Demonstrating the benefits generated against costs of the project.
- Demand:** the evidence of demand for the project from developers and future occupiers.
- Viability:** Assessment of viability that demonstrates the positive contribution derived from public sector funding support;
- Leverage:** An assessment of leveraged funding from other sources (public or private) to deliver the proposal, together with the consequential private sector investment at the EZ, as a result of the investment.
- Affordability** How the project is financially secure in the short term and financially sustainable in the longer term.
- Compliance:** Funding must be compliant with the [Subsidy Control Act 2022](#). It is the responsibility of scheme promoters to ensure that proposed use of the grant funds is compliant with Subsidy Control regulations.

## 5. Financial arrangements

This section summarises the current expected value of retained business rates and the approach to borrowing against rates where applicable.

## Expected value of retained business rates

The following table summarises outputs from financial modelling on the expected size and profile of the business rates programme. This is broken down by EZ area and Rating Authority.

Site	Rating authority	Estimated BRR over 25 years (£m)	Size of site (hectares)
Daedalus West	Fareham Borough Council	3.7	14
Daedalus East	Fareham Borough Council	39.0	40
Waterfront Area and Daedalus Park	Gosport Borough Council	8.4	26
<b>Total</b>		51.1	80

These figures remain forecasts only and will in practice be driven by the timing and pace of investment, the rateable values determined by the Valuation Office Agency (subject to appeals and review), and any future reform of the business rates system (including changes to the multiplier). This forecast will be updated periodically by the Local Rating Authorities, to inform investment decisions.

### Custodians of Retained Business Rates

As the bodies accountable for the Retained Business Rates, Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council will hold their respective Retained Business Rates growth in an earmarked reserve, for the purpose of funding expenditure in accordance with this MoU. The Relevant Authorities will also be entitled to meet their reasonable costs of holding and administering the retained rates from the funds available, including (but not limited to) holding and servicing the funds, administration, governance, reporting and monitoring, marketing and promotional costs. The reserves will be managed in line with the Financial Policies/Strategy for the respective Councils.

### Borrowing

As the bodies accountable for the Retained Business Rates, Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council will be responsible for deciding whether to borrow against retained rates income or enter into an agreement with a third party to do so. Rating Authorities will underwrite the borrowing risk in line their respective Treasury Management Strategies and policies.

## 6. Governance

This section sets out how decisions regarding the use of retained rates will be taken, the process for prioritising and selecting projects for funding, and where ownership of the retained business rate policy lies.

The arrangement for determining investment decisions is set out in Annex B.

There will be three layers to govern the Investment Programme for the Retained Business Rates.

### 1. Solent Enterprise Zone Strategic Partnership Group (SEZSPG)

The Solent Enterprise Zone Partnership Group is the professional advisory group, established to oversee and co-ordinate the delivery of the EZ Investment Plan. The Group will keep under review the EZ's marketing and promotional plans and will facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the delivery

of development and other projects on the EZ. The Group will also provide advice and guidance to the Investment Board.

The SEZSPG is comprised of a representative from Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and Solent LEP, and will be serviced by the Relevant Authorities on an annually rotating basis. The SEZSPG will meet on a quarterly basis.

Statutory responsibilities of individual representatives are not displaced by the Group, but members will collaborate to ensure co-ordinated effort, shared learning and best practice, management of interdependencies and the ability to present a coherent and accurate assessment of progress.

The main purpose of the SEZSPG is to:

- Understand and support all the delivery partners of the EZ and to overcome any significant barriers to unlocking the full growth potential of the EZ;
- Act collectively to lobby Government and other relevant parties for financial incentives in order to secure appropriate investment;
- Ensure that the EZ is collectively promoted, in order to successfully attract suitable investment, development, retain and grow existing businesses as well as support job creation.
- Reviewing the delivery of relevant funded projects and creating a co-ordinated approach to communications with occupiers, potential occupiers and the public;
- Represent the interests of all stakeholders in the EZ;
- Monitor both performance and risk regarding the delivery of the EZ; and
- Oversee the effective implementation of the Solent Enterprise Zone Implementation Plans
- Provide advice to the Solent Enterprise Zone Investment Board, such that they are able to make informed recommendations for investment decisions to the Local Authorities.

## 2. Solent Enterprise Zone Investment Board (SEZIB)

The Solent Enterprise Zone Investment Board is the advisory panel of local representatives, established to oversee the EZ Investment Plan for the EZ. Guided by advice from the SEZSPG, the Board will consider proposals for the use of Retained Business Rates, and make recommendations to the respective Local Authority that will make the investment decision.

The SEZIB is comprised of a Councillor/Board Member from Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council and Solent LEP, and will be serviced by the Relevant Authorities on an annually rotating basis. The quorum for any meeting of the Group shall be two members to include at least one representative of the Responsible Authority for any proposal under consideration.

The main purpose of the SEZIB is to:

- Develop and review an Investment Plan for the Enterprise Zone, to include the role of the Retained Business Rates in fulfilling the Plan;
- Critically review investment proposals for the use of Retained Business Rates, in accordance with the priorities set out in this MoU
- To make Board recommendations to the respective Local Authority, when they consider investment decisions funded by the Retained Business Rates.
- Advocate for the Solent Enterprise Zone and support the delivery partners of the EZ to overcome any significant barriers to unlocking the full growth potential of the EZ;

The Group will meet a minimum of two times a year, and as required to consider investment decisions that are brought forward.

### 3. Local Rating Authorities (LRAs)

Investment decisions pertaining to the use of the Retained Business Rates will be made by the local rating authorities, Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council, as custodians of the retained rates and ultimate decision-maker.

The local authorities will use their standard constitutional decision-making processes to determine all decisions, and each decision will be subject to the Council's existing scrutiny arrangements.

While not bound by the recommendations from the SEZIB, each local authority will have regard to the rationale and recommendation made by the SEZIB, in determining whether an investment proposal should be supported.

Should the local authority consider it appropriate to reject the recommendation, it will provide its decision together with its reasons for its decision to the SEZIB for doing so, in a timely manner.

## 7. Monitoring and Reporting

The Rating Authorities will hold and account for business rates and, with support from SEZSPG, will monitor and report the status on an annual basis in an agreed format via the SEZIB. The annual report will include:

- Investment decisions made
- Progress updates
- Cumulative costs and benefits
- Delivery plan
- Rates received, deployed, committed and projected and held uncommitted.

Working with the Rating Authorities, the SEZSPG will carry out ongoing monitoring of the Enterprise Zone and will provide the information required to meet required EZ data reporting requirements.

## 8. Policy review process

Ultimate accountability of the retained rates rests with the Local Rating Authorities. However, recognising the mutual interest of all parties to this MoU, the Partners will share the information needed to facilitate reporting on the benefits realisation from the EZ and any investment derived from Retained Business Rates. This includes:

- Latest revenue forecasts (updated on an annual basis, at a minimum)
- Rates received / deployed / due
- Benefits delivered / forecasted
- Proposed investment recommendations

The Parties also reserve the right to update the MOU in the event of a substantive policy change (e.g., HM Government rates review or relevant policy update)

## 9. Term and termination

This MOU shall commence on [DATE], and shall expire on [DATE]. In the event a Party withdraws from this MOU, the MOU will remain in force in relation to the remaining Parties unless agreed otherwise in writing by a majority of the remaining Parties or the withdrawal of a Party renders the operation of the MOU materially undeliverable.

## 10. Dispute resolution

If any issues, concerns or complaints arise of in or in connection with the MOU, that Party shall notify the other Parties and the Parties shall then collectively seek to resolve the dispute by a process of consultation. If the dispute cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time, the matter shall be escalated to the senior officers of each respective Party. If any Party receives any formal inquiry, complaint, claim or threat of action from a third party (including, but not limited to, requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000) in relation to the MoU, the matter shall be promptly referred to the Local Rating Authorities. No action shall be taken in response to any such inquiry, complaint, claim or action, to the extent that such response would adversely affect the Project, without the prior approval of the Parties (unless otherwise required by law).

## 11. Freedom of Information

Each party will provide to the other parties any information in its possession that may be reasonably requested by the other parties, subject to any Data Protection or confidentiality constraints, safeguards, and statutory rules on disclosure. Each party will consult the relevant other parties before making to any third party any significant disclosures of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and/or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 in relation to this MoU. The requirements in this section and Section 12 (Confidential Information) below are subject to any HMG requirements as to transparency which may apply to either or all Parties from time to time.

## 12. Confidential Information

Each party understands and acknowledges that it may receive or become aware of Confidential or Commercially Sensitive Information of the other parties (which may include information where the other party owes a duty of confidence to a third party) whether in the course of performance of the key commitments as set out in the Solent Enterprise Zone Proposal or otherwise.

Except to the extent set out in this section or where disclosure is expressly permitted elsewhere in this MoU each party shall treat all the other parties Confidential or Commercially Sensitive Information as confidential and safeguard it accordingly (which shall include complying with any protective markings on documents and instructions supplied by the other parties). In particular, none of the parties will do anything that may place the other parties in breach of a duty of confidence owed to a third party. A party receiving Confidential or Commercially Sensitive information shall not disclose Confidential or Commercially Sensitive Information to any non-Crown bodies without the prior consent of the other parties or otherwise as specifically required by law.

### 13. Variation

This MOU, including the Annexes, may only be varied by written agreement of the Parties.

### 14. Status

This MOU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from this MOU. The Parties enter into the MOU intending to honour all their obligations.

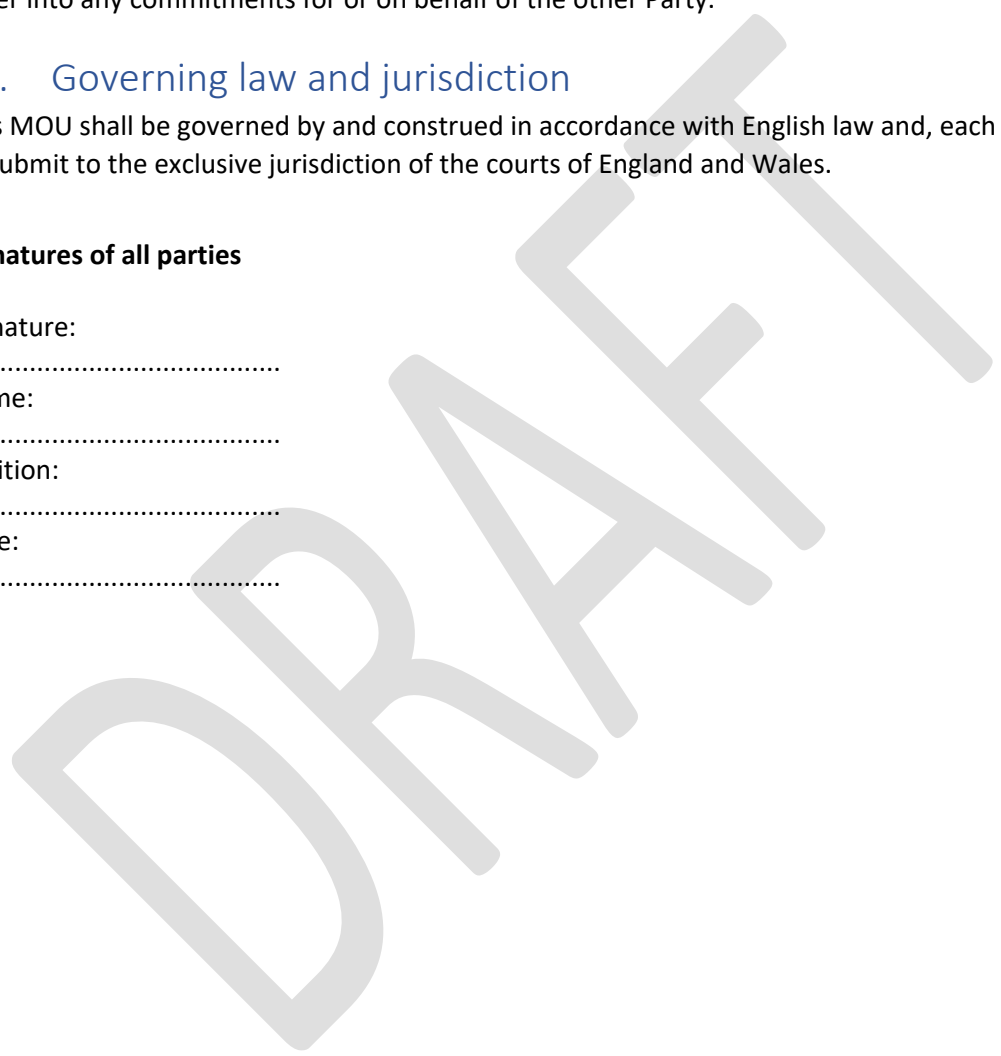
Nothing in this MOU is intended to establish any partnership or joint venture between the Parties, constitute any Party as the agent of the other Party, nor authorise any of the Parties to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of the other Party.

### 15. Governing law and jurisdiction

This MOU shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law and, each Party agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

#### Signatures of all parties

Signature:  
.....  
Name:  
.....  
Position:  
.....  
Date:  
.....



Annexe A – Map of the Enterprise Zone at Daedalus





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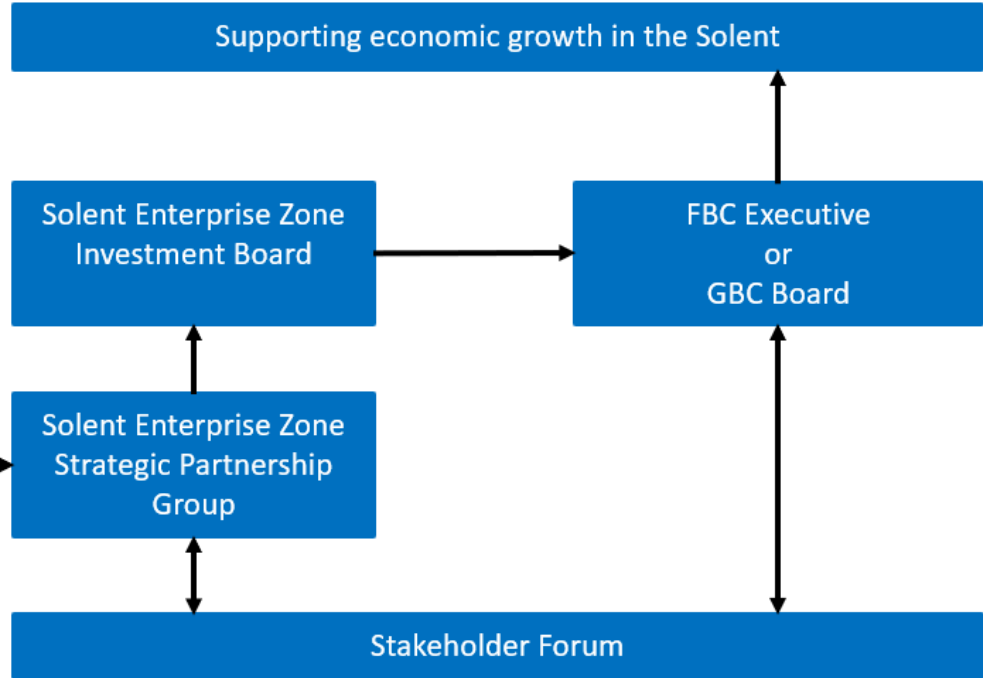
**Annexe C – Proposed Governance Structure**

Solent EZ investment Board comprise 1 Cllr/Board Member and 1 Officer from each of FBC, GBC, LEP

Investment Board develop and oversee EZ Investment Plan and make recommendations to GBC/FBC for investment decisions.

Recommendations guided by SEZ MoU

Investment proposals



Solent EZ MoU and Solent Economic Plan drive investment decisions

FBC Executive/GBC Board responsible for investment decisions. Local scrutiny arrangements apply. Investment decisions guided by recommendations from SEZ Investment Board

Solent EZ Strategic Partnership Group (officer-based) to co-ordinate delivery of EZ investment plan and provide advice to Investment Board

Stakeholder Forum information and knowledge sharing with key stakeholders

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan - Options</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Provides Housing Choices Promote Economic Development

**Purpose:**

To consider the outcome of the optioneering report for Fareham Town Centre regeneration, and to agree the proposed shortlist for further, detailed assessment for inclusion within the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.

**Executive summary:**

The Council has a strong ambition to reverse the decline of Fareham Town Centre through regeneration, recognising the wider placemaking, economic regeneration and health benefits a more successful town centre would bring.

Fareham's town centre has a key role in supporting the economy of the Borough. It is the highest-ranking destination in the Council's retail hierarchy and as such, is the main location for retail, leisure, entertainment, and cultural activities for the Borough's residents.

Work has already begun to deliver the Council's significant regeneration ambition with the construction of Fareham Live, the demolition and replacement of Osborn Road multi storey car park, alongside the purchase of Fareham Shopping Centre in September 2023.

The Council has appointed an asset manager to manage the Shopping Centre, alongside regeneration consultants to develop a deliverable and realistic Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. Stage 1 of this work was reported to the Executive in January 2024.

Stage 2 work has now been completed. After both a programme of engagement and detailed analysis by the technical teams, a short list of potential options has been developed to take forward for further detailed consideration as part of Stage 3. This

work is provided at Appendix A 'The Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan Optioneering Report'.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive agrees the Optioneering Report and the shortlisted interventions set out in Appendix A to continue through to detailed evaluation.

**Reason:**

To produce a Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan in line with the Corporate Strategy and to inform the next steps for the Council following the acquisition of Fareham Shopping Centre.

To attract investment, guide new development and public spaces, and ensure that the town centre meets changing needs.

To facilitate the delivery of transformational regeneration opportunities within Fareham Town Centre, and to create a sustainable long-term future with a mix of complementary uses, benefiting both residents and businesses of the Borough.

**Cost of proposals:**

The cost of the specialist consultant advice for the next stage of detailed evaluation is funded from existing budgets or earmarked provisions. This would include strategic advice, master-planning, communications, engagement, quantity surveyor services and commercial and residential market advice.

- Appendices:** Appendix A: Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan Optioneering Report
- Reference papers:** 08 January 2024 Executive report on Fareham Town Centre Regeneration
- Corporate Strategy 2023-2029
- Planning for the Future of Fareham Town Centre – Vision (2017)
- Fareham Local Plan 2037 (April 2023) Policy BL1 – Broad Location for Housing Position Statement (Feb 2022)
- Background papers:** Initial Engagement Summary Report, Redwood Consulting December 2023
- SWOT analysis, “Four Pillars” of the Strategy and the Strategic Objectives, Rivington Hark December 2023

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan - Options
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Fareham's town centre has a key role in supporting the economy of the Borough. It is the highest-ranking destination in the Council's retail hierarchy and as such, is the main location for retail, leisure, entertainment, and cultural activities for the Borough's residents.
2. At the heart of the town centre is Fareham Shopping Centre (FSC), a covered shopping facility originally built in phases predominately between 1975 and 1981 but with later additions, and the associated multi-storey car park.
3. The town centre extends in all directions from this to include West Street with an array of independent shops and eateries and the historic High Street with mainly office and residential uses. To the south is Market Quay which includes the Fareham police station, a cinema, various restaurants, and the most used car park in the town. To the north is the library, a health centre, a range of car parks, and the Civic Quarter comprising the Civic Offices and gardens as well as the new entertainment destination of Fareham Live.
4. This report provides an overview of the regeneration needs of the town centre and the Council's existing strategy, vision and policy framework. It sets out a summary of the work undertaken to develop the Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan, and then sets out the next steps in this project through to adoption in summer 2024.

#### POLICY CONTEXT

##### Fareham Town Centre Vision 2017

5. The Council has recognised for some time that it is important to address key issues within Fareham Town Centre. In 2017 the Council produced a Fareham Town Centre Vision called 'Planning the Future of Fareham Town Centre'. This reflected the commitments in the 2017-2023 Corporate Strategy and recognised the positive aspects of the town centre but identified ways that it could be improved. The 2017

Vision set out the Council's ambitions to address these issues, commencing with work in the Civic Quarter, focussing on Ferneham Hall and the Osborn Road multi storey car park.

6. In addition to these key projects, the Vision identified priorities across the wider town centre, which include encouraging the growth of the evening economy, the provision of new homes and improved pedestrian linkages throughout the town centre. The Vision seeks to build upon the existing strengths of the town centre, to create a destination for retail, culture, leisure and living.

## **Planning Framework**

7. The commitment outlined in the Fareham Town Centre Vision and the Corporate Strategy is reflected in the Fareham Local Plan 2037 (adopted April 2023) which includes within its Vision and Strategic Priorities the following:

*Fareham Town Centre and other retail areas will be retained and regeneration opportunities that support the town and district centres will be encouraged, whilst making efficient use of any developable land in these locations.*

8. To achieve these aspirations, the Local Plan 2037 includes Policy BL1 'Broad Location for Housing Growth', which identifies that through the '*comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment of the area, including a consolidated, varied, and integrated retail and leisure offer*'. In addition, the policy sets out that such redevelopment would also deliver improved accessibility and public realm in the town.

## **Corporate Strategy**

9. Both the current and former Corporate Strategies included clear commitments to the regeneration of Fareham Town Centre, recognising the town centre's importance in ensuring local economic growth by making the rejuvenation of the centre into a vibrant, attractive environment a priority. The 2017-2023 strategy committed to the commencement of regeneration of the town centre, which the Council have progressed in line with the Town Centre Vision (above).
10. The recently adopted Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 takes this further, with the commitment to produce a renewed Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Vision and masterplan to ensure that the town centre would meet changing future needs by attracting investment and guiding development. This is a key project in the Council's economic development priorities.

## **NEED FOR REGENERATION**

11. Fareham Town Centre plays an important role in the retail hierarchy, providing a range of shops and facilities, including a good range of convenience shopping, such as Tesco and Aldi, as well as cafés and restaurants, and several beauty and wellness service providers.



