

ALRESFORD HEALTHCHECK 2008

A plan to shape Alresford's future until 2020

April 2008

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1 FOREWORD

Welcome to this healthcheck of Alresford, which is designed to help shape the future of the town. It has been developed by members of the community and is the result of six years of work by local people. A very large number of contributors have been involved in the process, and this document is dedicated to all of them.



Throughout this document there is reference to 'Alresford' rather than 'New Alresford'. This is because the healthcheck is about Alresford as a 'local hub' as well as a geographical place limited by a town boundary. The phrase 'surrounding villages' is also used because the villages that think of 'Alresford' as their nearby town spread more widely than just the villages immediately adjacent to New Alresford.

The original Alresford Action Plan document was driven, researched and managed by the New Alresford Town Plan Steering Group (2005). Using the 'Market Towns Healthcheck' process, as developed by the Countryside Agency, we have researched current ways to sustain the town. The findings have been analysed and written up by a team of local volunteers working within Alresford Town Partnership. This healthcheck shows how the people of Alresford think the town should develop as well as celebrating which projects have already been achieved.

This document sets out a vision and prioritised projects for the future of the town. It includes a profile of the town, past and present, and a review of its current strengths and weaknesses. The document identifies the opportunities presently open to the town, which can be seized in order to help create for it a sustainable and prosperous future. Among the projects that have been prioritised for future action, potential partners and partners have been identified who can help bring these projects into reality. These projects are intended to help secure the long-term vision of the town as far as 2020 and beyond.

Our research has highlighted how lucky people feel to live in the Alresford area and how they would like the town's strengths to be built upon. We would like to see the town's commercial, educational and health facilities developed into state-of-the-art twentieth-first century facilities, and Alresford to become as much as possible a 'full service' town for those living and working in or near it.

This remains a working document: the process of regular reviews will take place to ensure the actions and projects we propose to deliver take account of changing circumstances and continue to meet the needs of all sections of the local community. In the light of this, Alresford Town Partnership will continue to seek the views of the community, both formally and informally.

We commend this healthcheck to you and ask for your continuing support and involvement as we reflect on the exciting prospect of implementing its proposals.

Nigel Paterson

Dr Nigel Paterson
Chair of Alresford Town Partnership

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Alresford Town Plan Steering Group was formed in 2002, consisting of enthusiastic, experienced local people representing a wide range of active groups and organisations in the town. It was superseded by Alresford Town Partnership and all the people who have worked with them. Many other individuals and organisations have also given their time and expertise generously, mainly in a voluntary capacity.

Alresford Town Partnership is most grateful to all those who contributed to the preparation of the original Draft Action Plan and of this Healthcheck. Officers and Members of the Alresford Town Council, Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council have also made a significant contribution to this document.

The findings of this document are based on research undertaken by Alresford Town Plan Steering Group and Project Groups, The Design Statement Research Team and Workshop Members, Alresford Town Partnership, the Healthcheck working group, and the NATC Working Group on the WCC LDF Issues and Options Exercise. We acknowledge the work of all those who have contributed to this work from 2002 onwards.

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SO24 9EP

3. SETTING THE SCENE AND VISION STATEMENT

Vision statement for Alresford:

New Alresford should continue to thrive as a small market town of unique character and history that appeals to both residents and visitors.

3.1 THE MARKET TOWN OF ALRESFORD

Alresford was developed by the then landlords, the Bishops of Winchester, in the early C13th as a new centre for trade and industry. Its formal name is still 'New' Alresford. It retains its original plan in the historic centre of a broad market street forming a 'T' with the main east-west road. It retains also something of its original character as a modest country market town, in many respects self-sufficient and providing goods and services to a hinterland of prosperous and attractive villages. It is bordered on the north by a delightful chalk stream, the river Alre or Arle, and the water meadows, designated as an SSSI. On three sides watercress beds take advantage of the abundant spring water. Beyond them, and visible from many viewpoints in the town, the fields on the lower land are devoted to salad crops and livestock, on the higher ground to combinable crops.

A railway line, built in the 1860s, marked the southern boundary of the town until the early 1900s when some middle-class housing was built, and the population increased only slowly until a large council estate was developed in the 1940s and 1950s. From then on there was rapid growth, almost all south of the railway line (now a 'heritage' line, called appropriately the Watercress Line) and the population doubled in the three decades up to 1990. The new housing is mostly well spaced in tree-lined roads, with appropriate green spaces. Alresford continues to grow, mostly by in-filling within its now well-defined boundaries. A by-pass, built in 1985, limits further expansion to the south.

There are two small industrial estates within the town, but the economy is largely based on shops and services, of which there is a very wide range, the great majority independently run and locally-owned. A significant proportion of the working population commute to work in larger towns such as Winchester and Basingstoke. Alresford has become a very attractive place to live, and visit; tourism makes an important and growing contribution to the economy.

For more information on the history of the town, see appendix A.

3.2 ALRESFORD TODAY

New Alresford is a popular place to live in, nestled in attractive countryside with reasonable road links with easy access to many major conurbations in the southeast. Residents feel it is a cheerful and friendly community with a compact town centre, clear town boundaries and beautiful surrounding countryside. There is a strong sense of community.

Townfolk enjoy membership of a wide variety of voluntary organisations (totalling over 50) and participating in a variety of social, cultural and sporting activities. The majority of housing developments in the town are either small or have compact closes. People find this makes them friendly places to live. The sense of community combined with the feeling of safety one has in Alresford, the attractiveness of the town centre, and the airy way developments have been set out are perhaps four of the primary reasons why Alresford has such a stable population. People tend to remain in the community rather than retire to another area, which is a major factor affecting the age distribution of the town. More 'affordable homes' have been built in recent years. This has not necessarily matched demand for such housing, because the one-bedroom properties built have been too small for a number of would-be purchasers.

New Alresford has three recreation grounds: Arlebury Park, Stratton Bates and Sun Hill, all of which have far-reaching views. The Millennium Walk (a riverside walk along the water meadows), the Memorial Gardens and a variety of green areas scattered amongst the houses are all also appreciated by both residents and visitors.

The town has two industrial areas, both developed over fifty years ago and in residential areas. One in Prospect Road and one in The Dean where there are light engineering, plating, woodworking and new technology companies. These areas provide both local and regional employment. The colourful shopping area is popular with tourists and local people. There are attractive coffee shops and hotels, and a variety of shops and



scene from the Watercress Festival (source: Alresford Chamber of Commerce, 2008)



(Alresford Twinning Association, 2008)

restaurants serving the needs of the community and the tourists. There are two mini-supermarkets - Tesco and the Co-op, and a weekly market. There is an annual Watercress Festival, and a French Market is being organised in 2008 for the second year running.

There is low unemployment and low labour turnover, but rent and rates can be high. There is also a low turnover of industrial and shopping units. Despite this positive outlook on the local economy, Alresford is keen not become complacent and recognises the need to strive constantly for improvements.

The community has a wide range of social and sporting opportunities in the town from which to choose. Perins School is a Community Sports College and allows local people some access to its sports facilities. Three thriving churches also contribute to the community and offer social activities for all ages.

The town had a population of 6,020 in the 2001 population census, at which time the average age of the population was 4.4 years above the national average. These people were spread amongst approximately 1,850 houses. Since that time, the number of houses has increased to 2,229 houses and, consequently, the population has also grown.

There is low unemployment in the town. The 2001 census showed that 67.7% of the 16-74 year-old members of the population were in employment or self-employment, and there was only 1.3% unemployment. Local businesses employed approximately 2,500 people of whom approximately 40% lived in the town and 60% travelled into the town from outlying villages and towns. Since then the Watercress packing plant has enlarged, and it buses in workers from Portsmouth and other districts.

Each of the surrounding villages has a population of between 50 and 300, bringing the total population served by the town to approximately 8,000. Unfortunately, public transport links have not kept up with these increases in population, and people have to travel by car from the villages to the town, or from many outlying parts of the town itself. Residents are very concerned the population will grow faster than the infrastructure which supports it.

Alresford and the village of Ropley are home to the Watercress Line Steam Railway, a tourist attraction run by volunteers. Visitors can be accommodated in one of two hotels and 'bed and breakfast' accommodation in the centre of town and in its hinterland. There is a Travel Lodge in nearby Four Marks.

3.3 ALRESFORD TOMORROW

Our vision for Alresford cannot be achieved without a change in the use of brownfield sites in residential areas and some sustainable population growth. It is important to manage future population growth so that it does not adversely change the nature and cheerful character of the town. Thus far, small developments of properties have assisted people not only getting to know one another but have made it possible for them to become integrated into a vibrant community of people who feel lucky to live in Alresford. We believe that growth is vital in order to increase the proportion of the population that is economically active and to ensure that businesses can thrive in Alresford and be attracted to it.

Alresford is a small but beautiful market town. It is an attractive place to live and as a location for entrepreneurial businesses. Any future growth of the town must ensure that individuality will be preserved, green spaces preserved, new green areas brought into the public domain and new activities catered for. It is firmly envisaged that the strong sense of community and the stability in the population turnover will be maintained.

This will be achieved by having a clear strategic plan catering for slow planned growth, and straightforward and timely communication with people about realistic short, medium and long-term goals together with clear and agreed priorities. A list of the projects intended to achieve this can be found in section 4.0. The Winchester City Council Local Development Framework consultation on the core strategy Issues and Options exercise has identified that Alresford needs to expand by a total of 300 houses between now and 2026.

3.4. THE MARKET TOWN HEALTHCHECK

3.4.1 BACKGROUND

A history of the healthcheck process and formation of working groups is given in appendix B Both New Alresford Town Council and The Alresford Society have recognised the importance of having a vision for the town. The Alresford Society led the formation of the Town Plan Steering Group which developed the *draft Alresford Action Plan* for two reasons:

- the community would then own the vision for the town
- that vision could influence all those who make decisions affecting the town.

The 'Market Town Initiative' process developed by the Countryside Agency was followed. This involved the communities in both the town and villages from the outset so they could take ownership of the evolving ideas and vision statement. It is intended the resultant report and action plan, the subject of this document, will influence policy makers and attract funding to implement actions.