12. However, over the last 20 years there has been a significant structural change in retailing and consumer behaviour driven by the growth in internet retailing. Fareham Town Centre, and in particular FSC, has seen significant decline over the last 5 years. This change was accelerated by the global pandemic with internet sales subsequently stabilising at around 30% of all sales and with footfall nationally returning to an average of 90% below pre-pandemic levels.
13. National retail brands, particularly fashion retailers, are consolidating representation to the major centres, shrinking their portfolios, and leaving smaller centres. This trend is highly evident in Fareham, with the loss of retailers such as Accessorise, Dorothy Perkins, Thomas Cook, TUI and M & Co, some of which are now predominantly online retailers, with little or no high street presence. The overall vacancy rate in the town centre has been increasing annually and the vacancy rate in the town centre is now higher than the national average (15% across the town centre as a whole in June 2023).
14. West Street has experienced an increase in vacant units, but the vacancy rate has remained below the national average. The 2023 Town Centre Retail Health Check recorded a vacancy rate of approximately 9 % of units. Generally, West Street has a high-quality public realm which benefited from significant investment in the mid-2000's to 2017 and is performing strongly.
15. However, FSC has considerably higher vacancy rates, currently approximately 33%. This figure includes the most recent closure of the Body Shop, as a result of the company entering into administration.
16. It also divides the town, separating the pedestrian shopping area from the Civic Quarter and residential areas beyond. Like most indoor shopping centres, it has fixed times for opening and closing which is of particular concern at night when the centre is closed and the access between the Civic Quarter and West Street bars and restaurants is restricted to narrow alleyways.
17. Such poor connectivity impacts on the potential of Fareham's night-time economy, which the Council is seeking to improve. This is also particularly important to support the future visitor attendance of Fareham Live.
18. The design of FSC provides little daylight penetration into the arcades and in its current form, there are limited redevelopment opportunities available due to extensive rooftop servicing and with FSC approaching 50 years of operation, there are a number of ongoing maintenance requirements for the fabric of the building. Being of dated design, the centre does not provide a particularly attractive or appealing shopping destination.
19. However, the FSC lies at the heart of the town centre and forms a key part of the adopted Local Plan allocation (Policy BL1) with significant potential to positively influence regeneration proposals for the town centre as a whole. It is in a prime location and spatially central to the strategic plans for future placemaking.

20. The Fareham Borough Council Position Statement on Policy BL1, produced and published to support the allocation through the recent Local Plan examination, along with commercial advice received as part of the due diligence process advises that a carefully managed loss of retail floorspace may be justifiable within the wider town centre.
21. The Council has a strong ambition to reverse the decline of Fareham Town Centre through regeneration, recognising the wider placemaking, economic regeneration and health benefits that could potentially be delivered. This could include improved leisure offer, alongside a wider array of food and beverage with entertainment facilities, new homes and improved parking provision as well as a reconsideration of the scale and function of the retail offer.

## **PROGRESS TO DATE**

22. Work has already begun to deliver the Council's significant regeneration ambition for the town centre. Construction of Fareham Live, the exciting new arts and entertainment venue, is underway and due to open in mid-2024. Trafalgar Theatres have been appointed as the operator for the new venue.
23. Work to demolish the existing decaying multi-storey car park at Osborn Road is almost complete. This will be replaced with a new surface car park providing 138 car parking spaces. Additionally, Ferneham Hall and Ferneham Hall (Clinic) car parks are being reconfigured to provide high quality parking spaces with 24 and 31 spaces respectively. Combined these three car parks will provide a total of 193 spaces with 26 accessible and 8 EV charging parking spaces.
24. The Council acquired FSC in September 2023 to enable the wider regeneration of the town centre, by consolidating the land holdings under a single ownership. This is in line with the Council's Vision and Corporate Strategy.
25. Since the purchase of the Centre, our Asset Managers have been focused on asset stabilisation and seeking to drive the Centre forward, in conjunction with the Regeneration Team delivering town centre regeneration work.
26. Ongoing work to proactively manage FSC so far includes:
  - An expenditure review to ensure spend is necessary and effective;
  - Lease management with seven tenants renewing leases, two new lettings and three new lettings in negotiation;
  - Engaging with current large space occupiers to understand their commitment and space requirements going forward;
  - Proactively engaging with operators for meanwhile use such as artwork studios, soft play and indoor markets;
  - Working with the Regeneration Team to develop a link from Fareham Live to West Street;
  - Analysing the shopping centre metrics for the Regeneration Team and providing strategic ideas on the way forward; and
  - Facilitating a 'Fareham at 50' large scale artwork installation in the Centre.

27. Additionally, the Council's Housing Service has exchanged contracts to purchase the Birks Building (also known as Foresters Hall) on West Street for housing purposes.
28. Hampshire Cultural Trust, as the operators of Westbury Manor Museum, have advised that the Museum will be closing in December 2024. Council officers are working closely with the regeneration consultants to consider future options for this important building within the town centre.
29. Regeneration, Asset Management, Housing, Planning, Parking and Leisure & Community Services are working closely together on all town centre projects to ensure a cohesive approach to delivery.

## **REGENERATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

### **Stage 1**

30. Following the acquisition of FSC, the Council moved quickly to secure the necessary skills and capacity to both manage the centre and develop a deliverable and realistic Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.
31. In January of 2024, a stage one report was presented to the Executive which provided a summary of work undertaken since the purchase and a programme for the development of the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. This was accompanied by an 'Initial Engagement Summary Report' and a "Four Pillars" of the Strategy and the Strategic Objectives to guide future work.
32. For ease, the four pillars and five strategic objectives are re-provided below:

#### *Pillars*

- Pride: Grow Pride in our Town
- Purpose: Create new sense of purpose for our town
- Perception: Improve perceptions of our town
- Personality: Restore our town's identity

#### *Objectives*

- Address connectivity issues
- Make the most of Fareham's inherent qualities
- Consolidate retail and introduce new vibrant uses
- Make the Town Centre more attractive
- Create unique selling points

### **STAGE 2**

33. Following on from this initial work, further consultation and engagement was undertaken around the kind of meanwhile and leisure uses people would want to see in the town centre.

34. Between Wednesday 31 January and Thursday 15 February feedback was gathered from Council Officers with two focused workshops, an interactive ideas noticeboard, and a brief on-line questionnaire on favourite independent shops and eateries.
35. Resident engagement was held over half term week (February 10 to 14) via two events, one in the Ping Pong Parlour in FSC for school-aged children and young people, and the second designed to engage younger children and their parents who were invited to contribute through a colouring-in activity. A further 200+ people were engaged during these Stage Two events.
36. The consultant team analysed ideas from Stage 1 and Stage 2 combined with their broader regeneration experience to develop a long list of options for interventions. These interventions range from immediate and short-term ideas through to potential redevelopment options. The Fareham Town Centre Regeneration and Action Plan Optioneering Report at Appendix A provides full details of the long list, alongside an assessment of each proposed intervention against a defined set of criteria.
37. The assessment metrics include time, cost, impact, and deliverability/complexity alongside the five Strategic Objectives to deliver schemes which will best fit the Council's overall town centre regeneration plan.
38. Using this approach, the interventions have been narrowed down to a shorter list for more detailed consideration as part of Stage 3.

## **NEXT STEPS**

39. Stage 3 will progress from mid-March 2024 through to mid-June 2024, with a Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan to be agreed by the Executive in July 2024.
40. A more detailed evaluation of the short-listed options from Stage 2 will be undertaken and will consider which are the most appropriate to take forward into the final Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.
41. Where the intervention proposed has a commercial value (redevelopment opportunities for example), the work will include a high-level feasibility and delivery strategy and will also consider possible delivery risks as well as likely capital investment. Where the intervention is based more in 'placemaking' and improvements to the public realm, concept, design and cost of delivery will all be developed and considered.
42. Engagement with landowners, businesses and residents as well as key public sector bodies will be undertaken on the worked-up interventions to seek views on preferences and priorities.
43. The interventions will all be assessed and considered against the five strategic objectives and four pillars from Stage 1 alongside technical metrics. This will provide a final range of interventions to include in the Strategy and Action Plan. It is not anticipated that all the interventions shortlisted at Stage 2 would be included in the final document. Part of Stage 3 will be to identify the interventions that would deliver the

most effective and deliverable change for the town centre. These will then form the core of the regeneration programme.

### **Funding**

44. Initial funding has been agreed to prepare the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. A high-level funding request for the delivery of the agreed interventions will be included at the next stage of reporting.
45. This will be developed as part of the more detailed evaluation of the short-listed options and will be done in conjunction with both internal officers and the Members Working Group.

### **Governance**

46. Currently governance and oversight are provided by the Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Member Working Group.
47. The Member Working Group has a remit to oversee specific elements of development and delivery the Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.
48. Once the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan has been adopted and moved to delivery phase a more extensive governance structure may be required. This will be considered as part of Stage 3, with proposals included at the next stage of reporting.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

49. No carbon impacts are anticipated as a direct result of the publication of the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan for Fareham Town Centre, although the environment and carbon reduction will be key considerations within the strategy.
50. Individual work streams and interventions will be subject to assessment as they are brought forward for delivery.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

51. Rapid progress has been made on the Corporate Priority to develop a Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan for Fareham Town Centre since the acquisition of FSC in September 2023.
52. The short list of options contained within the Optioneering Report has been developed through significant engagement with a range of residents, officers, members and businesses, alongside detailed technical analysis by our regeneration consultants.
53. The next stage will see further technical assessment, engagement and consultation to refine the options into a deliverable programme of works with the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.

#### **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Kirstin Clow, Regeneration Strategic Lead, 01329 824368





FAREHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



leslie jones  
architecture

Appendix 1

# Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan

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Optioneering, Stage 2 of 3

March 2024

# CONTENTS

- 1.0 The Toolkit-  
Assessment Criteria
- 2.0 Consultation Executive Summary
- 3.0 5 Key Themes
  - 3.01 Quick wins & Early Interventions
  - 3.02 Town Centre Parking
  - 3.03 Public Realm & Placemaking
  - 3.04 Underused & Underutilised buildings
  - 3.05 Bricks & Mortar
- 4.0 Next Steps





1.0

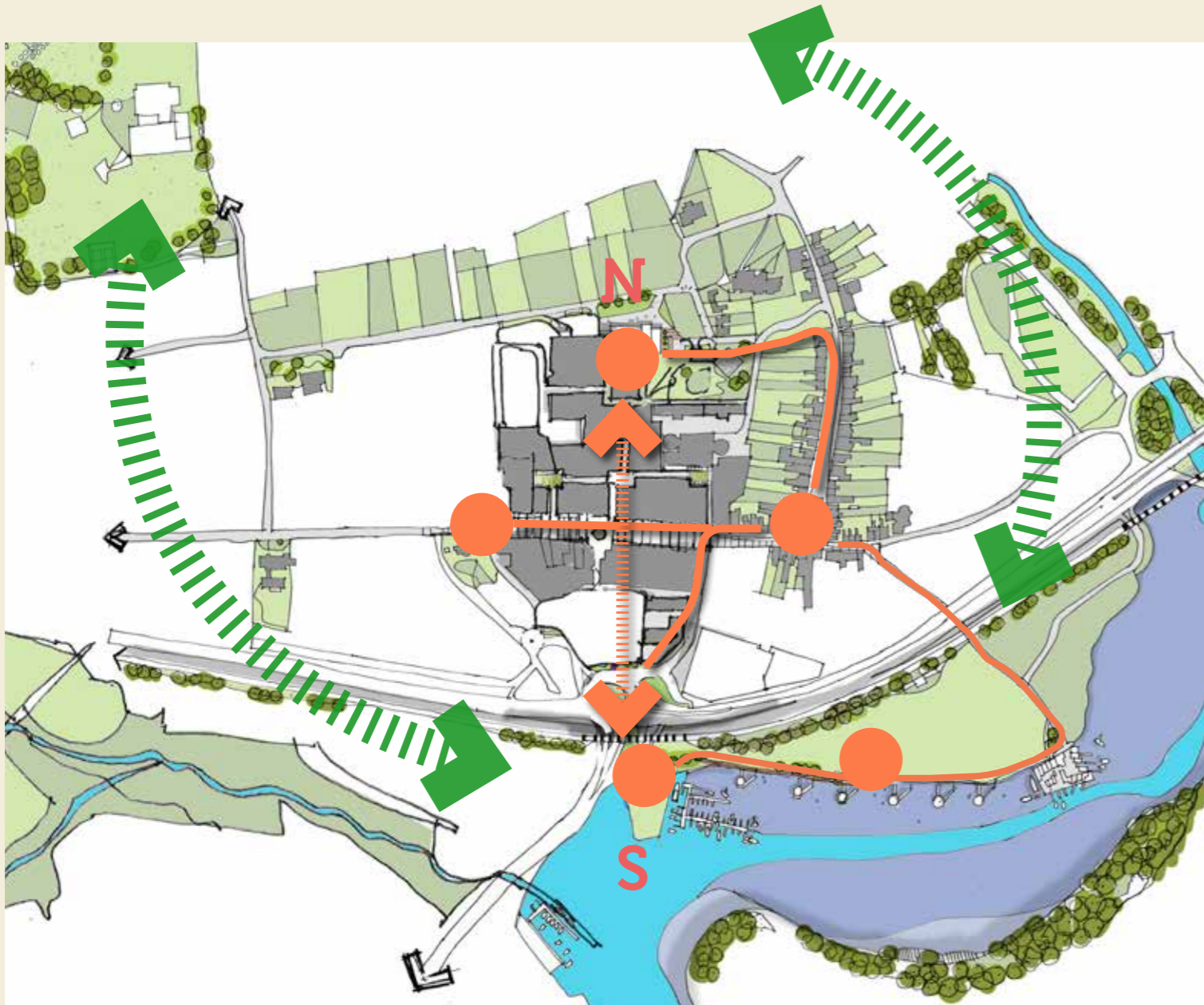
THE TOOLKIT

- 01 Address connectivity issues
- 02 Consolidate retail and introduce new vibrant uses
- 03 Make the most of Fareham's inherent qualities
- 04 Make the Town Centre more attractive
- 05 Create and amplify 'unique selling points'

# Strategic Objective 1

## Address Connectivity issues

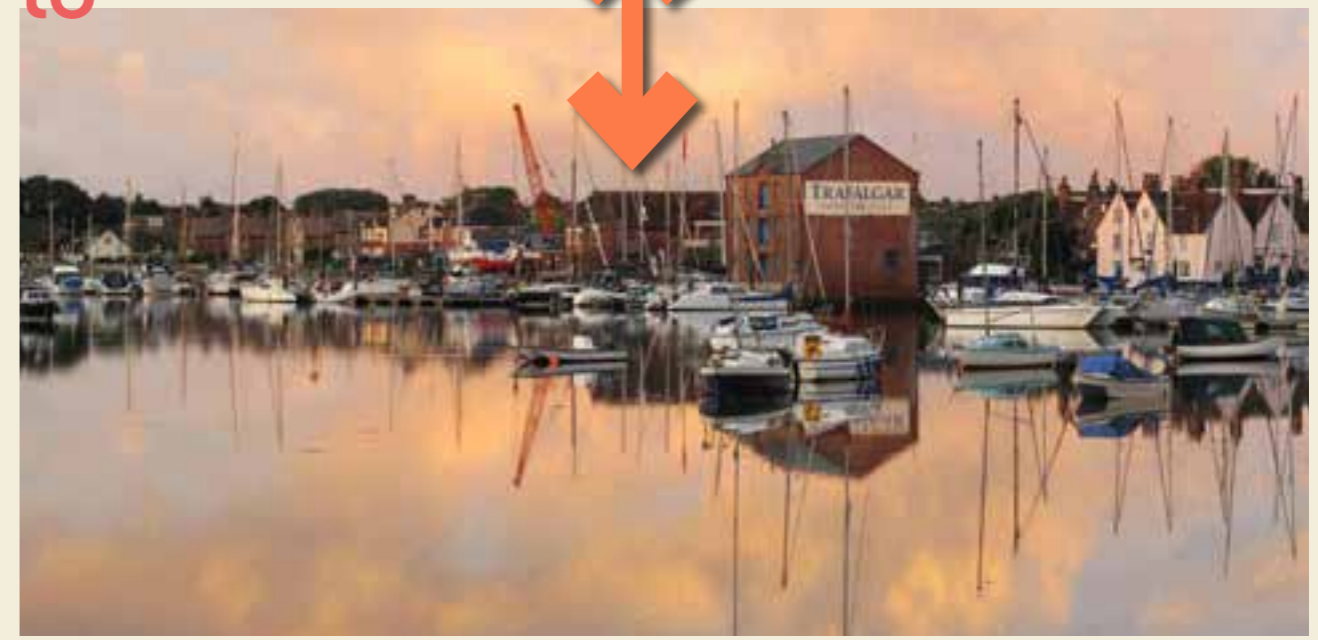
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### Culture



to

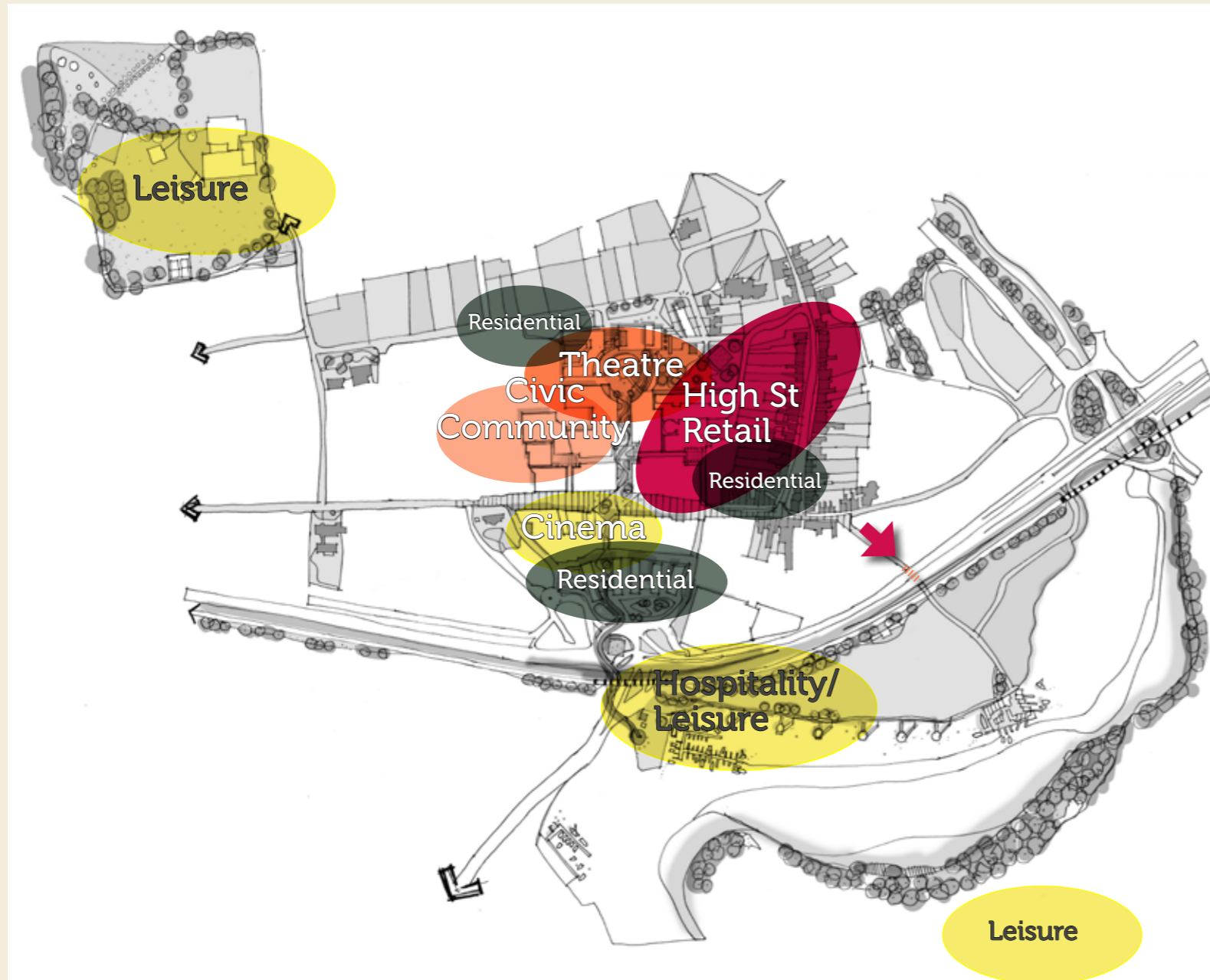


### Creek

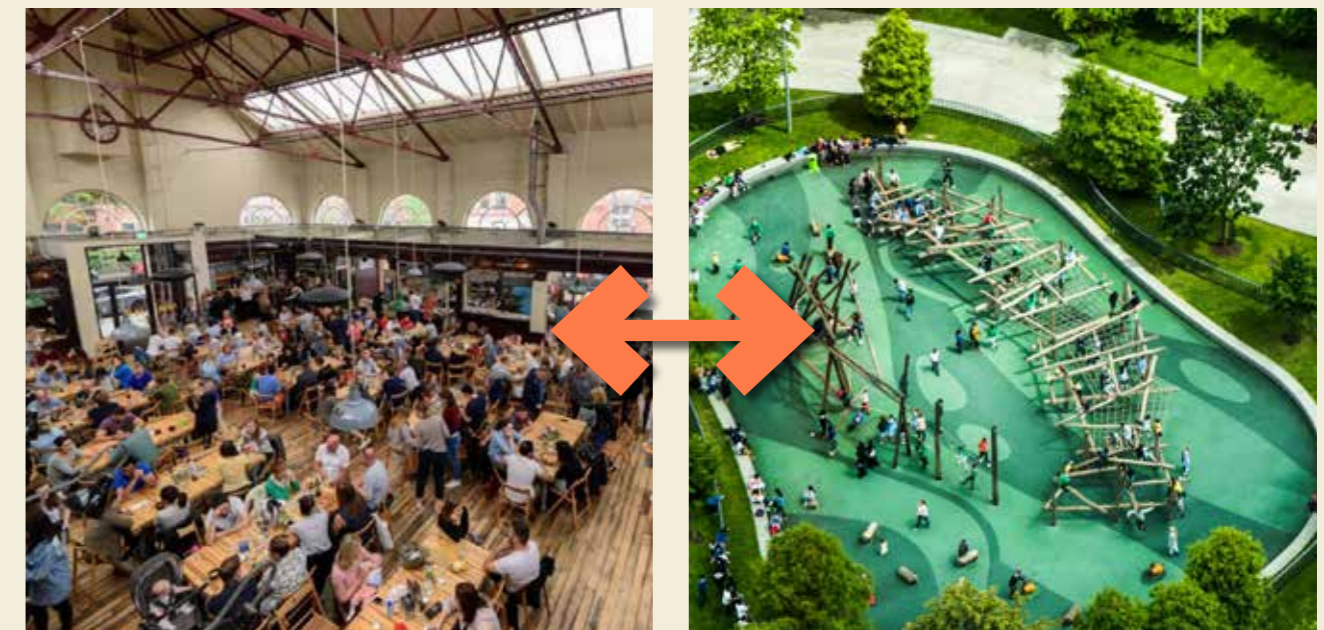
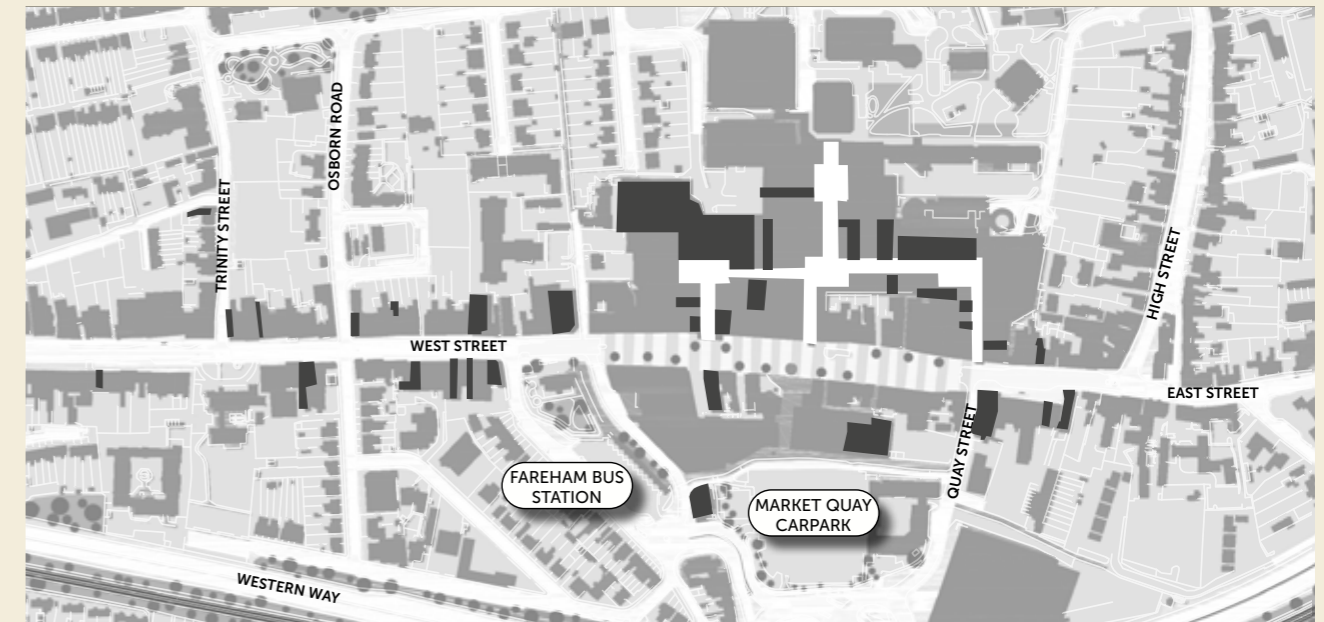
# Strategic Objective 2

## Consolidate retail and introduce new vibrant uses

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### Address the town's void units

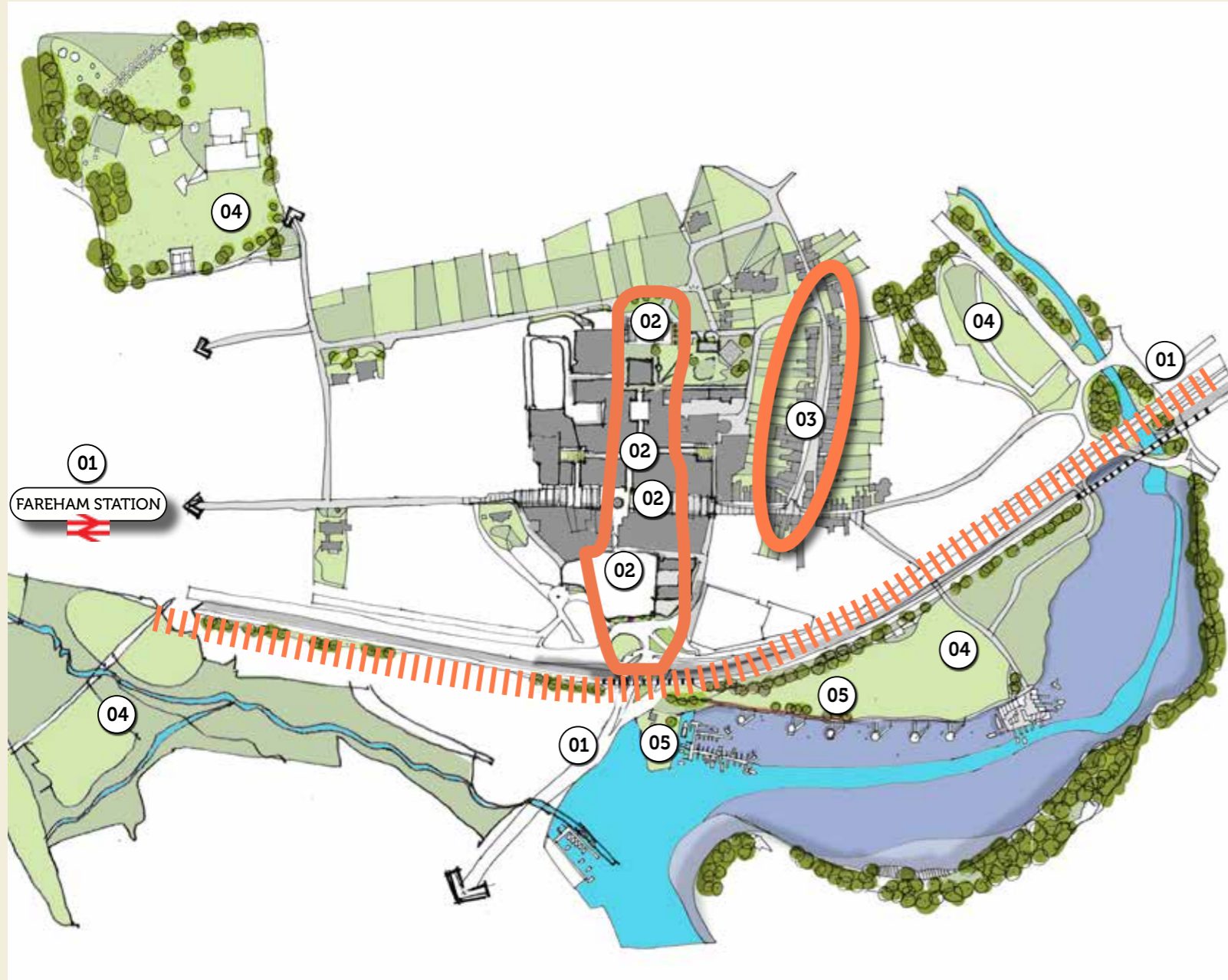


From foodhall/market to play areas to new homes

# Strategic Objective 3

## Make the most of Fareham's inherent qualities

03



- 01 Location and ease of access by road & public transport
- 02 Compact town centre with key use retail/ cinema/theatre/leisure/library/health centre/civic uses
- 03 Excellent heritage & history
- 04 Access to green space
- 05 Access to blue space

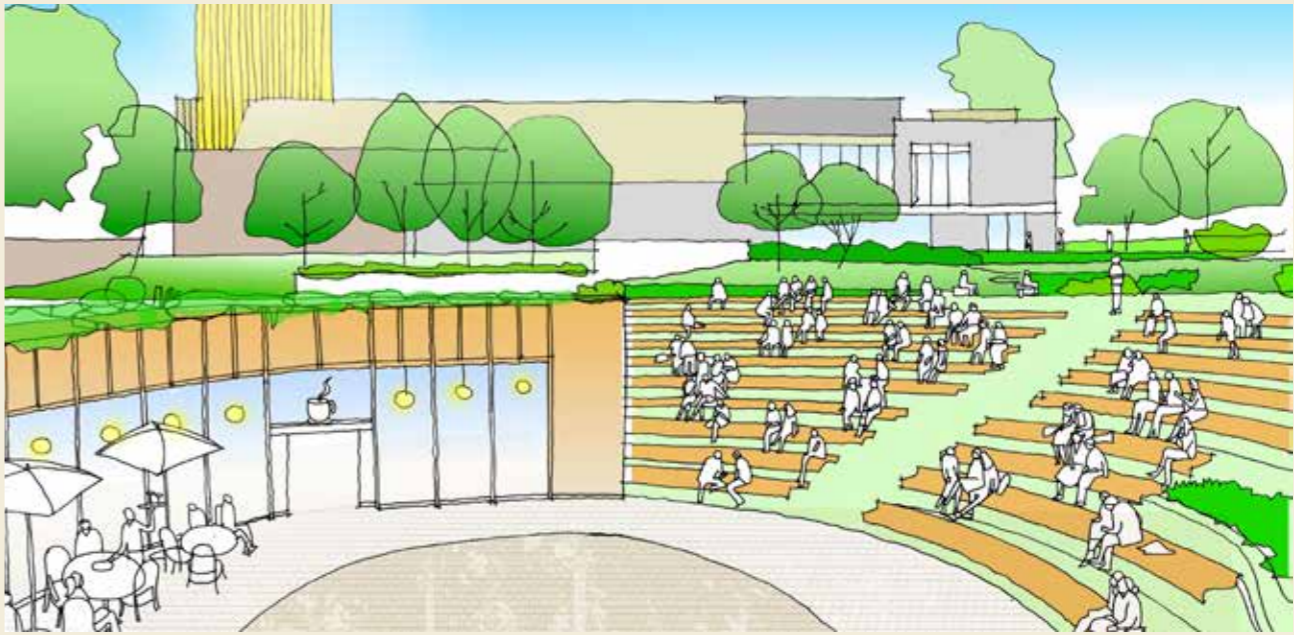
# Strategic Objective 4

## Make the Town Centre more attractive

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Excellent new public realm



From exemplary culture to vibrant streets

# Strategic Objective 5

## Create and amplify 'unique selling points'

05

Family Friendly



Green spaces



Historic High Street



Strong craft&makers culture



Children's play



Theatre



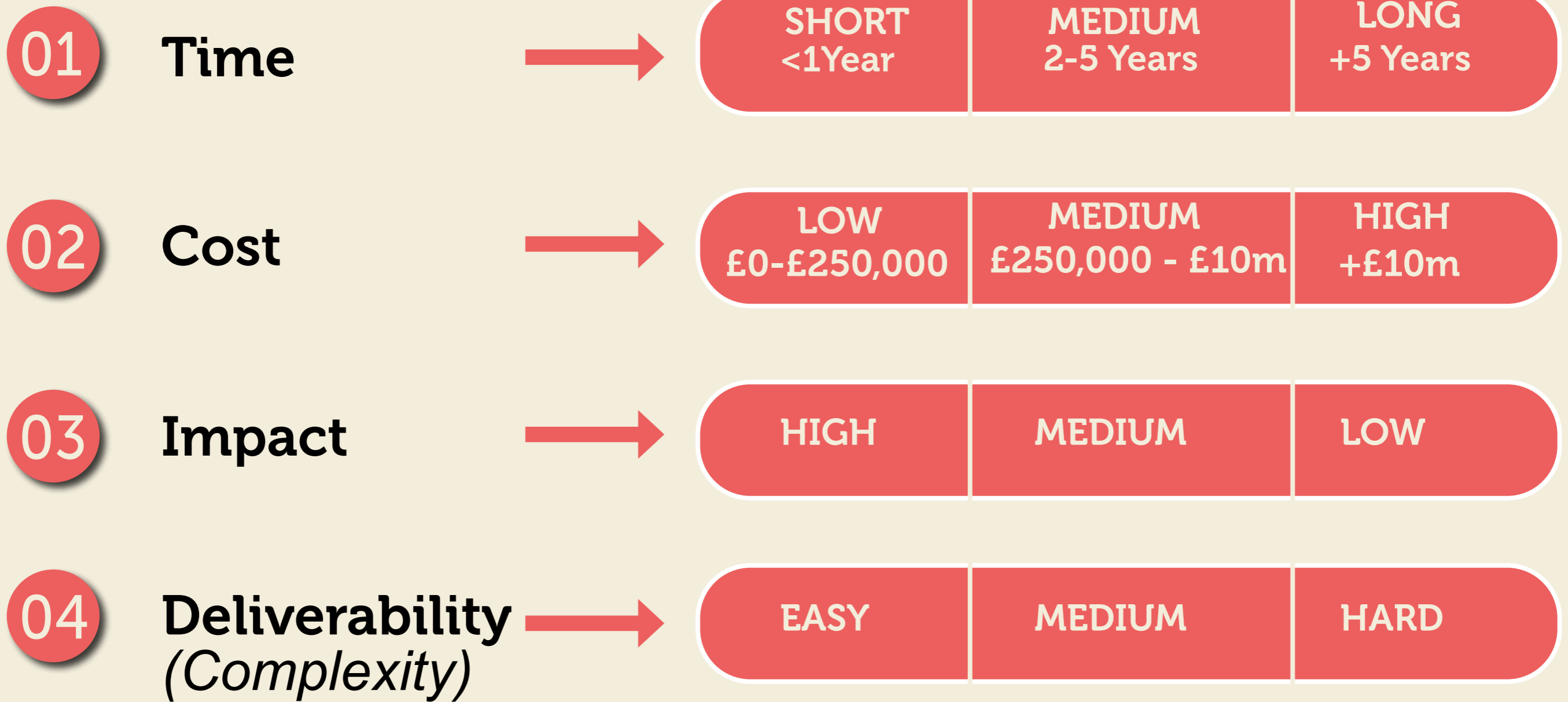
The Creek



Armed Forces Connections

# Schedule of Key Metrics

## 1-4





# Manifesto

## 4 Pillars

It was clear from the first round of consultation and analysis that 4 themes emerged. These are largely drawn from the community's emotional responses to their town which have been used to set a manifesto for the regeneration process. Our collective work will grow pride in Fareham for the communities that live, work and visit the town. We will focus on creating a new sense of purpose for the town which in recent years has lost its way, ensuring this new purpose improves the perception of Fareham. These will build and support the restoration of the town's identity.

**Pride**

Grow Pride  
in our Town

**Purpose**

Create new  
sense of  
purpose for  
our Town

**Perception**

Improve  
perceptions  
of our Town

**Personality**

Restore our  
Town's identity

2.0

REDWOOD  
CONSULTATION  
EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY

# Introduction and Objectives

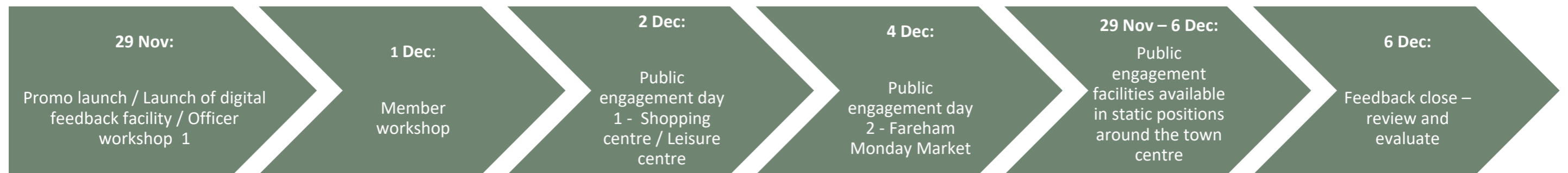
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- Over a period of four months, Redwood Consulting has delivered a public consultation and engagement approach to inform the development of a new regeneration strategy and action plan for Fareham Town Centre, on behalf of Fareham Borough Council.
- This has succeeded in gathering the ideas and views of over 1,100 people across a range of face to face and online platforms.
- Delivered via two phases of consultation, tactics ranged from workshops with officers and councillors, community pop-up events, a coordinated press and social campaign and digitally enabled-questionnaires and interactive notice board.
- Engagement was publicised via publicly-recognised council-owned channels, newsletters and the media. This included Live, Love, Local, Lets Talk Fareham and shopping centre channels.
- Recognising a potential USP to make Fareham the Hampshire destination for families following the feedback from phase 1, a thread of the phase 2 campaign focussed on harnessing the views of young people, parents and carers.
- ‘Let’s Make Fareham Fun’ ran over half term and included a colouring in competition and an engagement pop in a local ping pong parlour. An additional theme of phase 2 focussed around meanwhile and interim uses.
- This report summarises the finding of this four month long campaign.

# Engagement timeline

## STAGE 1 – 29 Nov – 6 Dec 2023

Questions focussed on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as discussing ideas around increasing pride and improving Fareham’s housing offer.



These findings formed the basis of the 5 strategic objectives and 4 pillars which influenced the evolving list of options for the town centre strategy.

Stage 2 sought to finesse these further as well as explore themes of family leisure.

## STAGE 2 – 31 Jan – 15 Feb 2024

Questions “drilled down” into the themes of Fareham as a family destination and identifying possible meanwhile or early intervention activity.



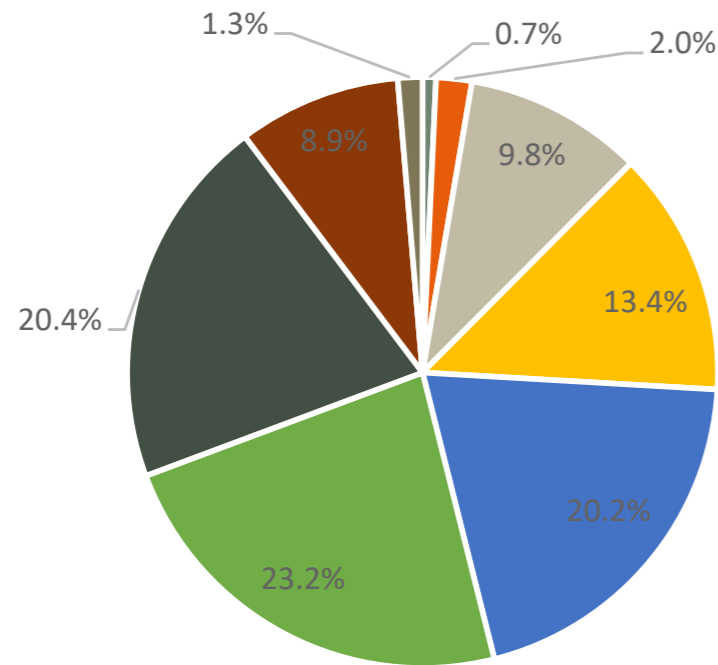
# Interaction highlights

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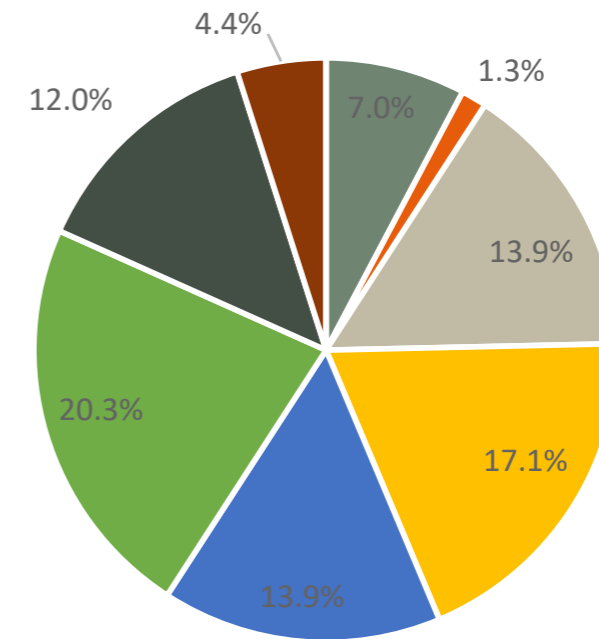
- The process achieved positive levels of engagement and over the course of the period with over 1,100 people interacting via the various mediums available.
- This included:
  - **139** physical feedback forms submitted across phase 1 and 2.
  - **874** digital feedback forms submitted via the online forum for phases 1 and 2.
  - **30** key officers engaged with during both phase 1 and 2.
  - **24** businesses within the shopping centre and wider town centre in phase 1.
  - **34** colouring in sheets were completed by children at the colouring in workshop in phase 2.

# Demographics stage 1 and stage 2

Stage 1 – age demographic



Stage 2 – age demographic



■ Under 18 ■ 18 - 24 ■ 25 - 34 ■ 35 - 44 ■ 45 - 54 ■ 55 - 64 ■ 65 - 74 ■ 75 - 84 ■ 85+

■ Under 18 ■ 18 - 24 ■ 25 - 34 ■ 35 - 44 ■ 45 - 54 ■ 55 - 64 ■ 65 - 74 ■ 75 - 84 ■ 85+

- **Stage 1 specific:** 87.5% completed the feedback as a resident, 6.3% as a business and 6.3% as a visitor.
- **Stage 2 specific:** Most respondents identified as a wider member of the public (41.8% of respondents), closely followed by parent or carer (38.6% of respondents). 19 people (or 12% of respondents) identified as a local young person.

# Stage 1 – Executive summary

## What do you think Fareham Town Centre’s housing offer should look like?

The most frequently raised issues included:

- 1) Affordable housing for local people,
- 2) Questions around the need for housing,
- 3) The desire to repurpose space
- 4) Ensure a level of architectural integrity around what is delivered / created.

There is a need to educate and inform about the value housing can bring to enlivening the town centre and meeting housing needs, to drive interest and understanding early in the process.