3.4.2. PRIORITISATION OF PROJECTS

Ideas and suggestions for local priorities were collated from the whole range of research sources available, most especially derived from, but not restricted to, consultations associated with the Healthcheck. This led to the creation of a list of sixty priorities. That was considered to be too long a list to put out for public consultation, so the list was refined down to the twenty-five project priorities which are given under the four headings below. Respondents were invited to prioritise up to five of the twenty-five projects and to add one more of their own which was not on the following list.

The Environment and Housing

1. Conduct infrastructure survey, using the HCC document and Environment Agency information
2. Identify site for allotments and allocate them to those who have requested them
3. Identify possible 'exception sites' for Alresford people, in order to increase further the provision of affordable housing
4. Identify and monitor brownfield sites within the town boundaries suitable for development.
5. Improve standards of street and open spaces cleanliness

The Local Economy

6. Provide more car parking in the central commercial area and implement effective enforcement of parking regulations
7. Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to increase vocational placements and provide training for young people
8. Improve floral planting schemes
9. Enhance waterside areas
10. Conduct housing assessment study to ensure industrial/ domestic balance and appropriate routing of industrial traffic
11. Seek finance for a business support package for both start up and existing businesses and local farmers. In the long term, plan for a Small Business Centre and widen training opportunities in the town. Establish stronger links with North Hants Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
12. Initiate Sunday Farmers markets in the summer

13. Audit and keep updated a list of spaces and facilities available for community and private use. Identify the changes need to match identified demand
14. Respond to perceived need for a larger indoor events facility for the community and members of it
15. Provide wider access to Arlebury Park by increasing the amount of green space available for recreational purposes and a wider range of activities

Health, Community and Recreation

16. Investigate feasibility of CCTV security at 3 yearly intervals
17. Promote and recognise community volunteering
18. Promote projects to meet needs identified by the Young Peoples Working Group
19. Build physical links with between Perins School, Arlebury Park and the town to make better use of community facilities

Transport and Travel

20. Obtain commitment from HCC to extend, review and promote the Cango bus system
21. Improve the quality of bus transport around the town. As part of that, establish Alresford as a partner for the Quality Bus Partnership
22. Project to investigate feasibility of using paid staff to open Watercross Line Link between Alresford and Alton at peak times
23. Reduce traffic speeds at the town gateways. Continue to pursue calming measures that can be established for safe travel
24. Implement footpath over railway and pedestrian access across Perins School playing field and to the Station Car Park
25. Create cycle tracks to facilitate safe cycling.

The questionnaire was widely circulated and publicised. Fifty-one responses were received by the deadline for the survey. The relatively small scale of the response means that the findings cannot be viewed as substantive. The main choices are described in section 4.

3.4.3. CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES, COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS, & FARMING COMMUNITY

Consultation with local businesses representatives, achieved through a business breakfast in the autumn of 2007, and by Chamber of Commerce members sitting on ATP, showed that their main concerns were that:

- a. New Alresford should continue to be marketed as an attractive and vibrant market town surrounded by a variety of attractions.
- b. Commercially New Alresford needs to raise its game in order to be sustainable and compete effectively for new enterprises that can provide future employment for the town and its surrounding villages.
- c. The growth of the town and its commercial viability impacts upon the farming community, and it is important to accommodate it. Alresford Town



Partnership should establish better links with the farming community.

Their vision for the future of Alresford was expressed as follows:

1. Alresford should work to retain its reputation as one of the most attractive and pleasant market towns in the country, and its local reputation as the most polite market town community in Hampshire. This is essential to the maintenance and sustainability of the local tourism industry.
2. A high quality retail and commercial sector should be encouraged, integrated with managed town events and activities, thus providing Alresford with a vibrant and continuously evolving town centre to which visitors will want to return.
3. People find the town an extremely pleasant place in which to live. In combination with the town's high quality shops, local services, educational provision and employment opportunities. This will facilitate the vision of making Alresford a thriving place in which to live.
4. The outcome envisioned is a town centre, supported by a modern commercial environment, which sustains advanced, conventional and traditional businesses and facilitates both business initiation and long-term growth.

3.4.4. CONSULTATION WITH THE SURROUNDING PARISHES

Alresford Town Partnership has always invited Parish Council representatives to participate in its meetings and be members of its working groups. Several representatives have attended meetings, and those who have particular interests have become involved with some of the working groups. The Parishes most involved are Bishops Sutton, Bighton, Cheriton and Avington. The Parishes do not wish to see any reduction in transport facilities to the town, which they feel, serves them fairly well. There is no transport from some villages to the town and parking in the centre of town and near the medical centre is a concern to them. Residents in the surrounding villages enjoy both shopping in the town and attending town centre events such as the Community Centre Coffee Mornings, the Watercross Festival and the Annual Fair.

Growth in housing stock should include affordable housing of an adequate size, to help keep young people within Alresford and its surrounding villages.

Sources: Full Strengths and Weakness Analysis (see appendix F) and minutes of Alresford Town Partnership Meetings 2005-2008

For a map of Alresford and its surrounding parishes, please see appendix G.

3.4.5 TOURISM HEALTHCHECK

New Alresford, its surrounding villages and nearby towns are home to a number of widely renowned tourist attractions. Tourism is an important part of the local economy. Within the town are:

- New Alresford Railway Station and the Goods Shed.
- The Millennium Walk - along the river Arle waterside, the great weir, the watercress beds that supplied the watercress making the area famous, the Eel House and Memorial Gardens.
- The variety of colourful Georgian properties
- At the Soke there is the original bridge built by the Bishop De Lucy when building possibly the first 'new town' in England, together with a house and mill that survived subsequent fires in the town.
- The Quaker House, chapels, and the original Perins schoolhouse.

Jane Austen visited Old Alresford Place. Her home is in nearby Chawton, and the renowned gardens of Hinton Ampner House can be found in one of the town's southern villages.

Alresford and its southern villages form a natural gateway to the South Downs National Park. Therefore, protecting this colourful, historic environment is important for the whole area and has been addressed both in the *Design Statement* and in this document.

Alresford, as a part of the Healthcheck process, is planning new reasonably priced parking for visitors and additional provision for disabled drivers, in addition to the existing provision. The other major traffic need identified in the surveys related to tourism, was the problem of large articulated lorries going through the town, potentially endangering the lives of pedestrians casually walking in the city centre, and causing harm to the properties in the town, its environment and infrastructure.

It has a good selection of catering outlets ranging from restaurants to coffee and teashop outlets and independent and specialist retailers (the only gap identified being men's outfitting/clothing). The town needs to consider how it can continue to attract interesting retail outlets to enable it to continue competing with larger nearby towns. On special attraction days, retailers have remained open on Sundays, however, they have not all found this economically viable, despite the vast number of visitors the events engender.

There is clear evidence people enjoy visiting New Alresford saying they like the brightly coloured houses and hotels, and the alleys and wide streets allowing the light to shine through, and the colourful display of hanging baskets. As tourism is a most important contributor to the economy of the town, efforts must be maintained to increase awareness of what a cheerful and attractive place it is to visit. The website and all means available must be used to promote its friendly and polite character. Alresford came top of the South East regional list in Country Life's 'Favourite Market Town' award (as reported by the British Broadcasting Corporation, 2005). More recently, it was also voted in a nationwide survey of leading estate agents to be the best small market town in Hampshire and one of the best in the United Kingdom (Winchester News Extra, 2008). There is a good selection of leaflets available at New Alresford Railway Station and at the Goods Shed. These include a leaflet with an attractive map of the town.



Study for the Healthcheck has highlighted that people find the variety of signage confusing, and this has been addressed in the town's *Design Statement*. The need for maintenance of the character of this area, and the importance of Alresford remaining a vivacious town have also been addressed in the *Design Statement*. The use of brownfield sites in tourist and residential areas was highlighted in the original Town Plan Steering Group research. It is also addressed in the *Design Statement* (New Alresford Town Council, 2008) and in the New Alresford Town Council (2008) and The Alresford Society (2008) replies to the Winchester City Council LDF Issues and Options exercise.

(Sources: Design Statement research, Healthcheck questionnaires and NATC Tourism Committee minutes).

3.4.6 Winchester City Council Local Development Framework Survey

Approximately 240 people attended a meeting held at Perins School on 16 January 2008. Two substantive written responses were subsequently submitted from:

- a joint consultative working group set up by NATC to include its Councillors, The Alresford Society, Alresford Town Partnership and The Alresford Chamber of Commerce. (see appendix D)
- The Alresford Society.

Various brownfield sites were identified that would provide sites for a total of 300 houses. The sites identified also afford the town the opportunity to improve the centre for both townsfolk and tourists.

4. AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE TOWN

As has been noted already, the vision statement is that:

New Alresford should continue to thrive as a small market town of unique character and history that appeals to both residents and visitors.

In the course of this Healthcheck and the consultation processes involved, a set of current priorities for the town has emerged. Issues such as the problems of accessibility brought about by long term parking in short-term parking spaces and the need for more pedestrian routes became evident especially during the compilation of Healthcheck section T3 'Ease of movement around the town'.

This Action Plan provides the basis for immediate action and a framework against which new projects can be evaluated. In compiling this Action Plan, we have focused both on what is achievable and the expressed wishes of the community. As indicated in section 3.4.2, the projects are grouped into four sectors: The Environment and Housing; The Local Economy; Health, Community & Recreation; and Transport and Travel. Some of these projects require sustained commitment and are long term aims, so it is critical that their ongoing progress is monitored.

As already indicated in section 3.4.2, the total number of responses was 51. Taking this relatively small size of sample into account, the responses from the community members involved show that by far the most favoured project was project 6 about parking (63% of respondents). The second most favoured project was project 4 about identifying brownfield sites suitable for development (35% of respondents). The third most favoured project was project 10 about a housing assessment study (33% of respondents). The exact wording of these projects is given in section 3.4.2 above. Using the classification of the survey, the first and third priorities are matters seen to be affecting the Local Economy, and the second priority is seen as an aspect of Environment and Housing.

5. ACHIEVING THE VISION

5.1 ALRESFORD TOWN PARTNERSHIP

Alresford Town Partnership will:

- deliver the aims of the Action Plan
- be the primary source of communication about the progress of the Action Plan
- champion, facilitate and promote projects through to completion.
- continually consult with the local community to ensure the actions pursued by ATP are the right ones for the community.