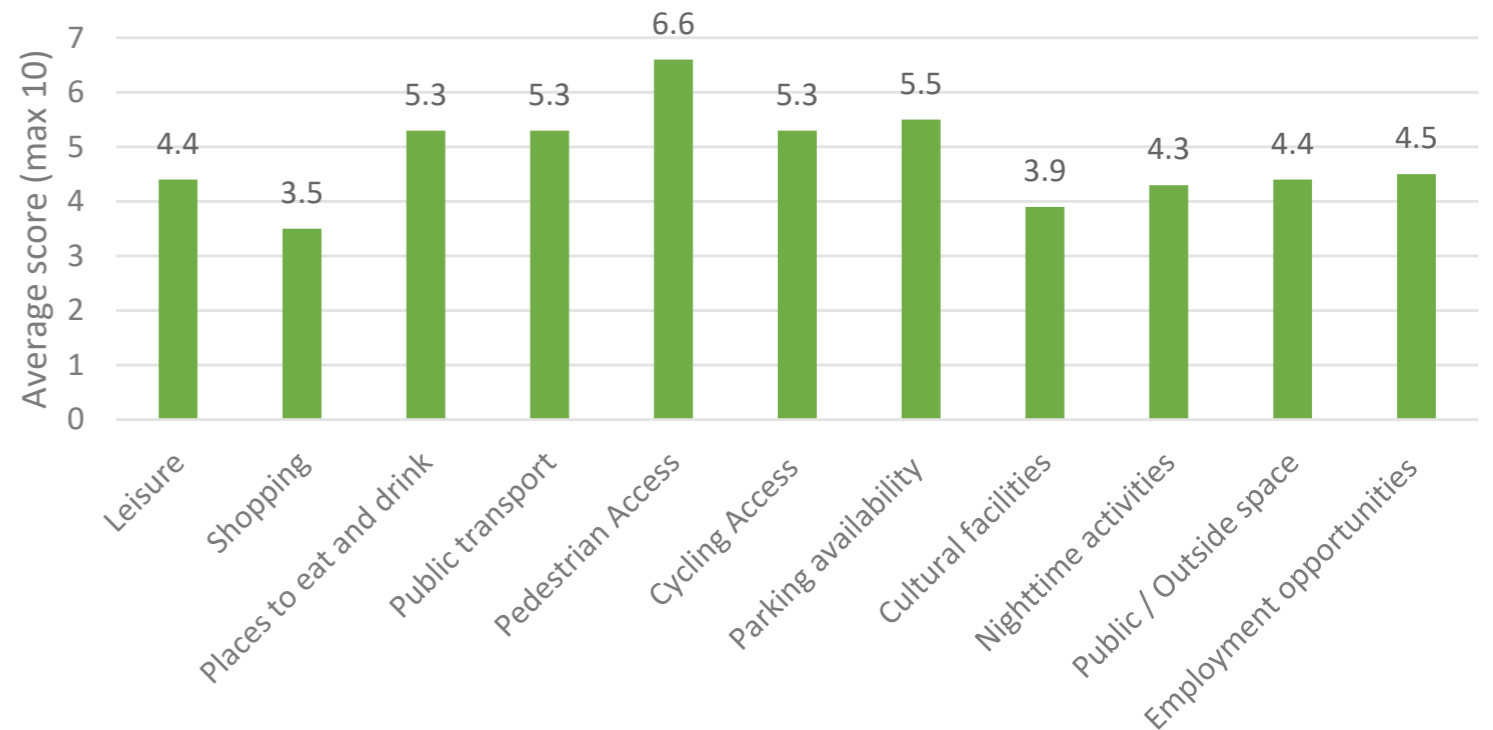
## What would make you prouder of the Town Centre?

The most frequently raised issues included:

- 1) Better retail and leisure facilities,
- 2) Regeneration to create a USP,
- 3) Clean and improved public realm,
- 4) Fostering community spirit
- 5) Creation of a better quality of built environment.

The ongoing proposals should therefore seek to create an identity and distinctive experience that aligns with and enhances the current character and reasons for patronage.

## When thinking why you visit and / or use Fareham Town Centre, how would you rate Fareham’s current offering / uses?



The average is based on a score out of 10, 1 being very poor and 10 being very good. The highest scoring option was pedestrian access with an average score of 6.6.

## Key findings

Fareham Town Centre is seen as a **convenient, functional & local Shopping Offer**

The reversal of **declining retail and leisure** in the town is important to us

Better **connections** and **improved user experience** is vital to creating **vitality** in our town centre.

Fareham has lost its way, we need to **bring back pride in our town** – events, enhance our heritage, promote the good.

We are undecided on town centre housing – but **Whiteley, Chichester and Gunwharf living looks positive.**

**A safe environment** is important to us

**Quality** is important to us – new buildings, landscape need to reflect **Fareham’s character.**

When is this going to happen – is this another false dawn – **we want certainty – trust is key to us.**

**What is a masterplan?** – have we not had one of these before.

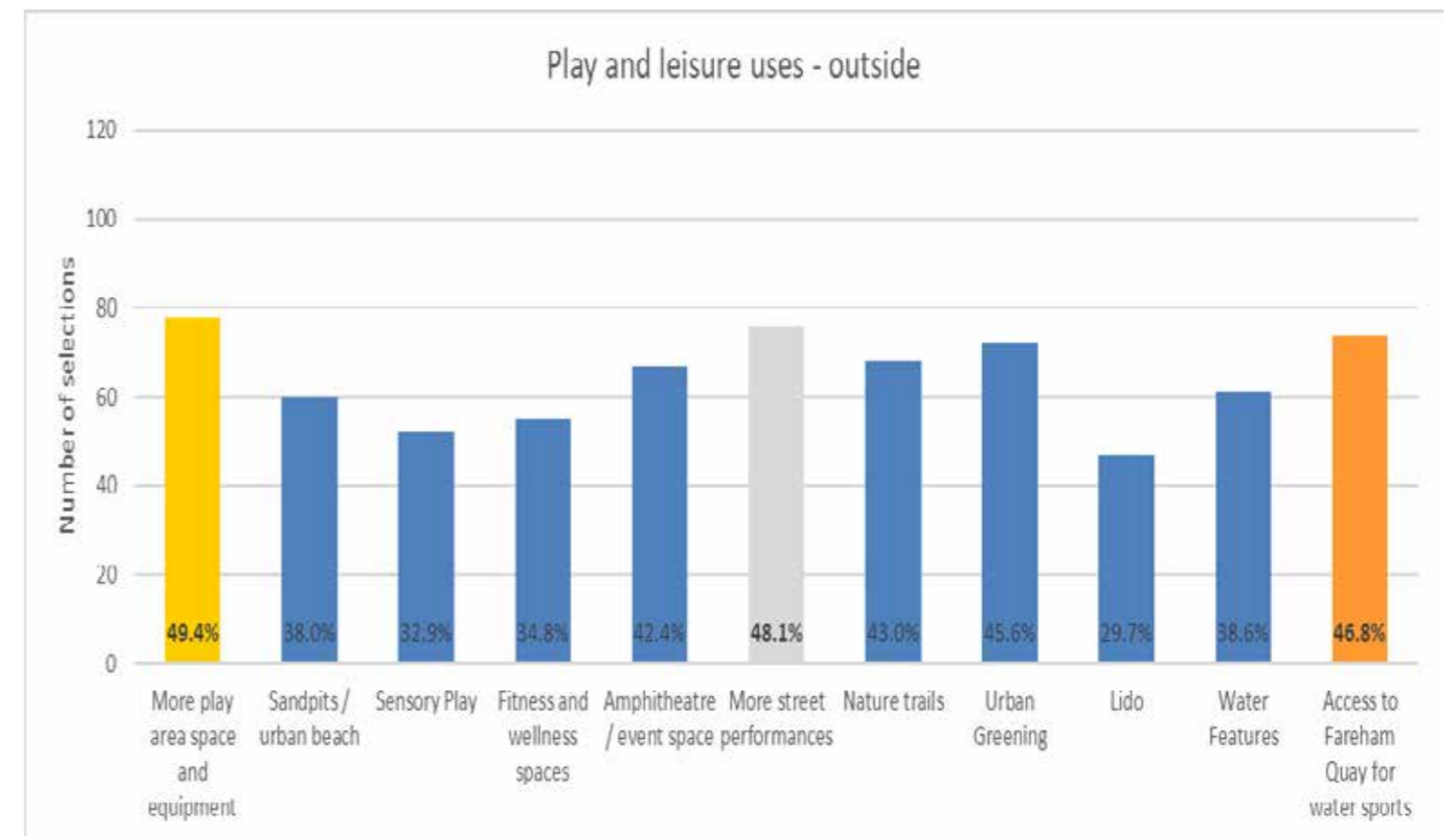
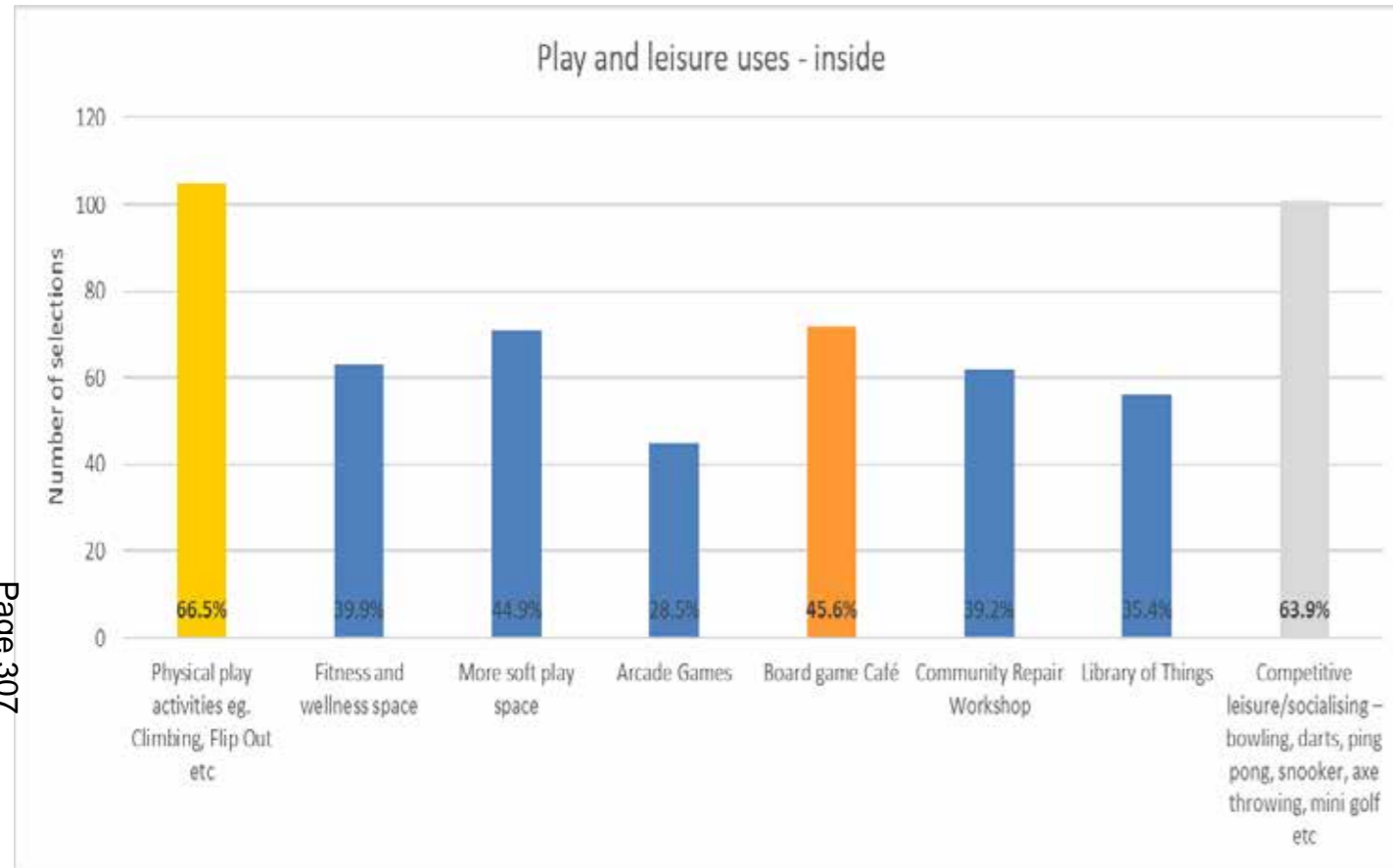
## Stage 2 – Executive summary

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- **Play space** is a key consideration as something that people would like to see change or improve in the town centre. Developing what is perceived as a positive addition to the soft play area and outdoor play area could be considered with a wider-ranging play offer for younger people that could include facilities such as a climbing walls or other play.
- **Parking** is a persistent issue that residents are keen to change, whether it is made free to better compete with Whiteley or be modulated in order to accommodate target groups like young families. A broader parking solution could be explored which addresses wider accessibility and wayfinding challenges for visitors.
- **Green space** was another common theme raised through both public and officer feedback, with a perception that some of the landscaping within Fareham Town Centre is too “hard” and could be softened via planting, parks, trees and other green spaces to create a more inviting street scene.
- **Public activities and events**, in addition to those already provided locally were raised frequently as positive change that could be introduced in Fareham Town Centre, whether this was having more events through the calendar year or amplifying activities already going on.
- Both public and officer feedback stressed a desire to see **indoor and outdoor market** activity introduced into Fareham Town Centre.
- It was agreed by most respondents that the **shopping centre in its current form was no longer meeting its full potential** as a retail space or as a functioning part of the wider town centre.
- The idea of introducing **new, exciting leisure uses around experiential play** such as mini golf, axe throwing, indoor play area, and board games cafés was popular across both officer and members of the public.

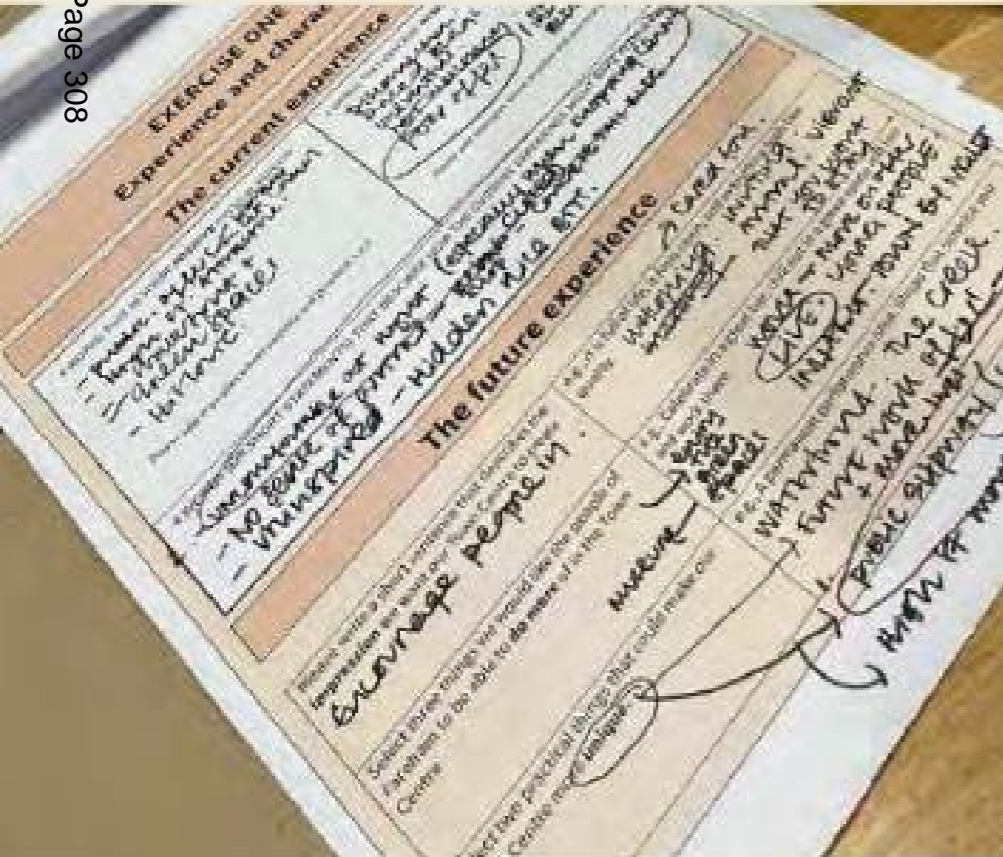


# Stage 2 – Make Fareham Fun



**What do you like currently about Fareham's play and leisure offer?** Comments from respondents suggested that Fareham Town Centre's leisure and play offer was satisfactory for young children but lacking more generally for young people. The soft play was often cited as a positive contribution to play and leisure in the town centre, as well as other establishments like Vito Lounge and Slug & Lettuce for older people, but that provision was generally limited.

**What else would improve Fareham for families and young people?** Respondents suggested that additional green space would be a positive addition for families and young people, and more programmed events and activities, either free or affordable to encourage people to make repeat visits to Fareham Town Centre. More child and family-friendly spaces were also suggested; examples of what these could be included cafes with spill-out spaces outside. It was also suggested that efforts should be made to make the town centre more accessible for families and young people, whether this was cheaper parking, or more frequent public transport services running for longer periods in the day to allow younger people to travel without relying on families to drop off and pick up.



# Phase 2



**Fareham Borough Council**  
 News | 16/02/2024 | Tuesday 10:43 AM | 47

To us here we can improve play and leisure for all ages in the town centre. We are inviting ideas from everyone and are particularly keen to hear from young people, parents or carers of young children to help make Fareham more family friendly. The Let's Talk events programme will run on the following dates:

- **Design your dream play space** - join us for a colouring workshop to design your dream play space, 10am-1pm on Saturday 10 February in Osborn Square (by the 50play).
- **Make Fareham Fun consultation** - Take a look at some of the themes and ideas around what let's talk could be improved or added to the town centre on Tuesday 13 February in the Ping Pong Parlour, Fareham Shopping Centre.

You can also take part in a survey (link in the comments below) 🙌

**Let's Talk**  
Fareham Town Centre

**Fareham Town Centre**  
**Let's make Fareham Fun**

**Let's Talk**  
Fareham Town Centre

**Why change Fareham Town Centre?**  
 Now that the Council has bought Fareham Shopping Centre, there is a real and exciting opportunity for change.

We had a fantastic response to our first round of public consultation last year and have used your feedback to develop "4 Pillars" or themes and 5 Key Strategic Objectives that any regeneration of Fareham Town Centre must seek to address.

**Our 4 Pillars**

- **Pride:** Grow Pride in our Town
- **Purpose:** Create a new sense of purpose for our Town
- **Perception:** Improve perceptions of our Town
- **Personality:** Restore our Town's identity

**Our 5 Key Strategic Objectives**

1. Address connectivity issues
2. Revitalize retail and introduce new vibrancy
3. Make the most of Fareham's inherent qualities
4. Make the Town Centre more attractive
5. Create a unique selling point(s)

We now want to work up a list of ideas and interventions which could help change our town centre for the better. We'll use these ideas to inform the development of a regeneration and Strategic Action Plan and turn some of these ideas into reality.

For more information about the future regeneration of Fareham Town Centre, please contact [consultations@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@fareham.gov.uk)

**FAREHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Give us your ideas on what you would like to see in Fareham Town Centre, as we recognise that the town centre needs more activities and things to draw people in, spend more time here and be welcoming for families.

We would also like you to tell us your best ideas about play space and leisure activities that you think could change the town centre for the better.

Share your views and help us shape the future of Fareham Town Centre - we are open to hearing all imaginative (and fun!) ideas.

[Share your views](#)

Share this with family & friends

## Fareham Town Centre Regeneration

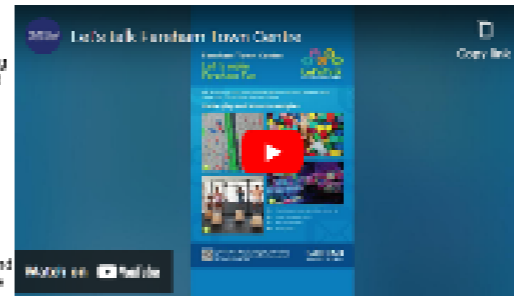
February 2024 - Let's make Fareham Fun

We are asking for ideas that could be explored to improve the town centre, building on the feedback received from over 1,000 people last year. We are also interested in exploring how the town centre can provide more, and improved, multi-generational play and leisure facilities.

We are taking ideas from everyone and are particularly keen to hear from young people, parents/carers of young children to help make Fareham more family friendly. The Let's Talk events programme will run on the following days:

- **Design your dream play space** - join us for a colouring workshop to design your dream play space, 10am-1pm on Saturday 10 February in Osborn Square (by the 50play).
- **Make Fareham Fun consultation** - Take a look at some of the themes and ideas around what let's talk could be improved or added to the town centre on Sunday 11 February 11 February in the Ping Pong Parlour, Fareham Shopping Centre.

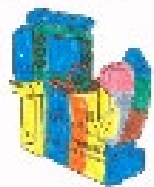
If you can't attend one of the above events, you can still have your say by completing this [quick survey](#) or by emailing any ideas to [consultations@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@fareham.gov.uk). These are requested by Wednesday 14 February however we will continue to review any feedback received after this period.