5.2 COMMUNICATING THE ACTION PLAN

Effective communication is seen as very important for the successful implementation of this plan. Alresford Town Partnership Steering Group has an Administrator and envisages this person being closely involved in achieving effective communication of its progress and endeavours.

An Executive Summary was made available first of all at a General Meeting of Alresford Town Partnership.

The action plan represents the co-ordinated voice of New Alresford and the surrounding villages. It is, therefore, a sound evidence base from which to plan projects and bid for funding to achieve its aims.

In order to maintain its relevance to the community it represents, the plan will be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis.

Ongoing communication methods will include, for example;

- Press releases in the Hampshire Chronicle
- Email notification of meetings to all those signed up to the ATP distribution list
- Notices at NATC offices, Community Centre and Doctors surgery

5.3 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This document has been produced following a high level of community involvement over a five-year period. This has included the findings from around 750 responses to the Town Plan Steering Group presentations and a similarly large response in the Design Statement research. The latter involved a survey which was delivered to all households, and also response cards. The interest and participation of local people cannot end at this point but must be maintained. Alresford Town Partnership will ensure that by an effective communications strategy and its quarterly General Meetings that the community as a whole remains engaged in the process.

5.4 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Alresford Town Partnership Working Groups will monitor and review relevant projects, reporting back on their progress to the General Meetings held once a quarter. The Action Plan will inevitably need to be updated as results of further research into the needs of the people of the town are obtained.

5.4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of a project will be done by the relevant Working Group, made up of community members. The group will monitor the project against a set of pre-defined objectives and will be accountable to the Chair of Alresford Town Partnership.

Each project will be evaluated against the following project criteria:

- scope
- timing
- budget
- measurable results and outcomes.

5.4.2 Review

Alresford Town Partnership will review its active projects on a quarterly basis, and more frequently as appropriate during the lifetime of the project. Any substantive amendments to the original written plans will need to be agreed by the Working Group and then at a full Partnership meeting before being adopted. Minor amendments will need to be approved by Chair's action.

5.5 RESOURCES

Initially work towards a town plan was undertaken on a mainly voluntary basis with a grant from New Alresford Town Council. In addition, New Alresford Town the Council has provided some finance and some administrative support for the Design Statement process. The research for, and writing of the Design Statement has been carried out by volunteers, as was the draft Action Plan. It is recognised that a key to delivery of the Action Plan has been, and will continue to be, the dedication and co-operation of volunteers. Alresford Town Partnership has now made a commitment to supplement this with a paid resource, with warmest appreciation of the funding received from Hampshire County Council which has made this possible.

5.6 FUNDING

A Resource and Funding budget will be required to bring some funding bids to fruition and will be the responsibility of Alresford Town Partnership. Some of the identified projects will be achieved through delivery by one or more partner agencies, and these will not go through the accounts of the Resource and Funding budget.

6. PROGRESS TO DATE AND HOW THE ACTION PLAN IS TO BE USED

6.1 PROGRESS TO DATE

A number of actions, which were suggested during the process of developing a vision for Alresford, have already been achieved prior to the publication of this document.

They are:

1. A Youth Working Group has been established under the auspices of Alresford Town Partnership. With multi-agency support, this group is supporting young people and providing the opportunity for them to put their views across more effectively.
2. A skateboard park has been built at Arlebury Park, funded via Alresford Town Council. The Town Council is also looking at ways to provide a wider range of activities for the community.
3. The Design Statement has been written and agreed with Winchester City Council as a result of work undertaken by NATC as a whole and an NATC working party. Some environmental analysis was undertaken at the same time. This can be accessed on the website of Alresford Town Partnership (see References section).
4. Provision for improvements to listed buildings using traditional materials – unless not feasible. (NATC Design Statement and WCC Conservation Officers).
5. A list of Grade listed buildings (does not necessarily include all historic buildings).
6. The process of obtaining additional green space to provide a rugby pitch has been started.
7. Meetings with Perins School managers to request wider use of Arlebury Park buildings.
8. Sites for a new car park and a footpath across Perins School grounds, in order to enhance accessibility to the town, have been identified along with timescales for implementation. WCC has been very supportive in helping to make this viable.
9. Policy for the economic development of Alresford. All the allotments so far created are now occupied, with the latest allotment provision also taken up and a short waiting list remaining.
10. Protection of open spaces and recreational areas from development. (NATC working in partnership with WCC).
11. Advice given on the provision of affordable homes and type. NATC and local councillors working with WCC Planning Department

6.2 HOW THE ACTION PLAN IS TO BE USED

The primary purpose is to influence planning at regional and local levels, linking into Regional Development Plans and the Local Development Framework, and to influence the Winchester District Community Strategy.

The Plan will also support any project requiring external funding. In this instance it is likely that the full document, including all the supporting evidence, will need to be available to potential funding partners.

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF ALRESFORD

In the year 1200, the powerful Bishop of Winchester, Godfrey de Lucy, decided to establish a market town on a part of the Liberty of Alresford, an extensive land-holding in the possession of the Diocese by grant of a seventh century Saxon King of Wessex on his conversion to Christianity. At that time, the building of new market towns was a common means for great magnates to improve the economy of their possessions and to increase their own revenues. The Bishop's investment was, however, unusually important. He built a great dam to establish a pond and provide a head of water for mills in his new town, and a bridge over the marshy ground around the ford between the Saxon settlement, now Old Alresford, and his new market, which he called 'New Market'. He intended that the new works would enable the river to become navigable down to Winchester. The pond also provided fish for his palace at Bishop's Sutton. The approach to the town today crosses his dam, with the great pond on the left, and goes over that same bridge to the market street, Broad Street. In the town, the boundaries of many properties are those of the 'burgage plots' his surveyors laid out, extensive gardens designed to enable the tradesmen he wanted to attract to run a self-sufficient household.

Many of these artificially-created new towns failed to survive the calamities of the 14th century. New Alresford survived, perhaps because it was intelligently sited. The dam and bridge ensured that the route from Winchester to London would now pass through the town, and the considerable local production of wool, corn, hides and other animal products found a nearby market and mills to treat the raw materials. By the 16th century Alresford was important enough to be rated as a borough, with the right to send two members to the Parliament (though this did not last). Good governance was assured by an appointed Reeve and a court of Burgesses. Unusually, the Burgesses did not entirely disappear with the sweeping local government reforms of the 1880s, and maintain a vestigial existence in the form of a Town Trust, which still manages the market and the ancient fairs.

The prosperity of the town was periodically set back by fires. Only a couple of houses and the lower part of the church tower survive from the very extensive fire of 1689, and another early in the next century. Rebuilding took place over the same cellars, and often within the same walls, but under tiled roofs rather than thatch. The economy must have been helped by the building of a fine turnpike at this time, and new agricultural systems coupled with enclosures. The long rows of houses and cottages with Georgian frontages, which are a major attraction of the town, date from this latest rebuilding, and from the prosperous times up to the end of the Napoleonic wars. Few houses were rebuilt during the Victorian era, because by that time Alresford was heavily dependent on agriculture which went into decline from the 1840s until the end of the century. The arrival of the railway in 1865 enabled the watercress industry and dairying to develop and bring some money into the local economy, as did the periodic sheep fairs for which Alresford remained famous into the 20th century. The Edwardian economic boom helped restore fortunes, as is apparent from an extensive development of good-class housing (much of it recently 're-developed') to the South. At this time also the church was restored, one might say replaced, and a fine chapel built. With the agricultural depression of the 1920s, followed by the general depression, the fortunes of the town took another dive. Such building as took place was of generally poor quality. The population stabilised.

The Second World War left Alresford more or less unscathed, but as impoverished as most country towns. Agriculture revived, but the town became less dependent on this single industry and attracted a certain amount of light industry. The first social housing was built in the 1940s, and added to in the following two decades. Probably

more important was the increasing ease of communication from the fifties onwards. Although Beeching's axe closed the railway line in 1975, steadily more people were accustomed to go to work by car and Alresford began to become something of a dormitory town, losing its self-sufficiency but improving its prosperity. The new housing built in the 70s and 80s was well planned and attractive, as was the town itself, and the population rapidly increased while remaining a good place to live and bring up a family – and indeed to live in retirement.

Two new roads had a favourable impact from the 1980s on the quality of the town, and the quality of life of its citizens. The M3 motorway was constructed so far from the town that long-distance commuting by car has never been easy. Most of our commuters work within a twenty mile radius, and so remain 'local' people. In 1985 a by-pass was opened, halting the southward march of development and freeing the town of traffic which threatened to strangle it, especially at summer weekends. This destroyed businesses depending on the passing trade, in particular pubs and antique shops (there were fourteen at one time). The town centre became habitable again, and the failed businesses were replaced by shops dependent on local rather than the passing trade. Butchers, bakers, fishmongers, hairdressers, opticians, dry-cleaners - in short a fine array of retail businesses and professional services - have made Alresford once again almost self-sufficient: this is in the sense that one can obtain almost all of the goods and services required for day-to-day living within the town - except men's shirts and socks, but new retail outlets are currently planned. In sum, a long and chequered history has left Alresford looking beautiful, and feeling beautiful, and functioning - as Bishop de Lucy intended – as a true English country market town.

APPENDIX B: HISTORY OF THE HEALTHCHECK AND THE FORMATION OF WORKING GROUPS

The steering group was formed in 2002. The steering group was made up of local, experienced volunteers from within the community, representing the business, public and voluntary sectors active in New Alresford. Representatives from the surrounding villages were invited to the public meetings of the group.

In conjunction with the Civic Trust, the steering group held a public consultation exercise in January 2003 to find out how local people would like to see the town develop (the Civic Trust, 2003). Feedback from the community at that workshop was recorded under the headings of 'pedestrian safety', 'affordable housing' and 'economic vitality of retail centre'. As an outworking of the recommendations made by the Civic Trust (2003) in its report on that consultation exercise, working parties were established to focus on the work involved. The findings of the working parties were subsequently brought together in the draft *Alresford Action Plan* (New Alresford Town Plan Steering Group, 2005).