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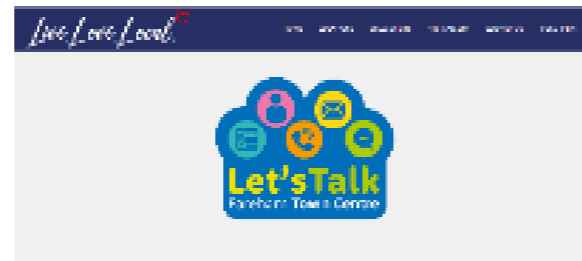
Design your dream play space - workshop competition  
 Name: Mia Age: 5



Design your dream play space - workshop competition  
 Name: Mia Age: 5



Design your dream play space - workshop competition  
 Name: Rayleigh Age: 7



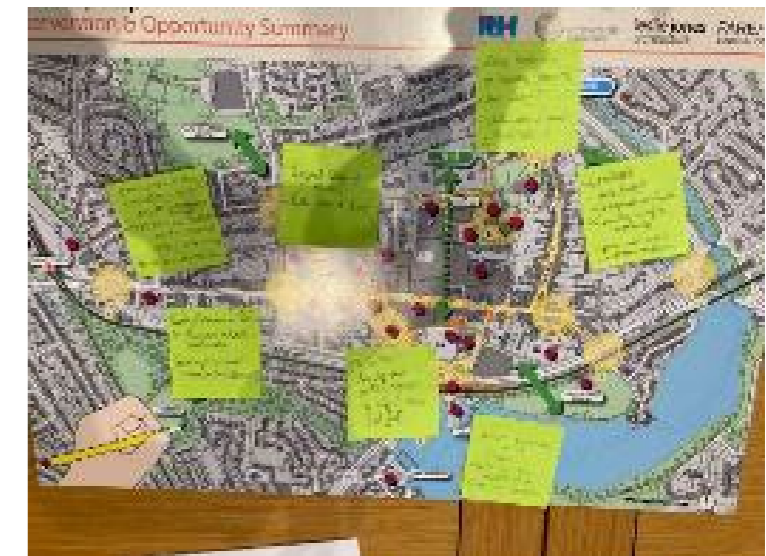
Design your dream play space - workshop competition  
 Name: Rayleigh Age: 7



Design your dream play space - workshop competition  
 Name: Rayleigh Age: 7



Design your dream play space - workshop competition  
 Name: Rayleigh Age: 7



3.0

KEY THEMES

# 5 Key Themes

## 1-5

---

- 01 Quick wins & Early Interventions**  
*- 'softer' activity, both physical changes & marketing/brand activity*
- 02 Town Centre Parking**  
*- consolidation, configurations & quality*
- 03 Public Realm & Placemaking**  
*- how it is used, how it interacts with the built environment & could it be improved?*
- 04 Underused or Underutilised Buildings**  
*- bringing them back to life*
- 05 Bricks & Mortar**  
*- strategic sites in the town centre*

3.01

QUICK  
WINS & EARLY  
INTERVENTIONS

# Quick Wins & Early Interventions

## Existing North/South Connection

# 3.01



Restricted Walkway



Plain Interior Design

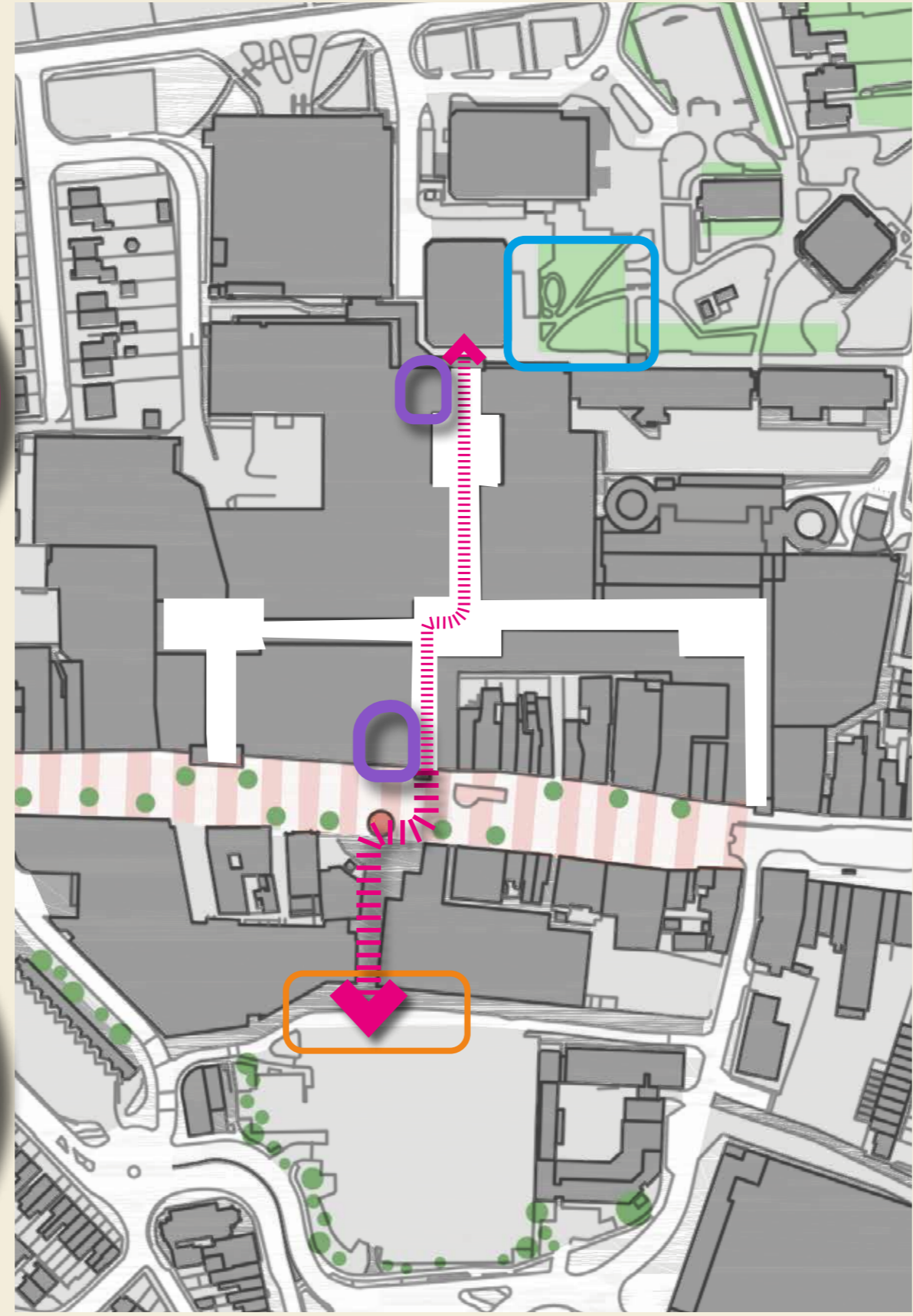
Page 313



Blank Facades



Wasted Potential



Blank Facades

Underused Space= lack of 'eyes on the street'



Underused Space



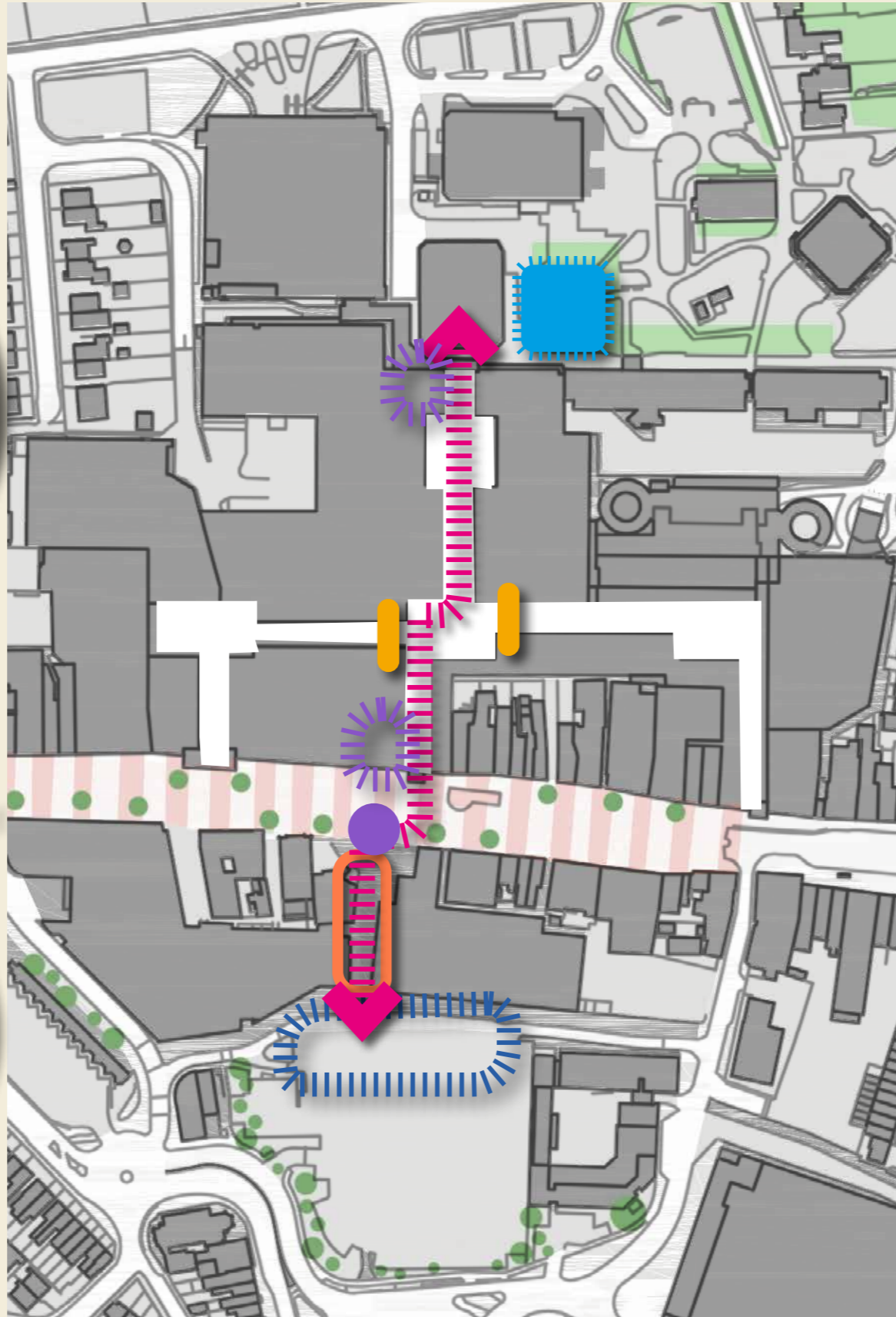
Poor Public Realm



# Quick Wins & Early Interventions

## 1- North/South Link Activation, Temporary Interventions

# 3.01



Page 314



# Quick Wins & Early Interventions

## 1- North/South Link Activation, Temporary Interventions

# 3.01

Reconfigure the existing public realm and create a temporary park in the space outside Fareham Library. This will improve visual connectivity and support the initial North South Route while longer term interventions are planned.



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## 02 - Place - Light the Viaduct

## 03 - Build Fareham Place Brand

## 04 - Town Centre Promotions & Events Task Force



Early development of brand Fareham creating a point of difference and wonder in the town centre. Obtain consent and install architectural feature lighting to the viaducts. Fully addressable colour changing lighting with projection capability. Create themed shows to tie in with local events and seasonal activities.



Establish a long-term place positioning for Fareham. Use this positioning to create a compelling narrative and character that will (in the longer term) build a differentiated and authentic Fareham identity and create (in the short term) consistent core messaging for communication and promotion.

Engage local businesses and organisations to use the Fareham narrative in their marketing and communication to maximise its reach and effectiveness.



Identify and deploy a specialist team to undertake and coordinate promotional activities across the town for an initial period of 12 months. The focus would be on the launch of Fareham Live and the existing event program with new events developed to support and enhance the program. This could develop into the formal coordination of wider business activities and services across the town centre, with a team consisting of representatives from the Council, Fareham Live, Shopping Centre, retailers and other business located in the town centre.

## 05 - Event - Amplify Existing Events



Consultation identified significant support for existing events, in particular the Christmas lights switch on. Carry out an analysis of the most popular events and invest in ways to “super charge” them – to make them even better and more popular. This builds on the Town Centre Task Force work, previously identified.

## 06 - Event- Create new Community Events, Fareham Festival



Create a range of annual community focused events designed to bring the various groups and interests in the town together. This could be ‘wacky races’ style events racing in homemade prams between eateries and pubs, ‘yarn bombing’ competition or a dedicated annual craft fair to support the makers and crafters of Fareham. Bring all the attributes of Fareham together in one event a something for all series of attractions to firmly establish Fareham in the regions calendar of events.

## 07 - Event - Monthly Forces Day



To celebrate the towns deep affiliation with the armed forces and using the specialist team described above create a programme that celebrates this relationship. For example, an armed forces event on a monthly basis, including a vouchers and discounts scheme at local shops, restaurants and bars. Meet the veteran’s day. Charitable events and fund raising.

## 08 - Place - Kids/Youth Activity Areas



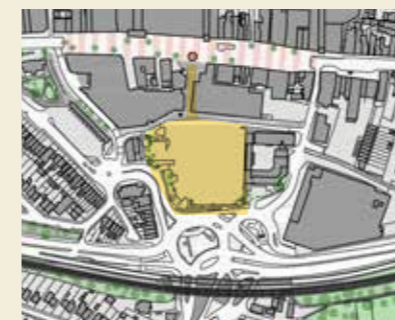
Page 318

Fareham as a place for families and children was a strong theme in the responses to the engagement activities. Identify opportunity for children's play areas in the public realm and within underutilised units such as Debenhams and others in the shopping centre. Aim to cater for a broad age range. Link with catering uses to encourage participation. Seek operators and partners to supply innovative activities to ensure families are well catered for in the town centre.

## 09 - Place - Market Quay Intervention



Create a temporary destination to provide a more attractive place to dwell. Provide additional pop-up food options and such as coffee and street food. Use temporary dressing techniques to provide wind barrier and definition as well as aligning the space with the activation within the shopping centre and helping to unify the north south route. Link to viaduct lighting initiative to further promote the southerly aspect.



## 10 - Place - High Street Farmers Market



Repurpose a handful of street parking spaces at the bottom of High Street on Saturdays to facilitate weekly farmers and creators markets and generally promotes dwell time and vibrancy of High Street. Include a temporary road closure of Union Street. Bring pop-up catering and coffee to drive foot fall.



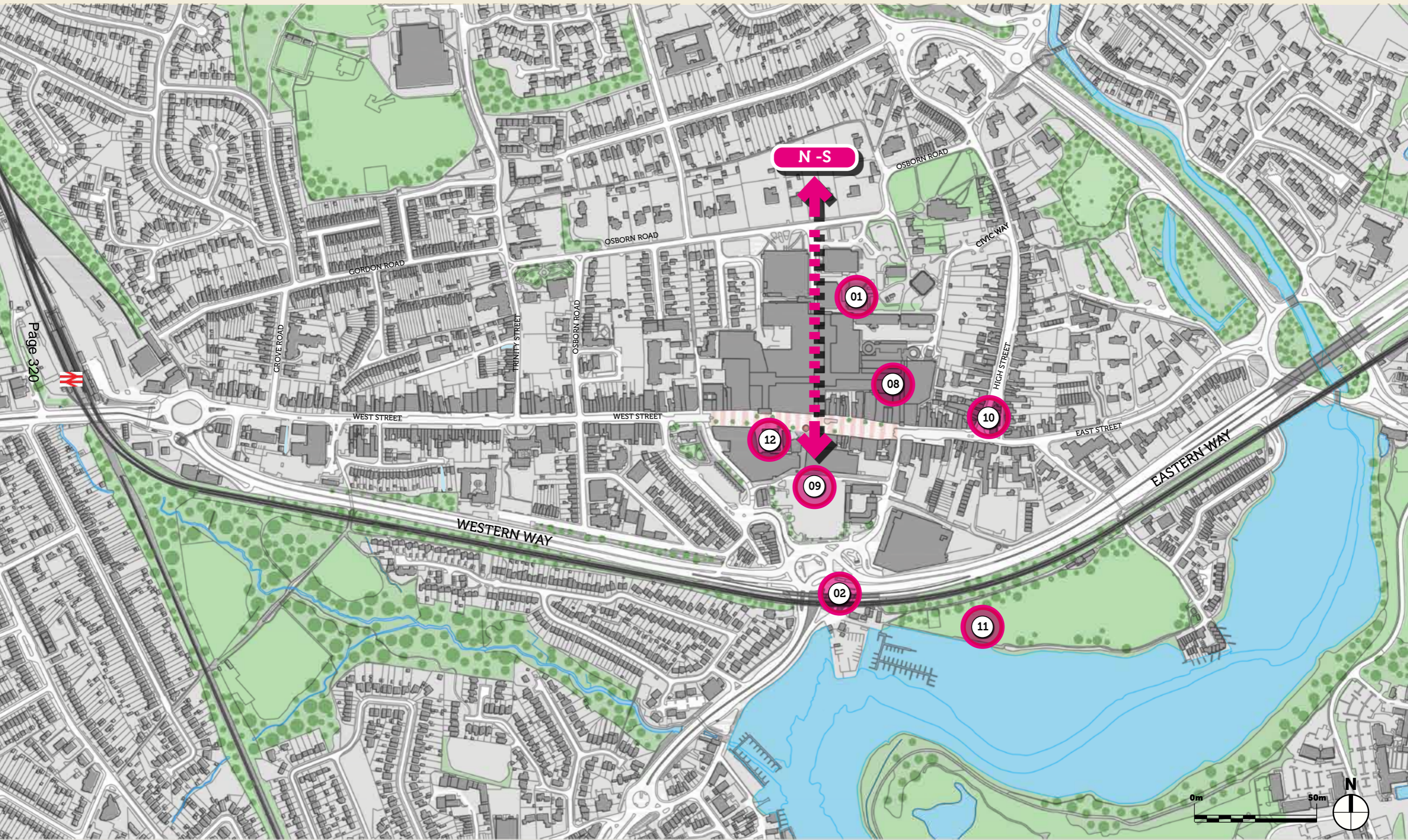
## 11 - Place - The Recreation Ground - BBQ/ Boardwalk



Page 319

Ahead of more permeant public realm improvements trial some additional seating, temporary BBQ facilities and pop up catering facilities to promote dwell time particularly through the summer months





3.02

TOWN CENTRE  
PARKING

# Improving Car Parking and Way Finding

## Optimum quantity, location and price

# 3.02

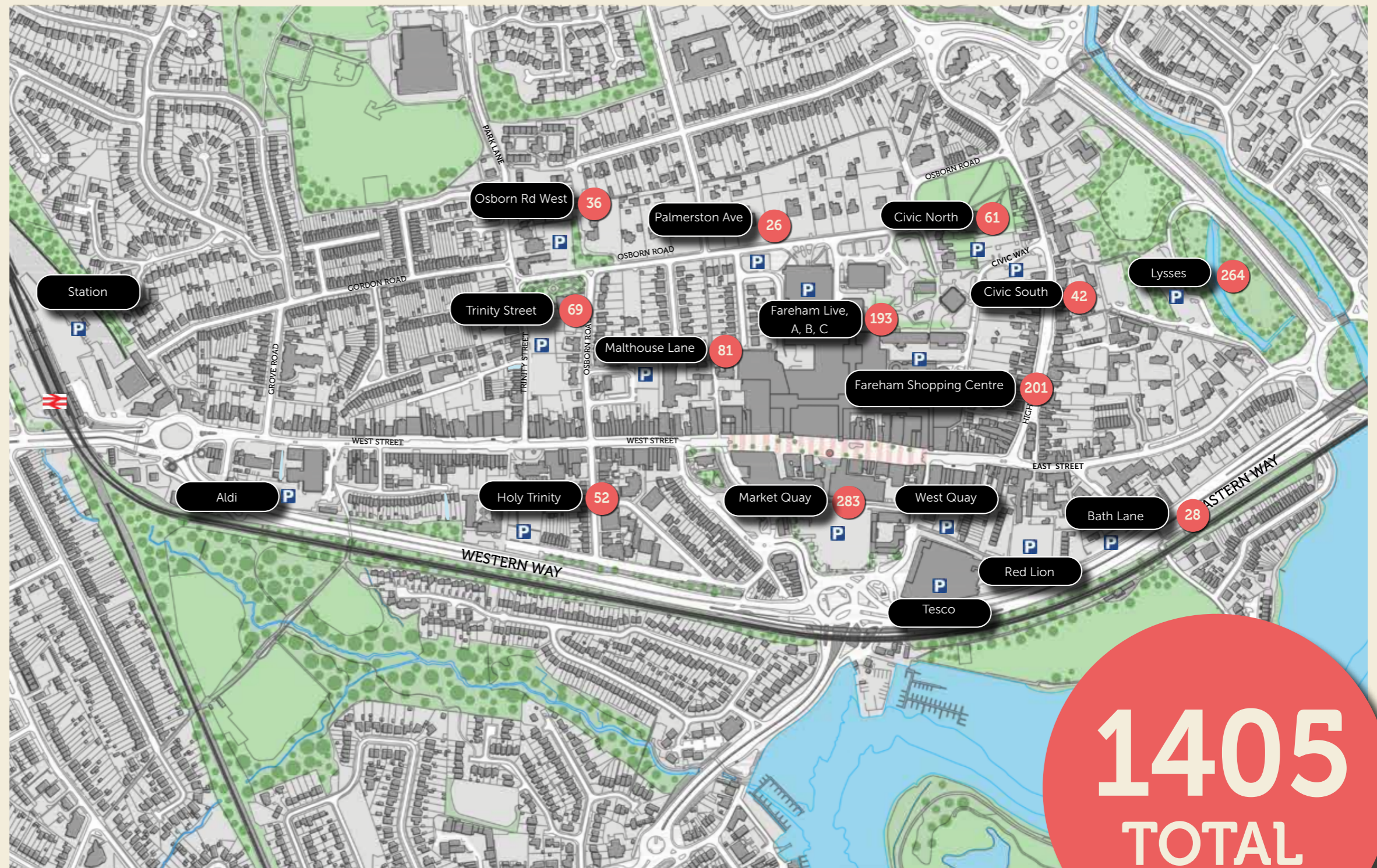


Undertake a strategic review of both the publicly and privately operated town wide parking provision. This would consider:

Page 322

- location, accessibility and usage of the car parks;
- the effectiveness of the current traffic movement around the town centre and possible improvements, including considering the one-way element on Trinity Road and Osborn Road;
- town centre wide wayfinding and real time information to facilitate the best parking experience possible;
- the key gateway arrival points into the centre and how these could be enhanced to deliver a sense of destination, including signage, branding and art;

The outcome would be a strategic plan for the optimum location and quantum of parking to best support the town centre going forward. The plan would also provide wayfinding, signage and movement strategies to support the car parking provision and ensure the town is easy to access, legible and attractive for the visitor.





3.03

PUBLIC REALM &  
PLACEMAKING

## 01 - Cremer Mall/Market Quay Car Park



Page 324

Explore the reconfiguration of the public realm to the front of the leisure uses fronting the Market Quay car park and Cremer Mall. Create a sense of place and destination to support existing uses and encourage new uses into vacant buildings. Reconsider the car parking layout to improve legibility and better direct pedestrians.

## 02 - Civic Gardens



Reconsider and redesign the public realm of the Civic Gardens. This will provide high quality setting for Fareham Live, form part of the north-south link to West Street and provide a new and legible civic space. This space should include seating and play areas as well as the potential for external performance space alongside food and beverage provision.

## 03 - High Street



Seek to improve the quality of the public realm to reflect the heritage of the area. This should include hard landscaping, soft planting, parking arrangements, improved seating, street furniture, signage and lighting. Build on the Farmers Market initiative to create a defined place or pocket park area at the junction with Union Street. Investigate availability of Heritage Lottery Grants.

## 04 - West Street - Pedestrianised



Explore ways to improve the quality of the pedestrianised area of West Street. Bring in soft planting alongside improved seating, play areas, street furniture, signage and lighting to create "Pockets of Joy". Consider this section of West Street as a destination and not a through route.