Alresford Town Partnership took on the Healthcheck, and groups were formed to look at some of the outcomes. Following the survey undertaken at the Watercross Festival in 2007 the working groups analysed the responses and discussed possible projects. These working groups are still in existence and include members from a variety of voluntary groups, some members of the original steering group, and some members of the Parish Councils from the surrounding villages. Other forms of data collection were also undertaken in 2007 and the findings from these were incorporated into the Healthcheck: a Chamber breakfast (see section 3.4.3), a mystery shopper survey (Tourism South East, 2007) and a survey of parking and shopping by Alresford Chamber of Commerce (2007).

The aim of the group is to create a hub around which community-led action is managed, maintaining the 'vision' and long term plan regularly reviewed and updated to ensure a better Alresford for future generations.

Groups have concentrated on specific aspects of the Healthcheck, the results of the 2007 survey compared with views and responses from previous and later consultation exercises and a strengths and weaknesses analysis drawn up, giving an up to date picture of the projects required.

Between 2002 and 2004 The New Alresford Town Plan Steering Group commenced consultative work on the Draft *Alresford Action Plan*, which it published in 2005, and then initiated the Countryside Agency's "Healthcheck" process.

The Steering Group and its Working Parties sought input and consulted with the general public in the whole Alresford's area, as shown on the map in Section 3.4.4. Key stakeholders, service providers and local businesses were also consulted. This ensured that all views were taken into account and all the possible solutions explored when putting together the *Alresford Action Plan*.

The Working Parties initially focused their research on five areas. These have been modified during the SWOT analysis to:

- Location and The Environment and Housing
- Recreational and Sporting facilities
- The Economy and Tourism
- Transport

APPENDIX C: HEALTHCHECK PROCESS TABLE OF EVENTS

Stage 1: GATHERING FACTS (in 2002)

	who participated
Completion of Working Party worksheets. Analysis done by each working group. Snapshot report on Alresford completed, providing a comprehensive description of Alresford, its community and the services it offers.	Steering Group

Stage 2 : CONSULTATION OF LOCAL RESIDENTS (in 2002/04)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings held to identify local issues and comments cards Completed by those who attended. Local survey of households in New Alresford, analysed and then key issues identified Draft Alresford 'Town Plan' issued and publicised together with potential actions to be prioritised. NATC undertook to achieve some actions, e.g. allotments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Group working groups/ local residents Steering Group NATC
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Stage 3 : CONSULTATION OF LOCAL BUSINESSES & COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS (in 2004/05)

Those consulted included the Chamber of Commerce, the National Farmers Union and individual companies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with those involved in the Steering Group and Tourist Industry. Meetings with members of agricultural and other stakeholder groups. Prioritisation of projects and draft <i>Alresford Action Plan</i> produced. Alresford Town Partnership set up. Allotments announced as coming on stream Alresford Town Partnership reconstituted the working groups Public meetings held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATC and tourism stakeholders NATC Steering Group NATC ATP ATP
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Stage 4 : VARIOUS (in 2005/07).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on achieving a new car park commenced Design Statement researched and written with aims of Action Plan as an initial vision of how the people of Alresford wish the town to develop and researched with public presentations and working groups Business Breakfast and consultative meetings with members of Tourism stakeholders in the Chamber of Commerce Business hours parking for business users at Arlebury Park set up Development and publication of a Tourism Strategy for Alresford Set up monitoring of speed of traffic Investigate new walking to town routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATC NATC ATP/WCC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATC NATC HCC/NATC NATC/HCC HCC/NATC
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic calming in Jacklyns Lane and safe routes to schools scheme • Skateboard facilities achieved • Acquired land next to Arlebury Park to redress lack of open space problem and provide rugby pitch and space for other sports and youth activities • Town Partnership constitution agreed • Programme of quarterly General Meetings begun • Exhibition & 'Putting Pedestrians First' questionnaire at Watercress Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATC • NATC • ATP • ATP • ATP
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Stage 5 : HEALTHCHECK COMPLETION (in 2007/08).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collation and completion of healthcheck information • Healthcheck data analysed. • SWOT analysis undertaken and healthcheck report <i>Alresford Healthcheck 2008: A Plan for Alresford until 2020</i> written • Public consultation so that the public are able to prioritise town needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATP • ATP • ATP • ATP
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APPENDIX D: WINCHESTER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (ALRESFORD REPORT)

This report has been prepared with input from New Alresford Town Councillors, The Alresford Society, Alresford Town Partnership and Alresford Chamber of Commerce.

1.1.1 Consultation

It must be said at the outset that whilst the Town Council welcomed the consultation that took place on 16 January we do not believe that the results will represent the views of the residents who attended. It is felt that the consultation process was too structured and was designed in such a way as to produce a result that would lead to Alresford residents showing a preference for either Area 1 or Area 2 being developed. There was little or no opportunity for residents to express their true views and opinions and we do not believe that too much credence should be given to any results from that consultation process. This has more emphasis as WCC's own Core Strategy document states "*the need to explore all potential options that may be available*" the thing that the consultation meeting manifestly failed to do.

Introduction

New Alresford Town Council consider that the concept of development on either of the identified greenfield sites at the extremities of the town is seriously flawed and has been suggested without any consideration of the uniqueness of this market town and the problems it faces today and in the future. This report demonstrates that Winchester City Council's desire to provide 300 units of accommodation in New Alresford can be more than adequately met over the next 20 years by using existing brownfield sites within the boundaries of the town. Provided the necessary infrastructure improvements and service improvements are made prior to development this will reduce the problems faced by the town and not increase them as the proposals outlined in WCC's Issues and Options paper would undoubtedly do.

South East Plan

There is a strong body of opinion amongst residents that the whole concept of undertaking this level of development in the South East of England is unsustainable particularly with regard to the adequacy of water supplies. It is suggested that there is no evidence of need and that to make more housing available only creates a greater need to provide yet more housing. In an environment which is increasingly being threatened by climate change there needs to be some guarantee as to the adequacy of water supplies in this region.

Overall Issues

New Alresford, compared with the parishes that immediately adjoin it, is small in area but densely populated. Within its boundaries it has limited green space that is accessible, and falls short by 3.0 hectares of the requirement for Sport and Recreation facilities.

Many residents of New Alresford seriously question any additional housing within the limited boundaries of the town and many would consider that even the limited housing increase considered in Option 1, Current Planned Boundaries, is too much. Others share the view of the Alresford Society that steady development is needed to retain the character of the town and its future as a 'real' market town. The continuing reduction in the size of households and the continuing increase in our age profile, mean that without more housing Alresford will shrivel and cease to be economically sustainable. Further, we think that an increase in the size of the town, year on year, is essential to retain our splendid array of independent suppliers of goods and services which is a determining factor in the make-up of the town's character.

We note the emphasis placed on Alresford as a key hub *“to develop and serve their existing and surrounding communities.”* This is not an unreasonable objective but it needs to be undertaken in such a way that the residents of the surrounding area pay a realistic amount to the provision of these services. It cannot be expected that the residents of the hub pay for the services used, in part, by non-residents.

There are many reasons for this and there is cause for concern regarding the infrastructure to support any increase in housing and population. The infrastructure concerns fall into two areas:

1. those associated with additional building in the town
2. those associated with additional use of the town by residents, visitors and those from surrounding areas who rely on the town for its facilities and services.

Given the above the overwhelming majority of residents of the town would wish to see little or no further development inside the town.

However, there are many people who believe that at the end of the day Alresford may be forced to accept further expansion and fear that this may be implemented to its detriment because the options were not fully considered and explored at this planning stage. It, therefore, seems prudent to look at how any such options should be implemented to ensure the minimum impact on the town and hopefully improve services. (See also submission from the Alresford Society and the Alresford Town Partnership.) This position is strengthened by the government's view, *“that if the Council cannot demonstrate through its LDF and regular monitoring that it can deliver the targets, sites for housing may be imposed through planning appeals.”* *The implementation of such a process would, of course deliver the worst of all worlds in forcing unplanned development without the benefit of any planned infrastructure improvements.*

In line with the Strategic Objective for *“Protection and enhancement of Winchester District's most valuable environments”* Area 2 should be protected at all costs and wherever possible access to the land should be improved to provide additional recreational areas for residents. This is consistent with another strategic objective to *“Maximise new opportunities for walking, cycling, sport and recreation/play to promote healthy lifestyles and to reduce the need to use the car.”* This area incorporates Arlebury Park recreation ground and the proposed compulsory purchase order site adjoining. This is a natural wild life area and offers probably the only place with views to the town from some of the premier walking routes in Hampshire.

Areas for Future Development

It is disappointing to note that in preparing the options very little thought has been given to addressing the other problems:

- parking,
- improved services,
- traffic problems,
- employment,
- provision for sport and recreation facilities, etc.

This is contrary to one of the strategic objectives of *“Provision of the necessary service and support facilities in the right place at the right time.”* Indeed the development of either Area 1 or Area 2 will add to these problems not help or resolve

them in any way. Emphasis must be placed upon producing a proper infrastructure survey and Strategic Land Availability Assessment.

It is not clear from the document whether the areas defined in Map 6 relate to Options 2 or 3 or whether Area 1 relates to Option 2 and Area 2 to Option 3 or any other combination. In any event it seems inappropriate to consider these or any other options within, what are after all arbitrary boundaries especially when there is a shortage of green recreational areas in the town.

However, the preferred solution must take into account the town as a whole and cannot just involve dumping one or more housing developments on the perimeters and hoping for the best. All of the current problems will intensify if this approach is taken and any development must include addressing the current issues and in particular parking, services and traffic. Parking is a critical problem in Alresford and any plans to increase the population density must provide for additional car parking. Further one of the objectives is to reduce car journeys and any development of green field sites around Alresford will almost certainly increase car journeys as people would not walk to the town from these new development areas. Lack of parking also has an impact on the economic viability of the town and, therefore, goes against yet another of the strategic objectives.

As a prelude to any decisions being taken it is believed that a proper infrastructure survey should be conducted to include but not necessarily limited to the following:

- What is the scope for housing development within the town's boundaries?
- What level of development will the present infrastructure bear?
- What will the requirements be for water, utilities, sewage, roads, schools, medical services and other essentials?
- What will be the plan to provide these infrastructure requirements?
- What is required for recreational space and how will this be provided?

Scale of Development

It is understood that there is a desire on the part of WCC for Alresford to increase its housing stock by some 300 units in order to meet the overall requirement being laid upon Winchester District for the period to 2026. From an initial quick survey we conclude that this volume of housing can be accommodated by implementing Option 1 and developing on brownfield sites within the town boundaries.

Detailed below are some sites that are currently identified or under discussion which demonstrates that this option is viable. Indeed it fulfils over 90% off WCCs requirement for Alresford. It is appreciated that perhaps not all of these sites will come to fruition or will not meet the outlined density but a proper Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will reveal other sites that will more than meet any shortfall in WCC's requirement. NATC has identified a number of potential sites and is more than willing to work with WCC in the preparation of the assessment using its local knowledge. In identifying those additional sites it is not intended they be definitive either in the sense of stating that these areas should be developed or saying there are no alternative or additional sites that could be used.

Also there is no suggestion that these sites, particularly residential houses, might be acquired compulsorily but they should be identified within an overall plan for the next twenty years. No development should be allowed without considering the potential of developing a wider area including adjacent sites. There is a need to ensure that development on these sites is not undertaken on a piecemeal basis that prevents an

overall development plan being implemented that provides for infrastructure improvements prior to development.

Site	Comments	Units of accommodation
Completed 2006/7		44
Railway Cuttings		30
Spring Gardens	Reserved site	30
Watercress Meadows	Proposed Exception Site	50
Bridge Road		14
Grange Road		23
Cricketers		40
Arle Gardens, The Dean	Derelict Watercress Beds	30
East of Cardew House		20
Total		281

Development sites on this scale, provided it is planned for, should generate the necessary funding to make the changes in the town Centre and also for the acquisition of additional recreation sites elsewhere in New Alresford or adjoining parishes. It is essential that this development is phased over the period to 2026.

A long term addition might be to re-locate Perins School to the east of Sun Lane creating an Educational Campus together with Sun Hill Schools. This has the additional benefit of better meeting the Safer Routes to Schools and Putting Pedestrians first campaigns by being able to provide better pedestrian and cycle routes that are very difficult in the town centre. Whilst this will involve new building some 75% of the usage would be for sports fields which would help preserve the green space to the east of the town.

The possibility of relocating Perins School could be added to by re-locating Sun Hill School across the road to this site thus releasing that land for development.

This complex would also provide an environmental boundary against future housing development. If this is done provision must be made for road access from the A31, utilising the existing under bridge which would also improve access to the Prospect Road business park if this were retained in the long term.

All of these developments need to be properly phased over the planning period and only approved subject to the necessary infrastructure work having been completed.

There needs to be a proper mix of types of housing and density although this need not necessarily apply to all sites. For example it would be expected that the housing density would be high in the centre of the town and lower at the edge. There is a view that in providing affordable housing within these developments there should be no distinction between the different types of accommodation.

Town Centre Improvements

At the present time there are two mini-industrial sites in the town, which in most cases offer little benefit to the town, by virtue of being in the town, but increase the problems, particularly traffic. The Dean industrial area has few if any commercial activities that are accessed on foot from the town centre and it is thought that almost without exception employees of these businesses use cars to commute even if residents of the town.

It is proposed that those commercial enterprises at the southern end of The Dean, roughly between IVC and 21 The Dean on the west side be re-located to other sites outside of the town. This area of The Dean could be re-developed to provide a town centre car park (minimum 100 cars), a site for an improved medical centre. This centre would provide the services needed by a growing community, and the closure of the Ropley surgery, and in line with the government strategy to provide more medical treatment locally in the community. Some town centre accommodation could also be provided for those members of the community who would benefit from being close to the town centre and are in addition to the outline numbers above. Improvements to the crossroads at The Dean, Jacklyns Lane should be made by installing a mini roundabout possibly with a raised identified pedestrian area.

The site of the existing medical centre could be used to expand the present Station Car Park possibly with the inclusion of a specific area for recyclables currently located at the back of the Car Park and the improvement of pedestrian access to the Car Park particularly from Station Approach. Alternatively it could provide accommodation with public parking underneath.

If improvements are made in this area of the town centre it is suggested that better use could be made of the Police Station which is currently an underutilised site comprising a Police Station that is rarely open and some overspill office accommodation.

Consideration should also be given to re-locating some commercial activities at the Prospect Road site out of town although care must be exercised to ensure that those businesses that are accessed on foot are retained. This would provide additional land for housing but not on the scale required if Options 2 or 3 were implemented.

If Perins School was re-located to the East of Sun Lane provision could be made at the southern end of the site for the relocation of commercial activities with direct access to the A31.

Infrastructure

It is essential that as part of the Infrastructure assessment that sustainability thresholds are established for the town at the present time. As development takes place it will be necessary to get binding agreements that new infrastructure will be provided before and as development takes place.

There is particular concern regarding water services and the ability of the current system to sustain development on this scale. Brownfield site development will put more pressure on existing water services than green field development and it is essential that agreement to the necessary changes is made prior to any development being agreed. This also applies to car parking in the town centre.

Sustainability, Conservation & Economic growth

There needs to be effective co-ordination and phasing of all development which is linked to infrastructure improvements.

There is a need to ensure financing is in place to ensure that infrastructure improvements can be made before developments are agreed.

Long term planning for light industrial sites and offices both near the town and in rural areas that would ensure the economic sustainability of the town. To be phased in concurrently with the development of the brownfield sites to offer relocation sites for town centre industries.

New Alresford is surrounded by small villages and the major industry in these villages is agricultural or related to agriculture. Sustainability also requires us to look at the health of these villages.

- Can workers afford to live near their jobs, is there alternative work when agriculture is in recession or there are problems in the industry? We should therefore look at redundant farm buildings as potential sites for new industry and industrial re-location.
- The road from Cheriton brings large lorries into the town. It therefore has become necessary for the provision of a link to and from the A31 by-pass.
- Heavy lorry traffic from the now international watercress company is also damaging the fabric of the town and it is necessary to consider a feeder by-pass to the watercress companies to the north of the town terminating at the watercress company.

There is a heavy reliance, particularly by the elderly and disabled, on volunteers and voluntary organisations in the town, which is not valued by government. These services should be a function of the major service providers based in Winchester.

NATC supports any green initiatives proposed as part of this plan.

Recreational facilities

New Alresford currently falls well short of the statutory requirement for Sports and Recreational space and facilities. Any large scale future development as well as making this requirement greater will reduce the ability of it being provided by using more of the existing green space currently in the town. Any plans for more development in the town must provide for the provision of more recreational land and it is for this reason that any development in area 2 should be resisted. This is a prime site for recreational land as well as being a natural wild life area which offers views to the town and adjoins some of the premier walking routes in Hampshire.

Any development plans must also include the acquisition of land for recreational purposes immediately adjoining the boundaries of the parish to ensure that we can meet our statutory requirements in this area.

If the option of re-locating Perins School came into play this site could be used sympathetically for the provision of housing that would be of benefit to those people most in need of being located in or near the town centre. Also the parking currently available on this site could be retained and released for public use which could reduce the amount of parking proposed in The Dean

Conclusion and Summary

Recognising the WCC's desire to plan for some 300 additional houses in Alresford over the next 20 years this needs to be done in a structured way that allows for the provision of the right infrastructure services and recreational and leisure facilities prior to any further development taking place. This report demonstrates that the required level of development can be achieved within the town without resorting to housing development in Areas 1 or 2 and it is essential that WCC undertakes a full and complete infrastructure and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as a matter of urgency. NATC believe that such a survey will endorse our position that the necessary development potential can be released, without building houses on greenfield sites, whilst at the same time improving the infrastructure, services and recreational potential of the town.

APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF THE STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

The work undertaken to complete the SWOT analysis in the Healthcheck survey has been an important element of the consultation process: this detailed work helped to establish the key concerns and was, therefore, instrumental in identifying the projects from which the action plan has been developed. Summary worksheets follow within this appendix, and full detailed worksheets are given in appendix F. The analysis of responses from major stakeholders and working groups shows the key issues to be addressed to safeguard and sustain the character of the town and the strengths people value about its character most.

People were particularly concerned about the public transport problems that people have when wanting to travel between the town's hinterland and the town centre. This results in people having to use cars to access services, which exacerbates the shortage of car parking in the town centre. Added to this is the limited bus service available to Winchester, Basingstoke and Petersfield, despite peak time buses being full, and reductions in peak time services to Winchester. Evening travel to and from hospital, educational facilities and places of entertainment are also highly problematic because of the limited bus service available.

Another key concern was about lorry movements in the town, the danger they pose to pedestrians, the congestion they cause and their damaging effect on the environment and character of the town. This has two causes:

- The watercress packing plant that employs workers from towns outside New Alresford.
- Lorry drivers using their satellite navigation instruments, rather than the main roads.

Residents enjoy their colourful Georgian town (they say it makes them smile) and are concerned that damage will be caused by the constant trundle of the lorries. They also feel this could destroy the tourism industry. Linked to this was a concern about the speed of traffic in many areas of the town.

Another concern was the age distribution of the population and the need to encourage new enterprises to encourage other age groups to come to the town, or for young people to remain once they have completed their education.

Concern was also expressed about the need to support local agricultural production. Linked to business problems was the lack of a nearby business banking facility and the need to rely on the North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce Group for new enterprise support and training initiatives.

When looking at the care of people in the community, the problem of an aging population and of day facilities to suit this wide age group was raised. Additionally there is a need to monitor our Health Centre to ensure it is able provide the very best facility possible for people.

Many people are extremely concerned about the water supply and the ability of water providers to maintain an adequate supply to the town as it continues to develop and grow. There is a particular threat to add treated water from more southern cities into local rivers. These rivers provide clear clean spring water for watercress and are a safe haven for indigenous endangered species that would not survive in less clean water. Alresford is located to the south of the river Arle. The watercress beds and fishpond water comes from spring water arising from boreholes.

In addition to promoting the concept of the proposed new parking facilities and footpath in Perins School, NATC has already supplied the requested skateboard park, has upgraded the football pitch and changing facilities. It also has provisional plans to purchase land for a rugby pitch.