## 05 - Quay Street



Improve the quality of the public realm of Quay Street to promote access to the recreation ground from the town centre. Including lighting and signage. In the long term this would align with the potential redevelopment of the eastern element of the shopping centre and the possible continuation of Quay Street towards the civic centre buildings.

## 06 - The Recreation Ground Water's Edge



Look to better utilise the recreation ground public footpath along the waters edge for town centre visitors. This could include a new board walk overlooking the creek, community barbeque provisions, quality play areas with playable space as well as dedicated play equipment. Make the area a focus for community events which require a larger area than the town centre can provide.

## 07 - Market Quay Roundabout



Explore with highways the possibility of re-sequencing the traffic lights to simplify the pedestrian crossing and wayfinding from the town centre to the recreation ground. This includes reviewing the pedestrian movements across the Market Quay Roundabout to potentially simplify and streamline the crossing.

## 08 - Bath Lane & Underpass

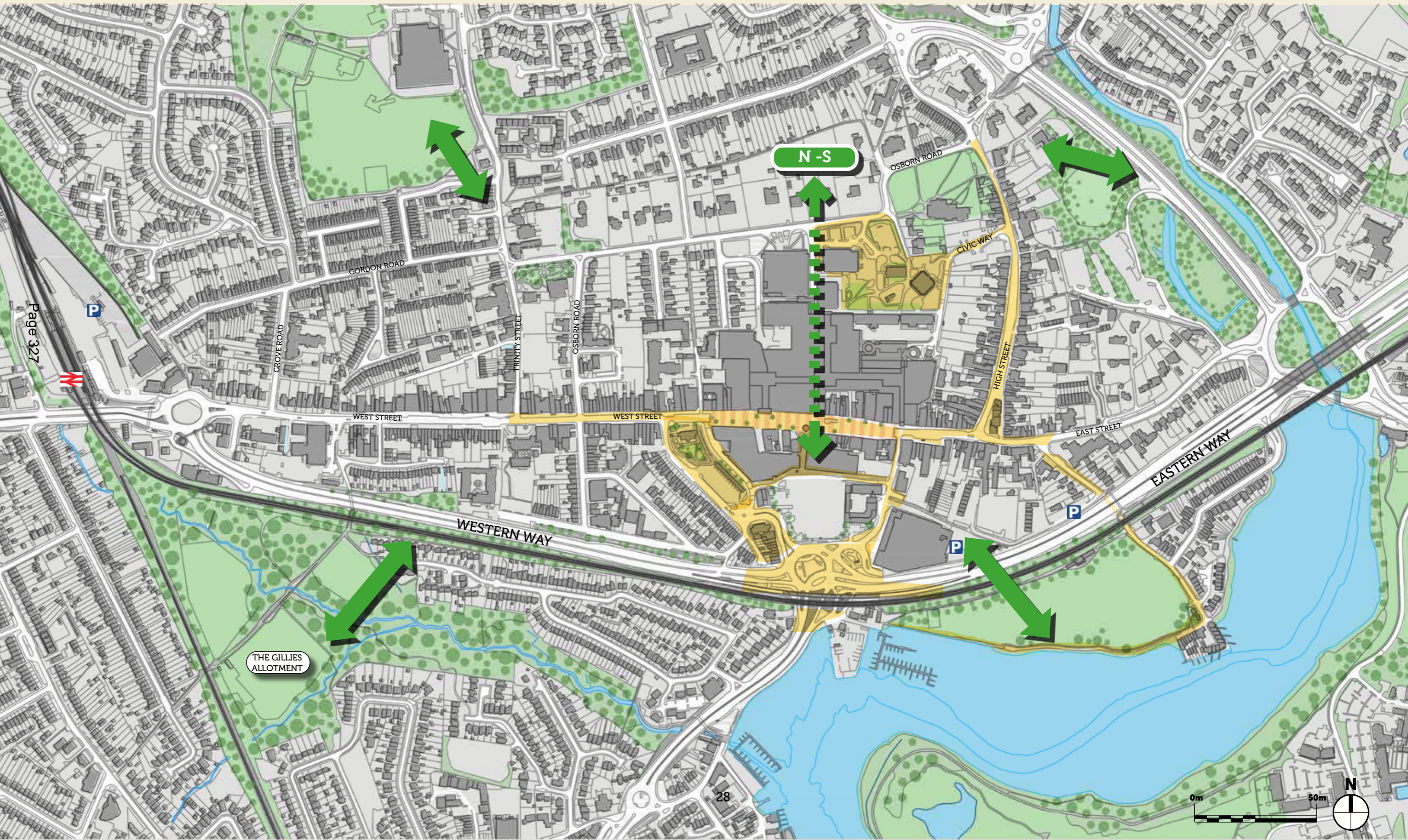


Improve the quality of the public realm of Bath Lane and the underpass to promote access to the Recreation Ground from the town centre. Including hard landscape, lighting and signage.

## 09 - Wallington Water Meadow



Create a legible link from High Street to the water meadow to bring this green asset within the curtilage of the town centre. Create a nature trail or similar to link south toward the creek and the Recreation Ground promoting a green circle around the town centre. Include raised boardwalk and bird hides for example.



3.04

UNDERUSED  
BUILDINGS

01 - High Street



Page 329

Introduce a match funded grant to bring vacant and underutilised buildings on High Street and West Street back into use. Ground floor uses must be commercial to help attract more people and contribute to vibrancy. Grant assistance may be supplemented with additional technical advice and support.

02 - West Street/Post Office



Consider redevelopment and/or refurbishment opportunities for this building on West Street including residential and commercial uses along with new vibrant ground floor uses to compliment this area of the town centre. Whilst the building currently does not contribute positively to the streetscape, sensitive redevelopment with appropriate town centre uses will bring this building back to life.

03 - West Street/Westbury Manor



Create a marketing prospectus to illustrate how the building and adjoining grounds could be repurposed to create a unique multi functional all day restaurant, function and meeting room space. Soft market test the opportunity to all hospitality entrepreneurs in Hampshire and Sussex (and beyond) to explore and unlock a deliverable business plan and operational structure.

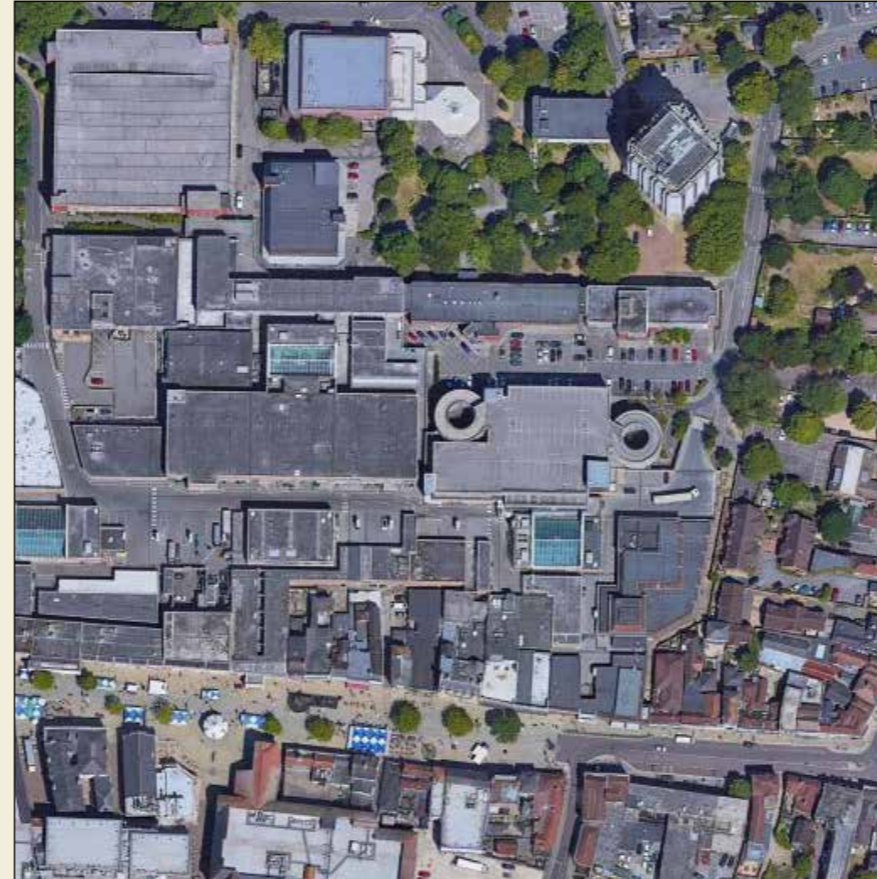
### 04 - West Street/Foresters Hall



Page 330

Consider redevelopment and/or refurbishment opportunities for this building on West Street including residential and commercial uses along with new vibrant ground floor uses to complement this area of the town centre. The Foresters Hall was a building with architectural merit, although now in a poor state of repair. Redevelopment should seek to reflect elements of the original building in any proposals coming forward..

### 05 - Shopping Centre



Shopping centre asset management initiatives to bring forward strong occupational strategy for existing units such as M&S, Job Centre amongst others. Aligned with the activation strategy for the malls this piece of work should deliver a new and vibrant future for the centre as part of the wider regeneration of the town.

### 06 - 66 West Street



Consider refurbishment opportunities for this building to deliver new uses within the town centre, such as a food hall type of operation, which are ideally located in an historic building or similar interesting structure centrally located in the town centre. This type of use would include events such as open mic nights, local band nights, book readings, small cultural events.

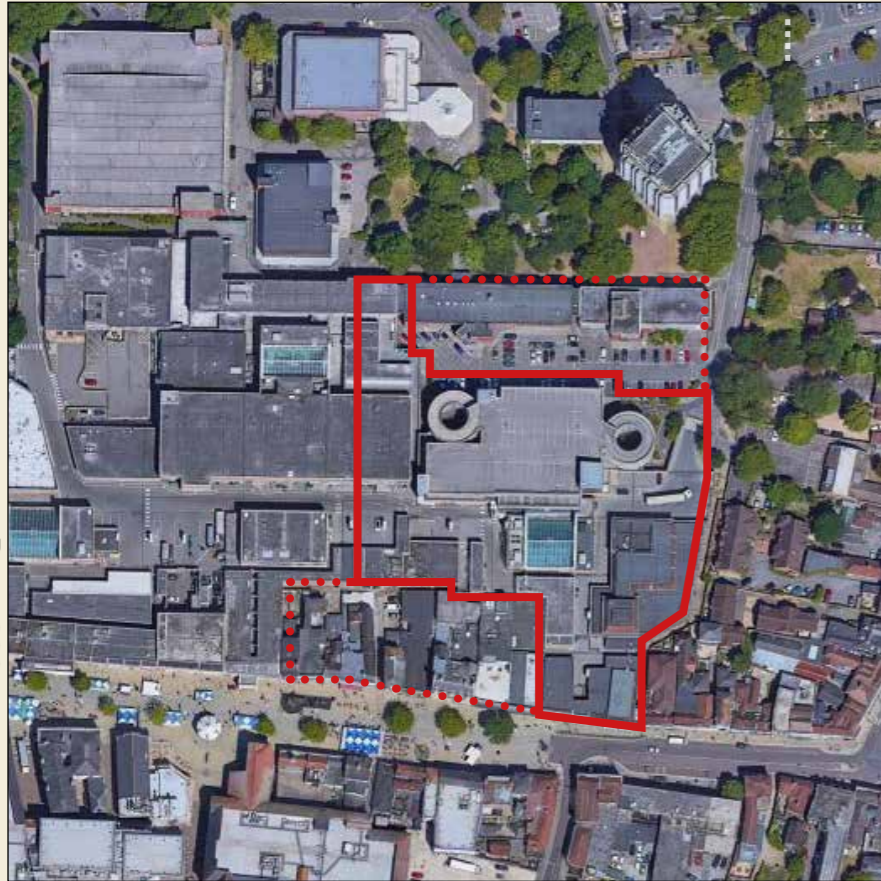


3.05

BRICKS & MORTAR



## 01 - Fareham Shopping Centre, Health Centre, Job Centre & West Street Properties



Page 332

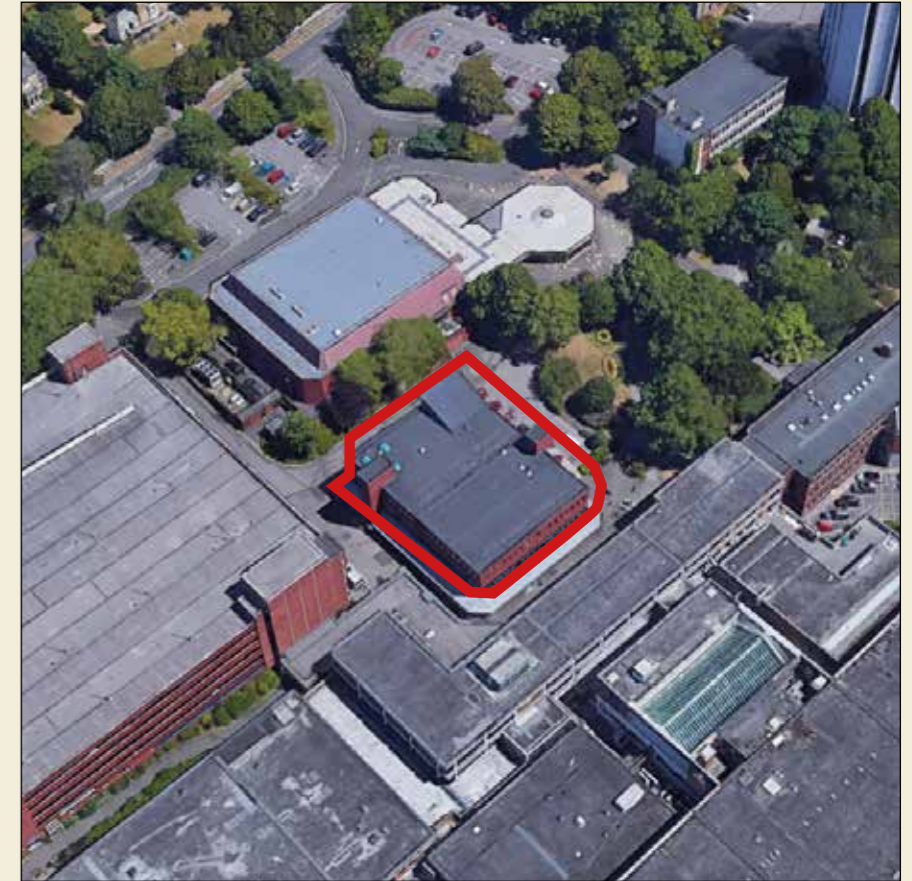
Explore redevelopment and/or repurposing of eastern element of the covered shopping centre. Opening up important north - south connections, helping to reduce retail vacancy by reducing the oversupply. Facilitating the placemaking around Fareham Live, introduction of complementary F&B and other leisure uses in a high quality new public realm setting. Unlocking value of upper parts and peripheral areas by introducing new residential.

## 02 - Civic Centre Buildings



Investigate the rationalisation and relocation of the civic uses into redundant parts of the shopping centre enhancing vibrancy and value of the centre. Enhance and repurpose the existing structure for unique residential accommodation making most use of the incredible 360 degree views.

## 03 - Library



Consider the relocation of the library into vacant parts of the shopping centre enhancing vibrancy and value of the centre. Releasing important land to facilitate quality place making, the introduction of destinational public realm around Fareham Live and the maximisation of a north - south route.

## 04 - Police Station



Page 333

Consider the relocation and demolition of the existing police station. Releasing highly prominent and strategically located site for mixed use, including new residential, development. Done well will improve the sense of arrival to the town centre and improve the north - south journey. Relocate and demolish existing police station. Releasing highly prominent and strategically located site for mixed use, including new residential, development. Done well will improve the sense of arrival to the town centre and improve the north - south journey.

## 05 - Bus Station



Explore the optimisation and enhancement of the bus station environment to provide a much-enhanced point of arrival. Introduce active travel hub and information centre. Improve the surrounding public realm leading to West Street and Market Quay to further enhance the arrival experience.

## 06 - Aggregate Wharf



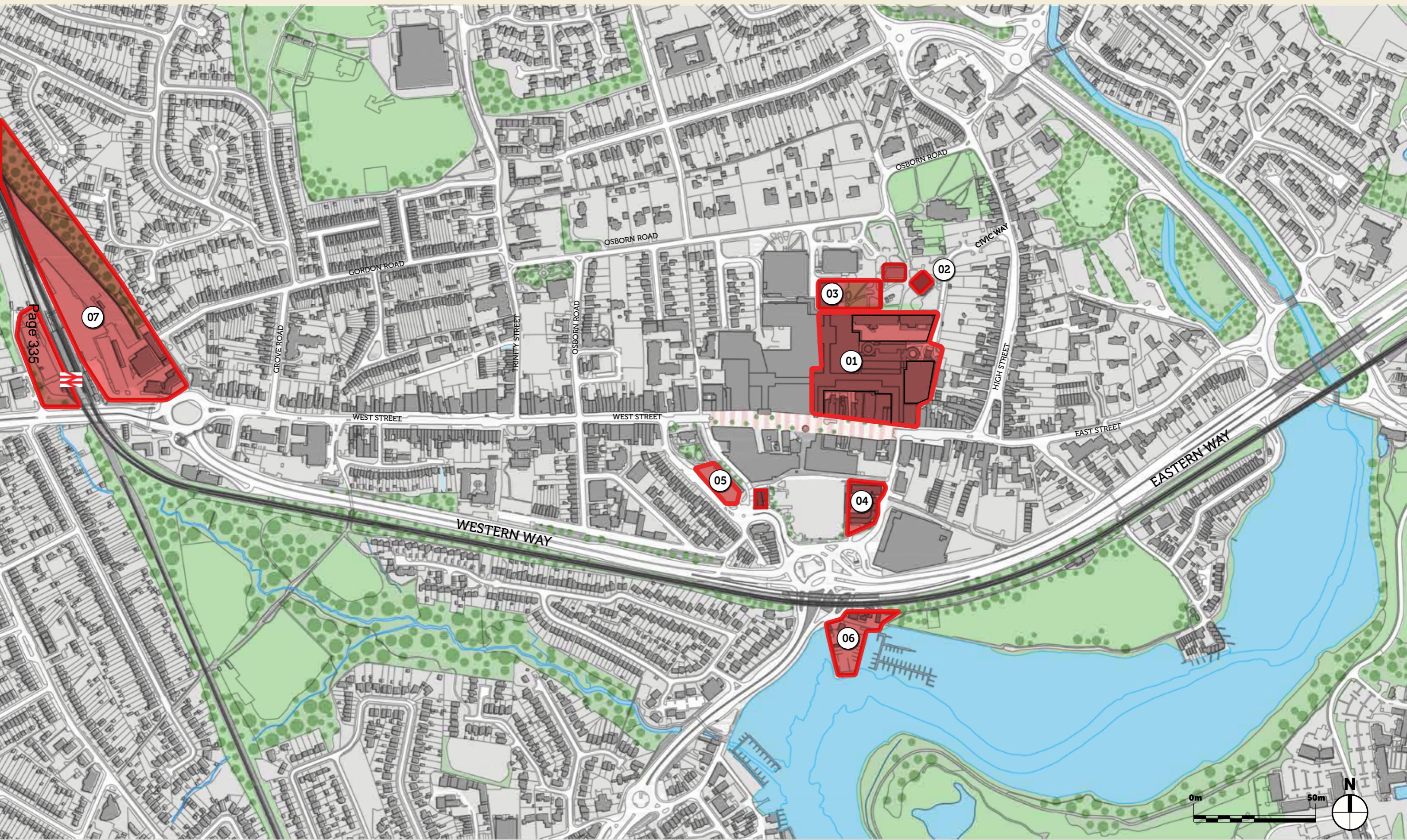
Investigate the potential to unlock a strategic site to help unlock the potential of the waterfront. Explore destinational uses that attract people to the town and encourage dwell time. Appropriate uses would include, cafes, restaurants, public space, kids play, water sport centres, mini ferry jetty, lido pool and hotel.

## 07 - Station Sites East & West



Page 334

Strategic sites at a major gateway to the town that could deliver a much enhanced arrival environment whilst unlocking the potential for significant new residential development.



# Stage 2 Recommendations

Below is the complete list of interventions considered as part of Stage 2. These have been assessed against the 5 strategic objectives and the schedule of key metrics outlined on page 10. This has resulted in 6 interventions not progressing to Stage 3 for more detailed assessment. These interventions are indicated in grey on the table below.

Shortlist	Intervention Number	Intervention Description
	<b>Quick Wins &amp; Early Interventions</b>	
1	Intervention 01 (combining 09)	Temporary enhancement of North South link (to Market Quay)
2	Intervention 02	Illuminate the viaduct
3	Intervention 03 (combining 04,05,06 and 07)	Fareham Brand + Task Force + Events
4	Intervention 08	Kids youth activity areas (the Shopping Centre's asset management team are already talking with soft play operators to deliver this within the Shopping Centre)
5	Intervention 10	High Street Market
6	Intervention 11	Waters Edge Boardwalk at the Recreation Ground (temporary trial)
	<b>Car Parking and Wayfinding</b>	
7	Intervention 01	Car Parking, wayfinding and gateway strategic review
	<b>Public Realm</b>	
8	Intervention 01	Market Quay Car Park
9	Intervention 02	Civic Gardens
10	Intervention 03	High Street (this intervention has limited impact and has been discounted)
11	Intervention 04	West Street - Pedestrianised
12	Intervention 05	Quay Street (this intervention has limited impact and has been discounted)
13	Intervention 06	Waters Edge Boardwalk at the Recreation Ground (permanent works)
14	Intervention 07	Viaduct Roundabout
15	Intervention 08	Bath Lane Underpass
16	Intervention 09	Wallington Water Meadow

# Stage 2 Recommendations

Shortlist	Intervention Number	Intervention Description
	<b>Underused Buildings</b>	
<b>17</b>	Intervention 01	High Street
<b>18</b>	Intervention 02	West Street/Post Office
<b>19</b>	Intervention 03	Westbury Manor
<b>20</b>	Intervention 04	West Street/Foresters Hall (The Council's Housing Service is acquiring the building for housing purposes)
<b>21</b>	Intervention 05	Shopping Centre (The Shopping Centre's asset management team are already undertaking this work)
<b>22</b>	Intervention 06	66 West Street
	<b>Bricks and Mortar</b>	
<b>23</b>	Intervention 01	Shopping Centre
<b>24</b>	Intervention 02	Civic Centre
<b>25</b>	Intervention 03	Library
<b>26</b>	Intervention 04	Police Station
<b>27</b>	Intervention 05	Bus Station
<b>28</b>	Intervention 06	Aggregate Wharf
<b>29</b>	Intervention 07	Station Sites East & West (This intervention is complex, with a significant delivery timeframe and is not appropriate for inclusion at this stage)

4.0

NEXT STEPS



# Next Steps

## Conclusion of Second Stage

# 4.0

### Final Stages:

Mid-March through mid-June with final reporting and presentation end June / early July.