Key strengths and weaknesses

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>1. Location and housing</p> <p>location</p> <p>a good mix of housing in good condition</p> <p>a good attractive shopping centre, wide airy venue with variety of shops</p>	<p>Visitors can only arrive by car, the Watercress Line when running, or by the limited bus services from nearby towns.</p> <p>popular well-laid out town but with high property prices</p> <p>Affordable homes do not always meet needs of townspeople.</p> <p>retail gap regarding teenage goods and outfitting; limited electrical sales outlet; mini-supermarkets charge higher prices than in local supermarkets a car journey away</p> <p>small market and, so far, no specialist farmers markets</p>	<p>manage the future development of New Alresford</p> <p>maintain breadth of Alresford Town Partnership and continued commitment to address local issues</p> <p>identify exception sites for local people and those who work in Alresford</p> <p>encourage street cleanliness and keep town cheerful and attractive, continuing to attract distinctive shops</p>	<p>potential conflict between and within different interest groups working together</p> <p>inertia to work with other organisations shown by some interest groups</p> <p>housing associations may not keep to criteria important to local people</p> <p>incorrect WCC projections of the housing mix needed</p> <p>Economic down turn - reducing numbers of tourists or numbers able to purchase from bespoke venues.</p>
<p>2. Recreation, sports and other facilities</p> <p>Three substantive recreational areas provide facilities for walking, football, skateboarding, and tennis.</p> <p>Community school which provides vocational and leisure courses.</p> <p>The Community Centre provides venue for weekly coffee mornings, WI market and facilities for</p>	<p>limited number of leisure activities catered for</p> <p>limited access for townspeople to recreational facilities</p> <p>Part of Perins School playing field is an exception site for building.</p> <p>The viability of the local events is dependent on the continuing goodwill of</p>	<p>bring green space up to recommended level and provide wider range of activities.</p> <p>encourage school to function more as a community school</p> <p>ensure volunteers feel valued.</p> <p>wider use of some community venues (e.g. for childcare).</p> <p>variety and regularity</p>	<p>land may not be available in most suitable place.</p> <p>WCC/HCC keen to take over the town's green space for building.</p> <p>Perins School will continue to limit access to its facilities</p> <p>reduction in the number of volunteers to maintain venues and clubs</p>

<p>badminton and judo clubs and other meetings.</p> <p>Arlebury Park, Methodist Church Hall and former chapel provide other venues</p> <p>Purpose-built medical centre.</p>	<p>volunteers.</p> <p>Cinema and theatre evenings are restricted to what volunteer groups provide.</p> <p>People have to go to Winchester for hospital services. This is a lengthy process for anyone not using a car.</p> <p>Aging population and lack of relevant services and provision.</p> <p>There is no bus available to take people to hospital at admissions time.</p>	<p>of films to bring in younger people.</p> <p>construct a new medical centre -in the long term if facility needs up-grading. More small procedures could be delivered locally.</p>	<p>prohibitive building costs in the future</p>
<p>3. Economy and Tourism</p> <p>A good variety of shops, which are very rarely empty</p> <p>Teenagers leave school well educated: over 90% of them go on to undertake further education after completing their statutory years.</p> <p>only 1.3% unemployment in the town</p> <p>A good stock of promotional literature about the town is available.</p>	<p>inertia concerning improving the variety of enterprises in the town.</p> <p>lack of local vocational training provision.</p> <p>lack of up-to-date plant and offices</p> <p>Lack of safe crossing points in the centre of the town and no pedestrian area, plus signage.</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce to encourage suitable entrepreneurs to set up in the town as premises become available.</p> <p>ideal location for new technology entrepreneurs to move to, because of skills profile of newly qualified young people</p> <p>efforts to attract visitors to the town have to be maintained.</p> <p>a new properly planned business park, and release of brownfield sites for housing and services</p> <p>encourage property owners to maintain their properties in traditional materials, in good order and colourfully painted.</p>	<p>businesses may not come to the town because of full employment and risks of skills shortages</p> <p>price of housing can discourage young people from settling in the town.</p> <p>concerns that HGV lorries in the tourist area cause harm to the town centre ambience and to specific properties.</p>

		<p>maintain provision of flower baskets and find other ways of brightening the town with flowers</p> <p>Work with police to agree on places for safe crossing.</p>	
<p>4. Traffic and Transport</p> <p>Proximity of the A 31</p>	<p>Poor access, other than by car, to the town from surrounding villages and from various areas in the town.</p> <p>Hospital visit by public transport requires two bus journeys</p> <p>Cost of one-off use of public transport is higher than using a car + parking.</p> <p>Lack of public parking spaces in or near the town centre</p> <p>HGV lorries causing harm to the town</p>	<p>Cango bus service extended to places in town not currently served by a bus service.</p> <p>revise peak time bus services and routes.</p> <p>books of bus tickets for purchase at discount.</p> <p>investigate locations for town centre parking and plan/build long-term stay car park</p> <p>access to A31 by-pass from the south; other routes to be planned to by-pass the town</p>	<p>prohibitive cost implications for projects</p>

APPENDIX F: FULL SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section S1: Population				
<p>People available to work as volunteers. The town has a good team of volunteers.</p>	<p>Aging Population. Lack of volunteers in middle age group.</p> <p>Less choice of workers and workforce mix. Risk of skills shortages.</p>	<p>Setting up of proper day centre. Low turnover may encourage employers</p>	<p>Younger people may not want to carry on volunteer work.</p> <p>1.3% unemployed may discourage employers/only unemployable available.</p>	<p>Alresford website encouraging people to set up businesses and work in the town.</p> <p>Set up – shows town and shows Design Statement.</p>
Section S2: Housing				
<p>Housing stock in good condition.</p>	<p>New properties too small for younger people's needs.</p> <p>New properties for newly qualified do not have work units on site for start-up businesses.</p> <p>No social housing scheme to encourage people to downsize.</p> <p>New affordable homes are expensive for semi-skilled and blue-collar workers.</p>	<p>Small integrated new developments with affordable homes content.</p> <p>Plan to match affordable housing with needs of New Alresford's working people.</p> <p>Keep these near town centre by using brown field sites whenever possible</p>	<p>WCC – Issues and Options Exercise.</p>	<p>Involvement in Issues and Options Exercise using SWOT as a base and WCC/NATC land use analysis.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section S3: Health and public safety				
<p>Crime rate low when compared with other towns in South Hants.</p> <p>Developing Strategy for Crime</p> <p>Neighbourhood Watch area.</p> <p>Good Health Area.</p> <p>Good Medical Centre but built to meet population needs of under 5000.</p> <p>Good emergency services including local Fire Service.</p>	<p>Growing assumption that there are no problems.</p> <p>Shared policing.</p> <p>Poor public transport both from Town & villages.</p> <p>No through or timely public transport to hospital.</p> <p>Distance of hospital provisions and emergency services.</p>	<p>Build on reputation for being a safe town to live and work in.</p> <p>Maintain a visible police presence on the streets and at the recreational grounds.</p> <p>Provide a Police meeting room at Arlebury Park and re-allocate old police houses as brownfield site.</p> <p>Long term plan to re-build medical centre in the Dean area.</p> <p>Maintain Fire Service Provision.</p>	<p>Cost: HCC & Bus Service providers and willingness of ratepayers to subsidies service - steady diminution of public transport.</p> <p>Similarly with medical centre.</p>	<p>Work with Police/HCC.</p> <p>Encourage neighbourhood watch to work with Town Partnership.</p> <p>Include new medical centre in long-term plans for the town.</p> <p>Investigate possibility of SEEDA funding for land use analysis.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section S4: Local government and Winchester City Council Organisations				
<p>Easy Access to Local Government and Councillors.</p> <p>Councillors hold Community bi-weekly surgeries.</p> <p>NATC (Parish Council) involved in consultation process for Design Statement and Town Plan.</p> <p>Town Partnership has taken on work of Town Plan Steering Group.</p> <p>Town Trustees create groups to protect some old structures.</p> <p>Current Eel House restoration.</p>	<p>Nothing happened as a result of original research for Town Plan</p> <p>If Town views are ignored on issues and options consultation will lose more credibility.</p> <p>Reliant on goodwill of volunteers and W.I. These are aging groups of people.</p>	<p>Ensure residents are shown their views and ideas have been fully considered.</p> <p>Ensure volunteers feel they are valued.</p>	<p>Inertia associated with implementing residents' views Council employees/officers.</p> <p>New volunteers may not come through.</p>	<p>Building up Town Partnership and its links with NATC/WCC/HCC. Council representatives attending Partnership meetings.</p> <p>Design Statement now written.</p> <p>Healthcheck Report – now written</p> <p>Find way of linking different charity organisations to Alresford Town Partnership or Town Council so that autonomy not taken away.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section S5: Leisure facilities				
<p>Facilities at Perins School.</p> <p>Arlebury Park, Stratton Bates, Sunhill are well kept. There is a skateboard park, football pitch rugby and football (both sexes) changing rooms, and tennis courts. Rugby pitch planned. Allotments for nearly thirty and more planned. Millennium walk takes people from town along River Arle to Arlebury Park.</p>	<p>Perins School not perceived as a proper community school by many in the community.</p> <p>Perceived lack of sports facilities for majority of townspeople e.g.: Hockey, Swimming.</p> <p>Perceived need for a lakeside walk.</p> <p>Perceived need for more car parking.</p> <p>Lack of green space in town.</p> <p>Current Issues and Options exercise proposals take Arlebury Park for development whereas recreational areas need to be increased.</p>	<p>Undertake survey of additional sports and recreational facilities.</p> <p>Acquisition of new recreational and leisure facilities.</p>	<p>Analysis will require volunteer effort or a SEEDA grant</p> <p>Cost of land purchase.</p>	<p>Work with school to improve this situation.</p> <p>Investigate preferred sites for parking and open green areas during</p> <p>Issues and Options exercise.</p> <p>NATC to investigate residents preferences for leisure facilities, prioritise, and plan implementation when possible.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section S6: Cultural and heritage venues				
<p>There are five venues for social events (inc three church halls) and a chapel.</p> <p>New Alresford – the Georgian market town.</p> <p>The Memorial Grounds and Eel House (Alresford Soc. & Town Trustees) and Old Fire Station are all in good repair.</p> <p>There are three mills, two on the Arle and one at the station.</p> <p>The C12th church.</p> <p>Watercress Festival.</p> <p>Good supply of tourist leaflets.</p> <p>The Community Centre.</p>	<p>Rely on volunteers and the next generation carrying on their work.</p> <p>Many projects and town historic properties are reliant on people's enthusiasm.</p> <p>The Community Centre relies on volunteers to keep it in good order and to run weekly coffee mornings.</p> <p>See also section S3.</p>	<p>Recognition of value of volunteers.</p> <p>Design Statement and listed building regulations to protect historic buildings</p> <p>See also Section S3</p>	<p>Volunteers feeling undervalued.</p> <p>Damage risk from HGV's and articulated lorries.</p> <p>See also Section S3.</p>	<p>See also Section S4</p>