- More detailed evaluation of shortlisted interventions to include:
  1. Develop concept and design
  2. Establish approximate cost of delivery (utilising quantity surveyor input where necessary)
  3. Undertake high level feasibility where initiative is tangibly value generating i.e. establish approximate profit/loss (utilising agency advisory input on value where necessary)
  4. Set out high level delivery strategy including funding options where applicable to include:
    - a) Key actions
    - b) Capital Required
    - c) Resources Required
  5. Identify delivery risks
- Engage with “Impacted Parties” to assess deliverability
- Final stage consultation (early June) displaying the worked-up interventions and inviting preferences and priorities to help inform the final recommendations in the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan to include
  - Workshops with key interested parties - either individually or small groups
  - Final public exhibition with intervention voting system recognising that some elements may require further consultation to secure planning permission, this will be focused on those activities when large scale consents are not required to reduce consultation fatigue.
- Final report of the Regeneration Strategy and Action plan to include exec summary of the consultation process



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 18 March 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Updated Complaints Policy</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Assistant Director (Democracy)
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

**Purpose:**  
To agree an updated Council Complaints Policy that will ensure complaints are handled in line with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code and the latest Code from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

**Executive summary:**  
The LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman ran a consultation exercise in Autumn 2023 that proposed a Joint Complaint Handling Code. The aim of their approach was to provide a ‘gold standard’ in complaints handling.

Following analysis of the feedback, it was announced on 8 February 2024 that both Ombudsmen would retain separate but aligned complaint codes. Housing providers would be expected to implement the Housing Ombudsman’s Code from 1 April 2024 and, whilst no confirmed timeframe, the LGSCO will consider their code in Ombudsman complaints from April 2026.

This report seeks approval for an updated Complaints Policy that reflects the requirements of the two new Codes. This ensures that we are fully compliant with our obligations in the way we manage complaints received by the Council.

**Recommendation/Recommended Option:**  
It is recommended that the Executive agrees the updated Council’s Complaints Policy, as attached at Appendix C to this report.

**Reason:**  
The updated Complaints Policy ensures that we meet our responsibilities in the way we manage complaints received against the Council.

**Cost of proposals:**

There is an additional resource requirement to manage the process needed to support the updated Council Complaint Policy. The cost of this has been met within the current establishment budget.

**Appendices:**

**A:** Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

**B:** LGSCO Complaint Handling Code

**C:** Fareham Borough Council Complaints Policy – April 2024

**Background papers:****Reference papers:**

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	18 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Updated Complaints Policy
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Assistant Director (Democracy)
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents an updated Council Complaints Handling Policy for approval. If approved it will ensure that we are compliant with our obligations in the way we manage complaints received by the Council.

#### BACKGROUND

2. Both the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman issue Codes on how they expect organisations to handle complaints they receive.
3. Both organisations ran a consultation exercise in Autumn 2023 that proposed the implementation of Joint Complaint Handling Code. The aim of their approach was to provide a 'gold standard' that would be applied across all Local Authority complaints handling.
4. Following analysis of feedback from Local Authorities and Housing Associations, it was announced on 8 February 2024 that both Ombudsmen would retain separate but closely aligned complaint codes. The Housing Ombudsman Code can be found in Appendix A and the LGSCO in Appendix B.
5. Housing providers are expected to implement the Housing Ombudsman's Code from 1 April 2024 and the LGSCO will consider their code in Ombudsman complaints from April 2026.
6. Although their individual codes contain minor variations they are very closely aligned and require the same two stage process, central recording and administration, response times and reporting requirements.
7. Authorities that do not adhere to the codes for individual complaints are at risk of being issued with a Complaint Handling Failure Order.

## **CHANGES TO THE POLICY**

8. The following part of the report highlights the main changes made to Fareham's proposed Complaints Policy (Appendix C) to ensure adherence to the new Ombudsman Code:
9. *A definition of a complaint, as distinct to a service request:* A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer, whereas a service request is a request to put something right eg a missed bin collection. This is an important distinction as service requests are not treated as complaints.
10. *A two stage Complaints process:* Fareham introduced a Stage '0' to our complaint's procedures in September 2022. This was done in part to reduce the number of what would now be defined as service requests being escalated to senior managers.
11. The proposed updated Council Policy contains just 2 complaint stages. Stage 1 will be investigated by a designated complaint handler within the relevant service. If the complainant is unhappy with their response, Stage 2 will begin. A more senior officer will investigate how the Stage 1 complaint was conducted to ensure it meets the requirements of our Complaints Policy. If the complainant is still unhappy, they can escalate the complaint to the relevant Ombudsman.
12. *Defined response timeframes:* Stage 1 complaints need to be acknowledged within 5 working days and responded to a further 10 working days later. Stage 2 complaints again need to be acknowledged after 5 working days but require a response after another 20 working days.
13. *Clear defined responsibilities and reporting requirements:* It is proposed that the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee is the designated Member Responsible for Complaints. They would receive an annual report outlining our complaint handling performance including any service improvements that they have prompted.
14. Complaints will also form part of the emerging Performance Measures approach as they can have an important role in driving continuous service improvement.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE NEW APPROACH**

15. If approved, the new Policy will be administered and recorded centrally via the Information Governance Team from the 1 April. The resource cost for this will be met within existing establishment budgets.
16. Individual services have already been engaged with and guidance developed to help ensure a consistency of approach. Relevant officers will also receive complaint handling training.
17. In line with the Codes, the Council will be required to publish complaint handling statistics and the Council will also re-enhance its website to give more information to customers.

## **CONCLUSION**

18. The Council's updated Complaints Policy will ensure that we meet our obligations outlined in the Housing and LGSCO's Complaints Handling Codes and help drive continuous service improvement.

**Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Roy Brown. Phone number 01328 824 489





# Housing

## Ombudsman Service

# Complaint Handling Code

**Date published: 08 February 2024**

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## Foreword

The heartbeat of this Code is enabling a positive complaints culture across the social housing sector.

This positive culture matters regardless of size or type of landlord. It supports strong resident-landlord relationships. It means things can be put right for residents when they have gone wrong. It helps organisations to develop and improve services. And, perhaps above all, it supports the values of justice and fairness that embodies so much of the sector's social purpose.

This Code considers complaints to be more than transactions. Nonetheless, good complaint handling requires effective procedures and well-trained staff alongside a positive complaints culture that enables those procedures to achieve maximum impact. This Code sets out what landlords must do procedurally to handle complaints. Compliance with the Code is most effective within landlords that operate within established dispute resolution principles: to be fair, puts things right, and learn from outcomes.

Landlords must embrace complaints through increased transparency, accessibility, and complaint handling governance, demonstrating that residents are core to its service delivery and good complaint handling is central to that.

This Code aims to support the earliest resolution of complaints while the matters are still within the landlord's own procedure. This can avoid issues escalating with potentially prolonged detriment to the resident, as well as requiring significantly more time and resource by the landlord to remedy.

This Code provides a guide to residents of what to expect if they make a complaint, as well as improving access and awareness to the procedure when they need it. The adoption of this statutory Code and associated duties ensures residents do not experience a postcode lottery in complaint handling.

Embracing the Code can also empower staff. Involvement in complaint resolution develops staff ownership, decision-making and engagement, and should ensure appropriate resources and tools are deployed to handle complaints. It provides senior staff with essential insight into day-to-day operations, allowing them to assess effectiveness and identify any organisational risks or issues. Lastly, data collected about complaints can be analysed and used to inform key business decisions to drive improvement in service provision.

Landlords are expected to annually self-assess against the Code, to engage its governance in that exercise and to publish the outcome. We also encourage landlords to see this exercise as an opportunity to engage residents in setting their approach to complaints to drive a positive complaints and learning culture. This approach must be captured by the landlord in a single policy for handling complaints.

The positive engagement of landlords in the Code and its principles has brought focus on the importance of complaints and the advent of this statutory Code will drive further change to the benefit of both residents and landlords.

## Introduction

### Statutory powers

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme should have in place for considering complaints against them following consultation on the code.

It also placed a duty on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with a code of practice that it has issued.

The Ombudsman consulted on the code and its intended approach to the duty to monitor in late 2023. This is the first statutory Complaint Handling Code ('the Code') and it will take effect from 1 April 2024; the duty to monitor compliance will go-live at the same time.

### Compliance with the Code

The Ombudsman believes all members should comply with all provisions in the Code as this represents best practice in complaint handling.

We recognise, however, that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible. We call this approach "comply or explain".

Where a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman and provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website. Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.

Where a landlord is unable to comply with the Code when dealing with a resident's complaint, the resident must be provided with a detailed explanation and signposted to the Ombudsman.

### Monitoring compliance with the Code

The Ombudsman would like all landlords to have strong local complaint handling and a positive complaint handling culture – extending fairness to benefit all residents. These lead to better services and strengthen relationships with residents. We will use the duty to monitor compliance to further these aims by supporting better practice and providing opportunities to demonstrate improvement.

Support will be provided through our Centre for Learning, accessible via the website, which hosts an ever-growing range of tools targeted at complaints handlers, senior managers and governing bodies.

We will monitor compliance in three ways. This will involve ensuring the landlord:

- has scrutinised and challenged its compliance with the Code, complaints handling performance and learning from complaints at its governing body and published the outcome on its website;
- complies with the Code in policy, and that any deviations are explained and are reasonable; and
- complies with the Code in practice.

Where a landlord does not meet the requirements in any of the areas and does not move into compliance within a reasonable timescale, the Ombudsman will issue a Complaint Handling Failure Order (CHFO) and publish this.

## The Complaint Handling Code

### 1. Definition of a complaint

- 1.1 Effective complaint handling enables residents to be heard and understood. The starting point for this is a shared understanding of what constitutes a complaint.
- 1.2 A complaint must be defined as:  
*'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'*
- 1.3 A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.
- 1.4 Landlords must recognise the difference between a **service request** and a **complaint**. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.
- 1.5 A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.
- 1.6 An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.

### 2. Exclusions

- 2.1 Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits.
- 2.2 A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:
  - The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.
  - Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.

- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
- 2.3 Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.
  - 2.4 If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.
  - 2.5 Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.

### 3. Accessibility and awareness

- 3.1 Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.
- 3.2 Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.
- 3.3 High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.
- 3.4 Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.
- 3.5 The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.
- 3.6 Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.
- 3.7 Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman Service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.

#### 4. Complaint handling staff

- 4.1 Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.
- 4.2 The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.
- 4.3 Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively.

#### 5. The complaint handling process

- 5.1 Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.
- 5.2 The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.
- 5.3 A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.
- 5.4 Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.
- 5.5 Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.
- 5.6 When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.
- 5.7 When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.
- 5.8 At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:
  - a) deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;



- b) give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;
- c) take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and
- d) consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.

- 5.9 Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.
- 5.10 Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.
- 5.11 Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.
- 5.12 A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.
- 5.13 Landlords must have processes in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure that appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.
- 5.14 Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.
- 5.15 Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

## 6. Complaints stages

### Stage 1

- 6.1 Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.
- 6.2 Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure **within five working days of the complaint being received.**

- 6.3 Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints **within 10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 6.4 Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.
- 6.5 When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.
- 6.6 A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.
- 6.7 Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.
- 6.8 Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.
- 6.9 Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:
  - a) the complaint stage;
  - b) the complaint definition;
  - c) the decision on the complaint;
  - d) the reasons for any decisions made;
  - e) the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
  - f) details of any outstanding actions; and
  - g) details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.

## Stage 2

- 6.10 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.
- 6.11 Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within **five working days of the escalation request being received**.

- 6.12 Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.
- 6.13 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.
- 6.14 Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 6.15 Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.
- 6.16 When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.
- 6.17 A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.
- 6.18 Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.
- 6.19 Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:
- a) the complaint stage;
  - b) the complaint definition;
  - c) the decision on the complaint;
  - d) the reasons for any decisions made;
  - e) the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
  - f) details of any outstanding actions; and
  - g) details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.
- 6.20 Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.

## 7. Putting things right

- 7.1 Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:
- Apologising;

- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
  - Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
  - Taking action if there has been delay;
  - Reconsidering or changing a decision;
  - Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
  - Providing a financial remedy;
  - Changing policies, procedures or practices.
- 7.2 Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.
- 7.3 The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.
- 7.4 Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

## 8. Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

- 8.1 Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:
- a) the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
  - b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;
  - c) any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;
  - d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
  - e) any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and
  - f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.
- 8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.
- 8.3 Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.
- 8.4 Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.
- 8.5 If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their

website. Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.

## 9. Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

- 9.1 Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.
- 9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.
- 9.3 Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.
- 9.4 Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.
- 9.5 In addition to this, a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').
- 9.6 The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.
- 9.7 As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:
  - a) regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;
  - b) regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;
  - c) regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and
  - d) the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.
- 9.8 Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:
  - a) have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
  - b) take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and

- c) act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

## Appendix A: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

**Section 1: Definition of a complaint**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i></p>			
1.3	<p>A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.</p>			
1.4	<p>Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be</p>			



	recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.			
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.			

## Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits			
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>			
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.			
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.			
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.			

**Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.			
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.			
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.			
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what			

	will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.			
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.			
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.			
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.			

## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.			
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.			
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively.			

## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.			
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.			
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.			
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be			

	expected to go through two complaints processes.			
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.			
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.			
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.			
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> </ul>			



	d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.			
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.			
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.			
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.			
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and			

	any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.			
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.			
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.			
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.			

## Section 6: Complaints Stages

### Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.			
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>			
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.			
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident			

	of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.			
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.			
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.			
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.			
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being			

	investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.			
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>			

### Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.			
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure			

	within five working days of the escalation request being received.			
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.			
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.			
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.			
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.			
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.			
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the			

	outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.			
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.			
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>			
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.			

## Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>			
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.			
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.			



7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.			
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**Section 8: Putting things right**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ul>			

8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.			
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.			
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.			
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.			

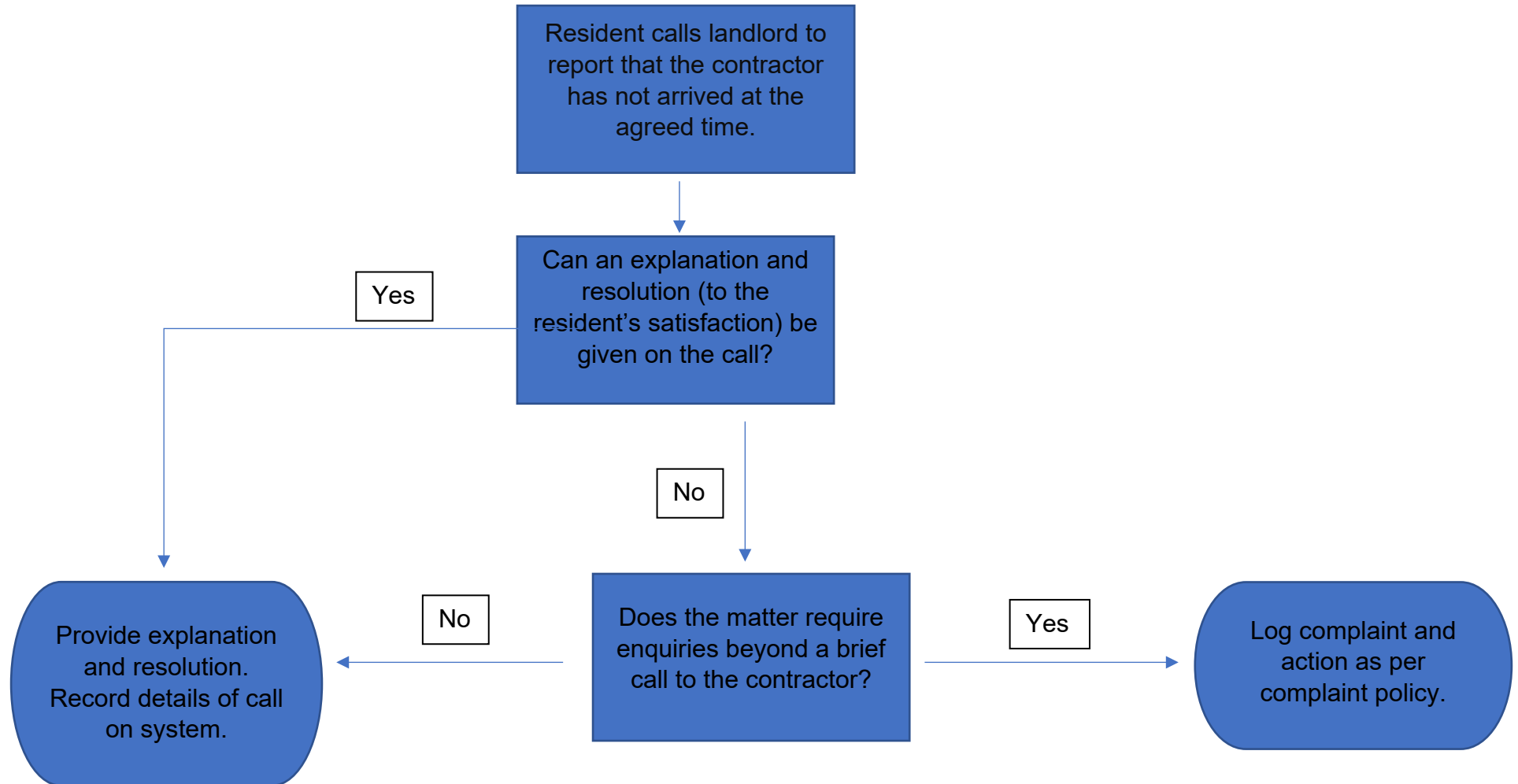
**Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement**

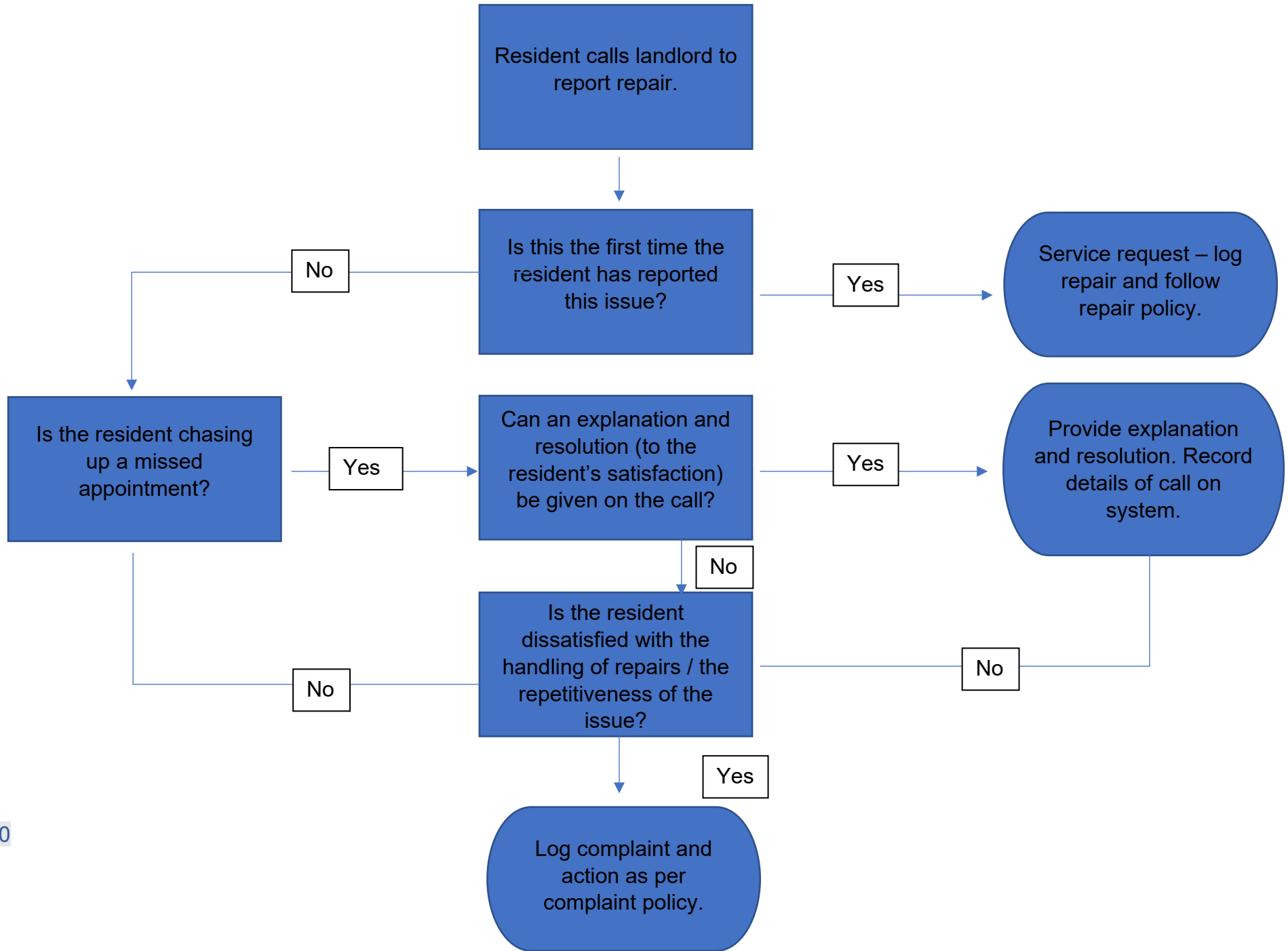
Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.			
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.			
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.			
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.			