Section S7: (Healthcheck) Strategic Plan				
<p>Weekly (2hrs) CAB Clinic.</p>	<p>Lack of information on avail of Community Legal Service. Only other face to face advice in Winchester (poor public transport access).</p>	<p>Clinic times may possibly be extended</p>	<p>CAB relies on volunteers.</p>	

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section T1: Travel to and from the local area				
<p>Travel time to by-pass (access to Winchester and Farnham) five minutes</p>	<p>Travel by car only way to travel to and from some villages.</p> <p>Poor single track roads to some villages.</p> <p>Public transport to villages often impossible. Gundleton is inaccessible by public transport on some days.</p> <p>Most accessible are the Candovers and the Itchen Valley villages, Cheriton and swarraton with Winchester & Basingstoke equally accessible to all but Cheriton.</p>	<p>Put an extra link onto by-pass from south and restrict lorries in the southern part of Alresford.</p>	<p>Cost and HCC willingness to provide services along A31 villages.</p>	<p>Feasibility study on possibility of southern exit onto A31 by-pass and business park in triangle created.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
<p>Travel by car to Winchester and Farnham 20mins, by bus min 30. To Alton 12 mins, by bus 15/20mins mins plus changing buses time.</p>	<p>Cango Bus service from Bighton/ Gundleton on some days of week. Medstead and Wield also not served.</p> <p>Roads poor and single track to outlying villages increase road travel times (10 mins minimum). and wear and tear on cars.</p> <p>Heavy-duty lorries damage roads and make them dangerous.</p> <p>Some parts of the town do not have bus routes plus annual cuts of services.</p> <p>No direct bus route to Winchester railway station, DHSS, Job Centre, further education facilities and hospital and hospital.</p>	<p>See also Section S3</p> <p>Cango bus daily service</p> <p>Run pilot bus through to hospital again. Investigate possibility of Cango bus for end of evening classes, theatre and cinema.</p>	<p>See also Section S3</p>	<p>Feasibility study on extension of Cango and other bus services – HCC</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Local Transport Plans (Including public transport and pedestrian)				
	There are no plans to improve road networks or bus services. No main bus station		Cost implications.	
Most buses stop in West Street	Railway station mainly for leisure & has limited winter service. No bus service from railway station.	Re-investigate possibility of peak time daily service every five years. If feasible run pilot scheme.	Manpower/ volunteers	Feasibility study on peak hour running by Watercress line.
400m railway to town – 5 minutes but not a public service railway. Occasional tourist coach visitors	No taxi rank. Footway safe – except entry points to car park. Footbridge needed from Nursery Road/Sun Lane to Town side of railway. No public service railway Railway between Alresford and Winchester was closed. No regular coach transport except for school buses.	Improvements to access to town – footbridge and improved pathways.	Cost implications	Improved Access to Town Project and Routes to Schools.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
	<p>Car parking is inadequate at peak times</p> <p>Elderly and disabled.</p> <p>Nowhere to store shopping if using Cango bus.</p> <p>There used to be a through bus to London</p> <p>Then there had to a change at Guildford.</p> <p>Now Alton and Guildford (15 min wait at each stop).</p>	<p>Run pilot of Cango bus going through housing developments and calling in at bus station with a cheaper ticket for around town travel.</p>		
<p>Bus via Candover and Itchen Valley to Winchester Candover Valley to Basingtoke Cheriton to Petersfield Direct to Winchester. Direct to Alton.</p>	<p>Poor evening and Sunday Service.</p> <p>No service from Winchester after 9.30pm and often only 2 hourly service.</p> <p>Steady erosion of services</p> <p>No through bus route to hospital.</p> <p>Above fragmented route to Guildford and London.</p>	<p>Investigate viability of old route to London.</p> <p>Current route often empty. Routes should provide links for towns without a public railway. (Portsmouth and Alton have these; Alresford and Four Marks do not).</p>	<p>Cost and HCC willingness to provide services to the A31 villages.</p>	<p>See also sections T1 & T2 – Improved bus routes.</p> <p>As above.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section T2: Access To Services				
<p>Information point at Library, Police Station, Leaflets at Railway Stn, NATC, pubs, and hotels.</p> <p>Timetables at town centre bus stops and full timetable at Library.</p> <p>School buses for younger pupils reach school by 9.am</p> <p>Limited service to get people to work and older children to school where there is a flexible timetable.</p>	<p>Internet at information point mainly used by foreigners contacting home.</p> <p>Timetables not on all bus stops.</p> <p>Sunday service 2 hourly.</p> <p>Last bus after end of evening classes and late shift at Supermarket (Winchester).</p> <p>No 9-5.30 timings to many outlying villages.</p> <p>Last bus to villages with a bus service now approx 8.30pm</p> <p>Bus to hospital involves a change.</p> <p>Peter Symonds 1 mile walk & Job Centre ½ mile walk or bus change. Cinema ½ mile walk No Return bus for evening viewings.</p>	<p>A second unit at Library</p> <p>Rectify this. Ensure timetables on town web site so visitors and residents can download them.</p> <p>Investigate possibility of a pre-book bus service for late run. Anyone abusing privilege to be refused tickets/bus pass.</p> <p>Subsidised bus passes should be allowed for educational purposes (inc FE).</p>	<p>Over 85% of residents already have access from home.</p> <p>Cost implications.</p>	<p>See also sections T1 &T2 – improved bus routes and access.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
<p>Leisure & sports – Perins & Arlebury Park. & swimming - Alton.</p>	<p>Neither accessible except by car/bicycle for several villages.</p> <p>Old Alresford, intermittent bus service - children use off road footpath to school. Cheriton similar</p> <p>Bighton/Gundleton/Medstead/Wield have no shop or PO.</p>	<p>Library providing stamp service.</p> <p>Feasibility of possible mobile shop.</p>		
<p>Voluntary Drivers for Day Centre</p> <p>Voluntary Drivers Scheme for Hospital etc.</p> <p>Bus to Old Alresford stops near Tesco mini-supermarket and Library (limited opening). Monthly mobile library.</p>	<p>Relies on volunteers.</p> <p>Govt. policy to reduce petrol allowance making it not cost effective for drivers.</p> <p>Taxis do not provide service for severely disabled.</p> <p>Not many low loading buses.</p> <p>Kerbside and bus stops need adapting.</p> <p>Dial a Ride (Winchester) rarely used.</p> <p>Bus stop on main road, no bus stop at surgery and hill to climb if coming in from Old Alresford or Bishops Sutton directions.</p>	<p>Link with Cango bus service.</p>	<p>No special rate for pensioners or advance purchase ticket packs – cost implications for this provision.</p> <p>HCC/WCC do not have these services as a primary concern. Cost implications.</p>	<p>See also sections T & T2 – improved bus routes and access.</p> <p>NATC to follow through</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
None	<p>Speed on road 40mph.</p> <p>Speed on many other roads unlimited.</p> <p>Roads mainly unlit.</p>	<p>Make town safer for both car and non car users.</p> <p>Bring in 20mph limit town centre.</p> <p>Opportunity for traffic management actions in a number of places in the town.</p> <p>Implementation of 'shared space' in the town centre as part of the "Putting Pedestrians First" project and in the interests of traffic management.</p>	<p>Cost implications and willingness of WCC officers and HCC to make Alresford safe for all traffic – car, bicycle and pedestrian.</p>	<p>NATC/WCC to apply pressure to HCC when WCC not able to follow through.</p>
<p>Public services are available via the internet.</p> <p>WCC & HCC are accessible.</p>				
Section T3 : Ease of movement around the town				
<p>Pelican Crossing-High St.</p> <p>Road Narrowing-Jacklyns Lane.</p> <p>Cycle track-Sewards Bridge.</p> <p>Raised crossing-Broad St junction.</p>	<p>Several unreported accidents in town, two in summer 2007, one in Autumn, total three, (inc two fatalities). Two reported at other sites.</p> <p>Lack of traffic management in the town</p>	<p>See also sections T2</p>	<p>See also sectionT2</p>	<p>See also sectionT2 for initial project on safety on roads.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
	<p>Traffic congestion at peak times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Top of Broad St - The Dean crossroads - Perins School Entrances - Sunhill School - Sun Lane/East St & Sun Lane Bridge 	<p>See also section T2.</p> <p>Feasibility study on safe measures for Sunhill School and implementation.</p>	<p>See also section T2.</p>	
	<p>Conflict between traffic and pedestrians at :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Street & The Soke where there is no pavement. East and West Street. Sun Lane Bridge. Both entrances to Station Car Park Jacklyns Lane crossing areas <p>None of the shopping streets are pedestrianised.</p> <p>.</p> <p>Traffic conditions causing bus delays are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shop Deliveries Car parkers over-staying. Steam train arrivals by road bringing town to a halt. 	<p>See also section T2</p>	<p>See also section T2</p>	<p>Projects in earlier sections apply.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
	<p>Public transport is less attractive because : Not punctual. Not always reliable</p> <p>Day Tickets to Winchester £6 limited areas on season tickets.</p> <p>School season ticket costs</p> <p>Non user friendly bus stops</p> <p>Limited hours of services and no prospect of improvement.</p> <p>Insufficient volunteers Therefore not possible.</p>	<p>Make public transport reliable and useable.</p>	<p>Cost implications.</p>	<p>NATC/WCC to pursue HCC</p>
<p>Parking in four streets Arlebury Park 30 spaces- Planned car park at Perins School to have 70 places, and 40 more spaces available later.</p> <p>Street parking and Health Centre spaces limited.</p> <p>Station car park is well used.</p>	<p>Station Car Park 15 yr lease.</p> <p>People will not walk the 50metres.</p> <p>Only three disabled spaces in central position.</p> <p>Park and pay scheme possible to facilitate release of spaces.</p> <p>Map in station, signs at junction with West Street</p>	<p>Investigate sites for car parks and competitive charging policy and implement.</p> <p>Establish further three disabled spaces near centre of town.</p> <p>Enforce parking regulations.</p>		<p>Car Parks project</p> <p>One site now identified at school. Implementation being followed up now.</p> <p>Further site identified in Issues and Options exercise (WCC).</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
	There is no shop mobility scheme	Investigate possibility of this facility at railway station (Edward Knight Centre).	Reliant on volunteers	NATC (Tourism Committee).
Buildings with disabled access are : St John's Church Community Centre Edward Knight Building Library Methodist Church Arlebury Park Railway station School Some of the shops and banks, wherever possible and the two mini-supermarkets.	Conservation area constraints.	Improve facilities where this is not already in hand.	""	NATC (Tourism Committee has worked on this). Most facilities able to accommodate wheelchairs now do There are some problem buildings.
Two tactile pedestrian. West Street with traffic lights & top of Broad Street - tactile with centre island.	Crossings required at the Dean and Jacklyns Lane and at least another one in Broad Street.	See also section T2	See also section T2	NATC/Town Partnership to follow through with WCC/HCC.
Bollards put in Broad Street to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement, but some have been taken out and pavement broken Some dropped curbs on corners, and at crossing points,	Pavements have become uneven in places where lorries and vans mounted them. Grange Rd area damaged by tree roots and parking. More needed, and some need to be matched with partner and possibly a raised crossing.	Plan gradual improvement of paved areas.		As above

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
There is a network of footpaths to town from housing developments. Churchyard footpaths link Haig Rd, Station Road and West St. Footpath along river and behind Arlebury Park. School footpath to Bridge Rd	No cycle footpaths in town centre. No footpath link behind pond	Assess feasibility of cycleway once driving speeds have been reduced. Examine possibility of extending walkway around the pond.	Cost/area crosses private land.	As above.
	Difficult pedestrian routes to villages except Old Alresford and Bishop's Sutton.	Investigate feasibility of cycle track at the side of single-track roads. Provide pedestrian routes to villages.		
	Perins School is a further 800 yards and Sun Lane Primary School ¾ mile.	Improve measures already taken (see also section T2).	Children still accessing schools via busy roads where due care is not always taken.	As above.
New Cycle racks being installed in Town Centre. Cycle rack at schools.	Lack of cycle routes.	If successful – provide a second cycle rack in the town centre.		Being undertaken by NATC

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section EN1 : Character and Vitality of the Town				
<p>Town makes the most of its setting.</p> <p>It is a vibrant & cheerful town. It has a compact town centre and the town as a whole has clear boundaries and beautiful surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Northern boundary River Alre (SS1)</p> <p>12th century church Old Alresford Pond.</p>	<p>Street cleanliness</p> <p>Heavy commercial vehicles/</p> <p>12th century bridge at risk because of heavy articulated lorry traffic to Watercress packing plant.</p>	<p>See also section T2</p> <p>Feasibility study for separate route specifically to and from Watercress Company and implementation.</p> <p>Access to A31 by pass from Cheriton entry to Jacklyns Lane and implementation.</p>	<p>See also section T2</p>	<p>Southern access to town project.</p> <p>Bespoke route to Fyffe's project.</p>
<p>There is a strong sense of community and people concerned about environmental issues and sustainability.</p> <p>The town centre is mainly Georgian in character, although some areas were built in Victorian times.</p>	<p>Threat to history of brightly painted houses.</p> <p>New properties destroying character of town</p>	<p>Ensure the town remains colourful.</p> <p>Ensure developments and renovations are in accordance with the Design Statement.</p>	<p>Modern buildings that do not respect the surroundings they are built in and therefore cause harm to the area. See also sections S2, S5 and S6.</p>	

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Section EN2 : The Town and Wider Countryside				
<p>Long standing links between town and countryside</p> <p>Many families spread amongst town and rural settlements. Views from the town. Three Parish Council representatives on Town Partnership.</p>	<p>Ease of transport</p> <p>Industry/scale of production - salad industry damaging town. Speeding and heavy lorries a problem for walkers, cyclists and car drivers.</p> <p>Footpaths in poor condition.</p>	<p>See also sections T2, EN1, S1 and S6</p>	<p>See also sections T2, EN1, S2 and S6</p>	
Section EN3 : The Environment and Quality of Life				
<p>Amenities well kept (see also section S6)</p> <p>Routes to school scheme.</p> <p>Riverside walks in good order.</p> <p>Arable and livestock farms Market Gardens and smallholdings. There is a good stock of agricultural land used for arable woodland and mixed farming. This surrounds the town.</p> <p>In between are watercress beds water meadows and woodlands.</p>	<p>Normally run by volunteers.</p> <p>People still speed on the roads concerned.</p> <p>Environment. Sustainable initiatives require Govt./Council Grants- there is no Govt. will.</p>			NATC/WCC
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
<p>Bottle banks Paper & plastic disposal at</p>	<p>Fly, wasp and maggot nuisance in summer</p>	<p>Consideration not given to summertime</p>	<p>Opportunity/cost.</p>	<p>WCC</p>

Winchester. Design Statement asks for sustainable or re-claimed materials to be used.	months.	problems with collections every fortnight. WCC equipment cannot re-cycle paper cartons – When feasible WCC to improve facility.		
Water supply.	Not used for energy as effectively as it could be.		Opportunity/Cost	
	Lorry traffic has been increasing problem.			WCC should ensure same low carbon requirements for all new build houses.
Community Groups were involved in Design Statement process.	Issues and Options 2011-2026 Govt policy to destroy countryside and enlarge town. Risk of development being out of character. Extending east destroys farmland. West – the water meadow areas South – woodlands and north would join New Alresford to Old Alresford. People's favourite views would be destroyed.	Ensure whenever possible design statement criteria applied to all new build and restoration work.		NATC

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
Town has three recreation areas.	The town has less open space than it should. Only field sport catered for. Walkways only go eastwards and no cycle routes.	See also section S5	See also section S5	See also section S5 – Open Spaces Project/ Section T Cycles and Footpaths Project.
Section EC1 – 7 : The Economy				
<p>Healthy</p> <p>Agricultural engineering, and trailers, woodworking, new tech and vehicle repair industries present. Stability in industrial unit use.</p> <p>High employment rate</p> <p>No institutionalised long term unemployment.</p> <p>Low labour turnover</p> <p>Wide range of blue-collar employment in Prospect Road and the Dean.</p> <p>Retail and tourism in the centre of town. Tourism industry growing.</p> <p>Residents prefer to use smaller businesses.</p>	<p>Possible long term problem if new industries not attracted and unskilled young people not involved.</p> <p>Risk of skills shortages.</p> <p>Some youth unemployment-unskilled group</p> <p>Cost of transport to work increasing 1940-50s plant</p> <p>Businesses in residential areas struggling to expand.</p> <p>New business site with by-pass access needed</p> <p>Need for training recognised but not taken up as a need- except on the job training.</p>	<p>New Business Park and business facilities, possibly in rural areas for agricultural industry.</p>	<p>Skills shortages</p>	<p>NATC to follow through Issues and Options responses relating to use of brown field sites and short/medium/ long term plans for development in the town and replacement business park.</p> <p>Encourage North Hants Chamber of Commerce to have links with the school and enable training of blue-collar workers.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
	<p>No Chamber of Commerce Training and Management Officer. Banking business managers in Winchester & Southampton.</p>			
<p>Library and Perins have internet access points.</p> <p>NATC has security measures on web site access.</p> <p>85-90% households have internet access.</p>				
<p>Adequate school provision in town and villages</p> <p>Primary School provision is often fully taken up. The schools in Ropley and Cheriton are used when Sun Hill is full, or because of parental choice.</p> <p>Perins Sec School has good outcomes.</p> <p>Over 90% go on to further education/ A levels.</p> <p>Some non-vocational courses at Perins. Perins is a Community School</p>	<p>Inadequate provision without travelling to villages</p> <p>Public cost of taxis taking children to school. No group pick-ups per school.</p> <p>Transport cost of studying A levels at Peter Symmonds, Alton College or Southampton.</p> <p>Course numbers in Adult Education are affected by increase in fees for over the 60s</p>			<p>Long term feasibility study on schools improvement scheme in Alresford linking Perins and Sun Hill.</p> <p>See also sections T1 and T2 – improved access and improved bus routes.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Projects
<p>No school exclusion problems School links strong</p>	<p>narrow interpretation of use of community status</p> <p>Fear on H&S issues affects school placements</p>			
<p>Communications and reliability are two skills needed by the town's industries.</p> <p>Some family group courses.</p>	<p>Tourism course held but little take up.</p> <p>Childcare course needed</p>			<p>Perins School/ Peter Symmonds College and FE resources – vocational courses as defined by towns training needs e.g. childcare.</p>
<p>Town well served by shops</p> <p>As need arises shops change.</p> <p>No problems with empty units.</p> <p>Effective use of floor space.</p>	<p>Only type of retailer missing – Gents outfitter.</p> <p>High rents.</p> <p>No properly planned home/work developments.</p>			<p>Continuation of New Alresford web site showing how attractive town is and pleasant to work in and set up 20th century businesses in.</p>

APPENDIX G: MAP OF ALRESFORD AND SURROUNDING PARISHES

8. GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATP	Alresford Town Partnership
Design Statement	The purpose of a Town Design Statement (TDS) is to influence the planning process so that changes and developments in and around a town reflect local characteristics and preserve the qualities which the community values in its surroundings. Produced by the community, a TDS, once having gained the official status of 'Supplementary Planning Document', gives detailed practical guidance on the broad outline within the <i>Local Development Framework</i> . Its uses include assistance to developers and planners when assessing planning proposals and to help ensure that further development and change is sustainable and based on an understanding of the common threads linking the past and the present.
Healthcheck process	A methodology developed by the Countryside Agency to help towns develop a local Action Plan
HCC	Hampshire County Council
LDF	Local Development Framework
NATC	New Alresford Town Council
SSSI	Site of special scientific interest
Sustainable development	Development which ensures that the needs of the present do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
SWOT analysis	The acronym stands for 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats'. A SWOT analysis is an analytical tool used originally in the business sector and applied here to a town.
WCC	Winchester City Council

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