9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').			
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.			
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and			

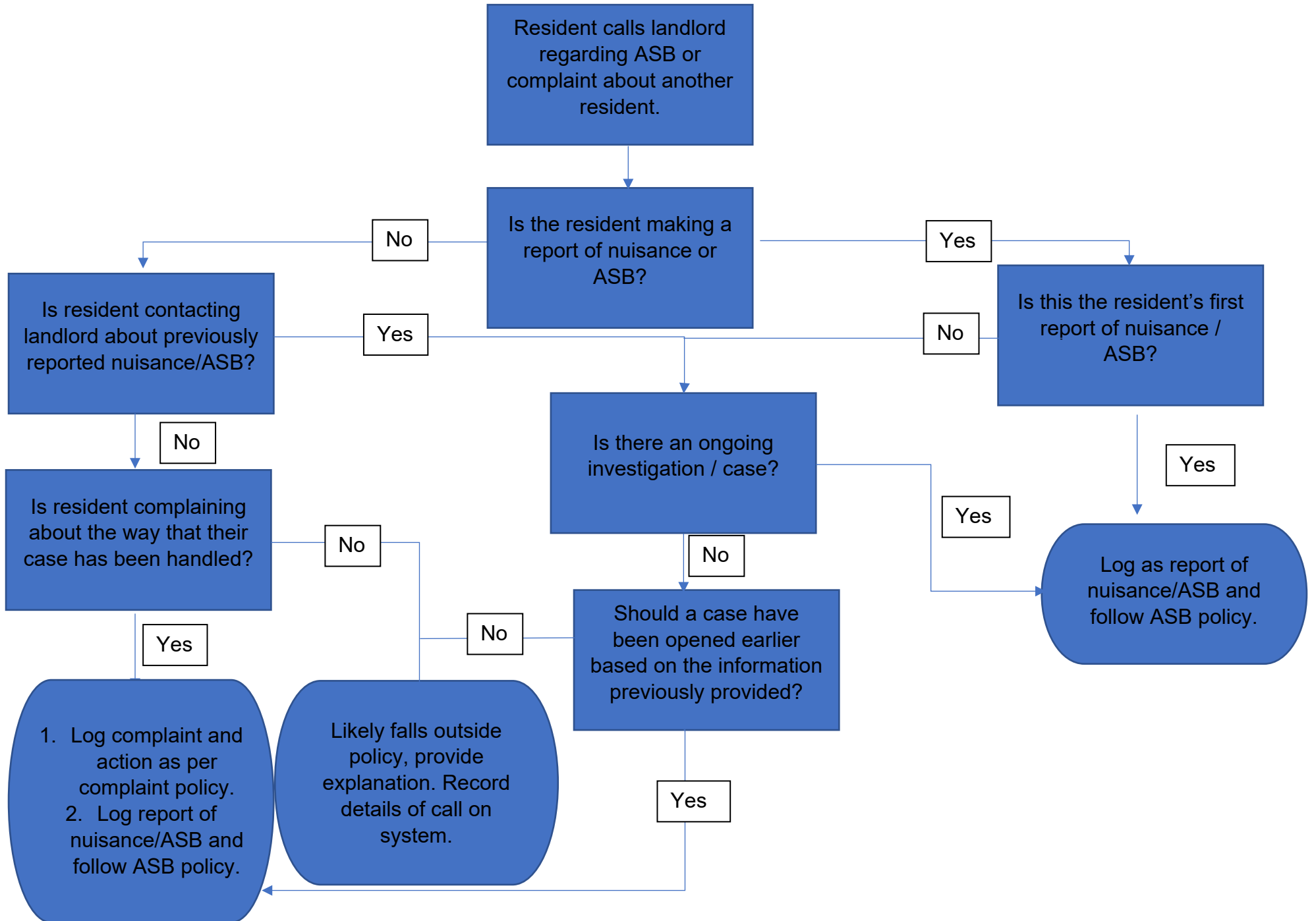
	d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.			
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</li> </ul>			

## Appendix B – Service request or complaint – flow charts











Local Government &  
Social Care  
**OMBUDSMAN**



# Complaint Handling Code

Date published: February 2024

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# Introduction

Good complaint handling requires effective procedures and well-trained staff alongside a positive complaints culture that enables those procedures to achieve maximum impact. This code sets out what an organisation should do procedurally to handle complaints.

Organisations should embrace complaints through increased transparency, accessibility, and complaint handling governance. Demonstrating that individuals are at the heart of its service delivery and good complaint handling is central to that.

Some organisations see complaints as a form of negative feedback. However, there are many benefits to be gained from having an effective and efficient complaints process:

- > Good complaint handling promotes a positive relationship between an organisation and service users.
- > Complaints allow an issue to be resolved before it becomes worse. Those issues not resolved promptly can take significant resource and time to remedy.
- > Involvement in complaint resolution develops staff ownership, decision-making and engagement.
- > Complaints provide senior staff with essential insight into day-to-day operations, allowing them to assess effectiveness and drive a positive complaint handling culture.
- > Data collected about complaints can be analysed and used to inform key business decisions to drive improvement in service provision.

The Complaint Handling Code ('the Code'), sets out a process for organisations that will allow them to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. The purpose of the Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by individuals promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. It will also help to create a

positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and individuals.

The Code will act as a guide for individuals setting out what they may expect from an organisation when they make a complaint. Organisations should seek feedback from individuals in relation to their complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.

Organisations should have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code.

The principles, process and timescales in this Code are aligned with the Complaint Handling Code issued by the Housing Ombudsman. This means that organisations who fall under the jurisdiction of both Ombudsmen should be able to provide a co-ordinated complaint handling process across services covered by both Codes.

# The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's powers and approach

The Code is issued under the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's powers to provide "guidance about good administrative practice" to organisations under section 23(12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. For the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, this Code constitutes important advice and guidance to councils, rather than instructions.

We have issued the Code for local councils in England. Other organisations in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction may find the Code helpful in setting out good practice.

We can recommend an organisation takes action to improve services or provide a personal remedy where it finds fault causing injustice to an individual or group of individuals. Unlike the Housing Ombudsman, we have no specific responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Code in addition to our role investigating complaints of maladministration and service failure.

## Using the Code

We expect local councils to carefully consider the Code when developing policies and procedures. Where an organisation decides that it will depart from the Code, it should ensure local decision-making processes have been properly followed.

We may make a finding of maladministration where local councils' policies and procedures depart from the Code without sufficient explanation. We may also make a finding of maladministration where a local council, without good reason, does not meet the standards in the Code when responding to an individual complaint.

Where an organisation is unable to comply with its policies and procedures when dealing with an individual complaint, the individual should be provided with a suitable explanation and signposted to the Ombudsman.

The Code should be considered along with other guidance issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Code does not replace any existing statutory complaint processes such as The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 or Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

# The Complaint Handling Code

## 1. Definition of a service request and complaint

- 1.1 Effective complaint handling enables individuals to be heard and understood. The starting point for this is a shared understanding of what constitutes a service request and what constitutes a complaint. In most cases organisations should be able to put things right through normal service delivery processes.
- 1.2 A service request may be defined as:  
'a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.'
- 1.3 This provides organisations with opportunities to resolve matters to an individual's satisfaction before they become a complaint.
- 1.4 A complaint may be defined as:  
'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.'
- 1.5 An individual should not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative should still be handled in line with the organisation's complaints policy.
- 1.6 Organisations should recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This should be set out in their complaints policy.
- 1.7 Service requests are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made. A complaint may be raised when the individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. An organisation should not stop its efforts to address the service request if the individual complains.
- 1.8 Service requests should be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.

## 2. Exclusions

- 2.1 An organisation should accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If the organisation decides not to accept a complaint, it should be able to evidence its reasoning. Each complaint should be considered on its own merits.
- 2.2 Organisations should accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the individual becoming aware of the issue. Organisations should consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.
- 2.3 A complaints policy should set out the circumstances in which a matter might not be considered or escalated. Organisations should ensure that these are reasonable, and should not deny individuals access to redress.
- 2.4 If an organisation decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation should be provided to the individual setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.
- 2.5 Organisations should not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they should consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.



### 3. Accessibility and awareness

- 3.1 Organisations should make it easy for individuals to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Organisations must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of individuals who may need to access the complaints process.
- 3.2 Individuals should be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff should be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the organisation.
- 3.3 High volumes of complaints should not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain.
- 3.4 Organisations should make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all individuals. This should detail the process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy should also be published on the organisation's website.
- 3.5 The policy should explain how the organisation will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.
- 3.6 Organisations should give individuals the opportunity to have a suitable representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the organisation.
- 3.7 Organisations should provide individuals with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.
- 3.8 Where an organisation asks for feedback about its services through a survey, it should provide details of how individuals can complain so they can pursue any dissatisfaction if they so wish.

## 4. Complaint handling resources

- 4.1 Organisations should have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).
- 4.2 Anyone responding to a complaint should have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They should also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.
- 4.3 Organisations are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff should be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and resourced accordingly

## 5. The complaint handling process

- 5.1 Organisations should have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code.
- 5.2 The early and local resolution of issues between organisations and individuals is key to effective complaint handling. Organisations should not have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.
- 5.3 When an individual expresses dissatisfaction that could meet the criteria for a complaint as set out in section 1 of the Code, they should be given the opportunity to make a complaint. Organisations should recognise that individuals may be reluctant to raise complaints out of fear it may impact services they receive in future.
- 5.4 The person responding to the complaint should:
- clarify with the individual any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about;
  - deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;
  - give the individual a fair chance to set out their position;
  - take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and
  - consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.
- 5.5 Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code the organisation should inform the individual of when the response will be provided and the reason(s) for the delay.
- 5.6 Organisations must make reasonable adjustments for individuals where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010.
- Organisations should keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments should be kept under active review.
- 5.7 Organisations should not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons to do so. Organisations should clearly set out these reasons, and they should align with the approach to exclusions set out in section 2 of the Code.
- 5.8 A full record should be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This should include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the individual, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports. This should be retained in line with the organisation's data retention policies.
- 5.9 Organisations should have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Organisations should ensure that appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation to stage 2 or the Ombudsman.
- 5.10 Organisations should have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from individuals and/or their representatives. Organisations should be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and should keep an individual's restrictions under regular review.
- 5.11 Any restrictions placed on an individual's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

## 6. Complaints stages

### Stage 1

- 6.1 Organisations should have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further consideration. Organisations should consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the individual is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the individual.
- 6.2 Complaints should be acknowledged, and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure **within five working days of the complaint being received**.
- 6.3 Organisations should provide a full response to stage 1 complaints **within 10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 6.4 Organisations should decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform individuals of the expected timescale for response. Any extension should be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual.
- 6.5 When an organisation informs an individual about an extension to these timescales, they should be provided with the details of the relevant Ombudsman.
- 6.6 A complaint response should be provided to the individual when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions should still be tracked and actioned promptly, with appropriate updates provided to the individual.
- 6.7 Organisations should address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. Organisations should be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.
- 6.8 At the conclusion of stage 1 organisations should provide details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.
- 6.9 Where individuals raise additional complaints during stage 1, these should be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related, and the stage 1 response has not been provided. Where the stage 1 response has been provided, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being considered, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues should be logged as a new complaint.
- 6.10 Organisations should have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Individuals should not have to escalate a complaint in order to get an appropriate remedy.

## Stage 2

- 6.11 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the individual's satisfaction at stage 1, it should be progressed to stage 2 of the organisation's procedure. Stage 2 is the organisation's final response..
- 6.12 Requests for stage 2 should be acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within **five working days of the escalation request being received**. Within the acknowledgement, organisations should set out their understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the individual is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the individual should be asked for clarification.
- 6.13 Individuals should not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Organisations should make reasonable efforts to understand why an individual remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.
- 6.14 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 should not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.
- 6.15 Organisations should issue a final response to the stage 2 **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 6.16 Organisations should decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform individuals of the expected timescale for response. Any extension should be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual.
- 6.17 When an organisation informs an individual about an extension to these timescales they should be provided with the details of the relevant Ombudsman.
- 6.18 Organisations should confirm the following in writing to the individual at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:
- a. the complaint stage;
  - b. the organisation's understanding of the complaint;
  - c. the decision on the complaint;
  - d. the reasons for any decisions made;
  - e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
  - f. details of any outstanding actions; and
  - g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if the individual remains dissatisfied.
- 6.19 Stage 2 should be the organisation's final response and should involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.
- 6.20 A process with more than two stages will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the relevant Ombudsman. A process with a single stage means the organisation may lack the ability to check its response before an individual comes to the Ombudsman.
- 6.21 Where an organisation's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor) or independent adjudicator at any stage, it should form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Individuals should not be expected to go through two complaints processes.
- 6.22 Organisations are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.

## 7. Putting things right

7.1 Where something has gone wrong an organisation should acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:

- > Apologising;
- > Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- > Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- > Taking action if there has been delay;
- > Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- > Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- > Providing a financial remedy;
- > Changing policies, procedures or practices.

7.2 Any remedy offered should reflect the impact on the individual as a result of any fault identified.

7.3 The remedy offer should clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the individual where appropriate. Any remedy proposed should be followed through to completion.

7.4 If a proposed remedy cannot be delivered, the individual should be informed of the reasons for this, provided with details of any alternative remedy and reminded of their right to complain to the Ombudsman,

7.5 Organisations should take account of the good practice guides issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

## 8. Performance reporting and self-assessment

- 8.1 Organisations should produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which should include:
- a. an annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure its complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
  - b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the organisation's complaint handling performance. This should also include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept;
  - c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code;
  - d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
  - e. the annual letter about the organisation's performance from the Ombudsman; and
  - f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the organisation.
- 8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report should be reported through the organisation's governance arrangements and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The response to the report from the relevant governance arrangement should be published alongside this.
- 8.3 Organisations should also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.

## 9. Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

- 9.1 Organisations should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.
- 9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is important to the effectiveness with which organisations resolve disputes. Organisations should use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.
- 9.3 Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive organisational culture. Organisations should report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as citizens' panels, staff and relevant committees.
- 9.4 The organisation should appoint a suitably senior person to oversee its complaint handling performance. This person should assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.
- 9.5 In addition to this, organisations should assign lead responsibility for complaints in governance arrangements to support a positive complaint handling culture. We refer to this as the 'Member Responsible for Complaints' (the Member). This role could be carried out by an individual or committee depending on the governance arrangements in place.
- 9.6 The Member should receive regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance. The Member should have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.
- 9.7 As a minimum, the Member should receive:
  - a. regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance
  - b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; and
  - c. the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.
- 9.8 Organisations should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:
  - > have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
  - > take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
  - > act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.



# Appendix A: Self-assessment

A self-assessment should be completed and shared with the organisation's governance arrangements as part of the complaints performance and service improvement report.

Evidence should show how the organisation follows the Code and its own policies. It should also set out how well it is performing and provide information about service improvements which have been implemented following complaints.

For example, this could include records of quality assurance checks on complaint responses, exclusions and feedback from relevant staff. If the failure to meet an expectation only relates to one service area or department this should be made clear.

When completing the self-assessment, organisations should not focus on the number of complaints received. Recording a high number of complaints may be an indication that the organisation welcomes complaints and that individuals are able to access the complaints process easily. Organisations should focus on timescales for responding to complaints and complaint outcomes.

A suggested self-assessment format is included here, but organisations may adopt their own version to meet local needs and reporting requirements.

# Example: Self-assessment against the requirements of the Code

Code section	Action	Do we follow the code Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<b>1: Definition of a service request and complaint</b>	We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint and these are defined in our policies and procedures.		
<b>2: Exclusions</b>	Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress.		
<b>3: Accessibility and awareness</b>	We provide different channels through which individuals can make complaints. These are accessible and we are able to make reasonable adjustments where necessary.		
<b>4: Complaint handling resources</b>	We have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling. Complaints are viewed as a core service and resourced accordingly.		

Code section	Action	Do we follow the code Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<b>5: The complaint handling process</b>	We have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code and individuals are given the option of raising a complaint where they express dissatisfaction that meets the definition of the complaint in our policy.		
<b>6: Complaints stages (Stage 1)</b>	We process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.		
<b>6: Complaints stages (Stage 2)</b>	We process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.		
<b>7: Putting things right</b>	When something has gone wrong we take action to put things right.		
<b>8: Performance reporting and self-assessment</b>	We produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge which includes a self-assessment against the Code.		
<b>9: Scrutiny &amp; Oversight</b>	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.		

## **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614  
Web: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)  
Twitter: [@LGOmbudsman](https://twitter.com/LGOmbudsman)

## **Appendix C- Revised Complaints Policy**

### **1. Overview**

2. The Council aims to always provide a high-quality, cost-effective services. However, we recognise that things can go wrong. If they do, we need to know so we can put things right and learn from them.
3. Complaints are therefore welcomed as they can help us improve service delivery and inform our policies.

### **4. What is a complaint?**

5. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council, its employees, or contractors affecting a resident or group of residents.

6. Examples of a complaint include:

- A delay in taking action without good reason.
- A failure to provide a service.
- Mistakes in the way a decision has been taken.
- Not following the law or the Council's own policies.
- Broken promises.
- Giving incorrect or misleading information.
- Bias or unfair discrimination.
- Rude, unhelpful or inappropriate behaviour by staff.
- Poor communication.
- The conduct of staff when delivering the service.

7. Where the complaint response is handled by the Council, we will work with the relevant contractors or third-party organisations as part of the 2 stage complaints process.

### **8. What is not a complaint?**

9. We receive a lot of service requests, and these are slightly different from complaints. A service request is a contact from a customer to the Council requiring action to be taken to put something right. Examples include:


- Reporting a missed bin collection.
- An issue reported to us for the first time eg the need for a housing repair.
- Asking us to reconsider a decision that has been made.

10. Talking with the relevant service should enable them to put the issue right straight away or allow them to explain why they can't.

11. If you are unsure who the best person to speak to is, please contact our Customer Service Centre [01329 236100](tel:01329236100) [customerservicecentre@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:customerservicecentre@fareham.gov.uk)
12. If a service request is raised via the complaints system, it will be passed to the correct service to deal with as any other enquiry to that service would be.

### **13. How to Raise a Complaint**

You can make a complaint in a range of ways:

- Residents can raise a complaint in the following ways:
  - By using the [online complaint form](#)
  - By printing off a [paper version of complaint form](#)  (390 KB).
  - By telephone: [01329 236100](tel:01329236100)
  - Email: [complaints@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@fareham.gov.uk)
  - By letter: Complaints Team, Fareham Borough Council, Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham, PO16 7AZ
  - In person
  - Using an audio recording
  - In different languages
14. We accept complaints made on your behalf by third parties or representatives eg Councillors and will handle them as if you made the complaint yourself. Once a complaint has been submitted, Councillors will not be involved in investigating the matter or providing a response to the complainant.
  15. If you make a complaint against a Councillor, it will be forwarded to our Monitoring Officer. If a Councillor receives a complaint about another Councillor, they will forward it to the Monitoring Officer and then have no further involvement.
  16. We will make reasonable adjustments to help ensure that anyone wanting to make a complaint can do so. Details of how to make a complaint to the Council and Ombudsman are published on our dedicated complaints webpage.
  17. The annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report will also be published on the complaints webpage.

### **18. Our Complaints Process**

19. There are 2 Stages of complaints, in line with the Complaints Handling Codes from the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Our central Complaints Officer will manage the administration of complaints using the 2 stage process:

## Stage 1

20. At this stage a Complaints Handler within the relevant service will investigate your complaint. We will:

- Acknowledge and confirm your complaint within 5 working days of receipt.
- Investigate and respond to the complaint within 10 working days after we acknowledge and confirm your complaint.

21. In exceptional circumstances, particularly where your complaint is complex, we may not meet these timeframes. In this case we will let you know why and when you can expect a response.

## Stage 2

22. If you are unhappy with our response at Stage 1, you can request that a more senior officer reviews the handling of your complaint. They will review whether the correct procedures and processes were followed when investigating the complaint in Stage 1. We will:


- Acknowledge your Stage 2 complaint within 5 working days of receipt of your request to escalate from Stage 1.
- Investigate and respond to the complaint within 20 working days of acknowledging your complaint.

23. In exceptional circumstances, particularly where your complaint is complex, we may not meet these timeframes. In this case we will let you know why and when you can expect a response.

## Ombudsman Complaints

24. If you are still unhappy with our response after Stage 2, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman Service for an independent review.

### Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- The quickest way to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is to complete an online complaint form. You can also complain by telephone.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Contact details are:
- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- Tel: [0300 061 0614](tel:03000610614)
- Text 'call back' to: [0762 481 1595](tel:07624811595)
- Online complaint form: [www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint](http://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint) 

### Housing Ombudsman

- The quickest way to complain to the Housing Ombudsman is to complete an online complaint form.

- Housing Ombudsman Contact details are:
- Housing Ombudsman Service (for issues relating to Local Authority Housing only)
- Online complaint form: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/) 
- If you wish to make a complaint by post, you can telephone the Housing Ombudsman Service on [0300 111 3000](tel:03001113000) and they can post you a complaint form.

### **Complaint Exclusions**

21. There are some types of complaint which will be treated in a different way. Some examples of this are:

- Refusal of planning application, or the failure to make a decision within a given period – Appeals process.
- Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations or Data Protection legislation matters.
  - i. Member complaints
- Any other matters for which an alternative statutory or Constitutional appeals mechanism exists, including:
  - i. Parking appeals
  - ii. Licensing appeals
  - iii. A Benefits or Council Tax decision.
  - iv. A Homeless decision

22. We will always consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. However, in some instances, we will not investigate your complaint. Some examples of this are:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.
- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.

23. In these cases, we will let you know the reasons why we are treating your complaint differently, or not investigating.

### **24. Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour Policy**

25. A copy of our policy can be viewed: [Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour Policy](#)

### **26. Exceptional Circumstances**

27. If we are unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, the Council will:

- Inform the Ombudsman.



- Provide information to residents who may be affected.
- Publish details on our Complaints Webpage, including a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.

## **28. Reporting on the Complaints Code**

29. To ensure we monitor and learn from complaints we will provide regular updates to our Senior Leadership Team.

30. The Chairman of the Council's Audit and Governance Committee will be the Member Responsible for Complaints. They will receive an annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report presented at the Audit and Governance Committee to consider. This will include:

- An annual self-assessment against Ombudsman's Code.
- A qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance, including a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept.
- Any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman.
- Service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.
- Any annual reports about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and
- Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman.

31. The report along with the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee will be made available on the Council's Complaints Webpage.

## **32. Publicising our approach to complaints**

33. To ensure that people can easily make a complaint if needed we will:

34. Publicise the Complaints Policy alongside information on the Ombudsman and Complaints Codes on our dedicated Complaints Webpage, social media accounts and our 44 public noticeboards.

35. Details on the Council's complaints policy will be included in customer satisfaction surveys.

36. We will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010 to allow individuals to make a complaint. A record will be kept of any adjustment made and be kept under active review.

