



Minutes

Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils' Joint Committee

Held at: Remote Meeting

Date: Thursday, 17 November 2022

Present: Councillors Michael Boor, Laszlo Dudas, Frank Hobbs, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Roger Joyce, Terence Mullard and Paul Thomas

Apologies for Absence

Officers Present: Olu Fatokun (Low Carbon Senior Specialist), Andrew Hatcher (Revenues and Benefits Lead Specialist), Rod Lean (Chief Officer - Place & Growth), Sue Lewis (Case Officer (Committee)) and Adrian Tofts (Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist)

Others Present:

6. **Appointment of Chairman**

Parish Councillor Frank Hobbs was appointed Chairman for the meeting.

7. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

8. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022 were submitted and agreed as a correct record.

9. **Welfare Support Update (Revenues and Benefits)**

A presentation on Welfare and Support was given by Andrew Hatcher, Revenues and Benefits Lead Specialist, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

He reminded the committee of the Government support which has already been delivered, including the recent cost of living payments.

The presentation shows the 6 areas the team work on paying particular attention to the following:

- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) which is an emergency short term fund to help those find solutions to their needs. This is a fund that those on housing benefit can apply for. The Council has already received 346 applications of which 263 awards have been given. Applications can be found on the Council's website.
- Financial Support Payments (FSP) which is designed to assist people who have applied for council tax reduction and who facing exceptional hardship. The Council has already received 401 applications with 272 awards being made. This is funded with KCC.
- Household Support Fund which is an additional fund from government to support vulnerable households, this fund is managed by KCC and the monies are distributed to district councils.

Phase 1 - This fund has already been used to help households in need of basic living requirements such as beds, mattresses, food and heating. The Council has worked alongside local suppliers to provide the necessary items, with the Council receiving an additional £50,000 as they had done such good work in the area.

Phase 2 - The housing support fund helps pensioner households in the same way but also by supporting financial needs and energy costs.

Phase 3 - Alongside this the Council are awaiting further information in respect of targeted funding predominantly for energy support.

- The Welfare Team have been campaigning to get more take up of pension credit and council tax support.

The team have engaged with a number of community groups and these are shown in the presentation slides providing help, guidance and training on issues such as loan sharks and problem debts.

Working with Refernet an online signposting service created by Kent, the team have been able to signpost people to the right support but also provide additional support when needed. Examples of the help given are provided.

The team have been awarded a number of accolades for all their hard work, which they are very proud of.

Following a number of questions Mr Hatcher informed that a poster providing the essential contact information to assist households who

need help has been produced with the help of other organisations. This has already been distributed in a number of parishes but those that still require copies can direct their requests to Andrew.hatcher@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk.

Members congratulated the team on all the hard work they have been doing and in achieving their awards.

10. **The Carbon Innovation Lab and District Wide Carbon Plan**

A presentation by Olu Fatokun, Low Carbon Senior Specialist on Carbon Innovation Lab and District Wide Carbon was given. A copy of the presentation is attached.

A climate emergency was declared in 2019 and since then the Council has made a declaration to: “develop a strategy for Folkestone & Hythe District Council to play a leadership role in community, public and business partnerships for our Carbon Neutral 2030 commitment throughout the district.”

With 5 priority areas of focus; Road Transport, Residential, Commercial and Industrial, other activities and Land Use absorption, together with the CI-Lab objectives, as shown, the Council has held 3 meetings to discuss a number of issues and these are shown within the presentation.

Following these meetings it was seen that 2 priority areas have emerged - sustainable transport and behavioural change and from these 4 emerging projects have developed;

1. Our Schools – working alongside schools to develop an eco-school programme, some of which is already being achieved.
2. Local Businesses – to engage and encourage local businesses.
3. Privately Occupied Homes – encourage individuals to participate and work with the council
4. Active Mobility – work to provide better walking and cycling routes, work alongside KCC to gain funding.

Town and Parish Councils can help to improve health and wellbeing in their local areas, highlight examples of initiatives in the areas to help others participate. Members can send their initiatives to council officers who will encourage others to do the same and provide an update to Cabinet in due course.

During discussions with members the following points were noted:

- Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) will be meeting with Sarah Deakin, KCC and Janet Hill, Swale BC to discuss a way forward for parishes to help and promote new initiatives.

- Encourage developers to look at what they can do when building new sites.
- Town and Parish Climate Conference will be held in the new year and it is hoped that Councils officers will be able to attend and present.
- Encourage walking to and from schools.
- Look at KCC bike ability programme and encourage schools to join in, some have already.
- Look at ways to encourage international networks to reduce carbon emissions and reduce light pollution.

It was clear that people need to keep talking, start acting on changes and encourage others to do the same.

11. **Next Steps for Folkestone Town Centre - UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Bids**

Rod Lean, Chief Officer - Place & Growth presented members with an update in respect of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Levelling up bids. A copy of the presentation is attached.

UKSPF

This is new funding for local investment as part of a suite of complementary levelling up.

There are 3 key UKSPF priorities, Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. FHDC allocation is £1M over 3 years, but before this can be allocated an investment plan is required setting out the districts priorities which then has to be signed off by Central Government to unlock the allocation.

The Strategic context is shown in the attached slides with focus on 2 main themes, cost of living and skills, with 3 selected key interventions, again as per slides, all of which will enhance and add value to the overall schemes put forward as part of the LUF.

The Council are awaiting approval of the investment plan bid which is hoped to be announced in the next two weeks.

Levelling up Fund

The Council was allowed to submit one bid for funding up to the value of £20M with 10% match funding from public or private sector. The application deadline to apply for funding was August this year.

Members were informed that FHDC had been listed on the category 1 priority list, this is because Folkestone and Hythe District Council has 3 areas of high deprivation, therefore areas that need the most help.

The bid had to be right and demonstrate deliverability of projects by March 2025. The Council felt they could deliver on this and, therefore, chose to focus on the Folkestone place plan and identified 74 projects which were then narrowed down to 6 priority projects; Station Arrival and Town Centre Connections, Improved Town Centre Gateway, Folca, F51 and Payers Park, Harbour Line and Tram Road and Sunny Sands.

Of these 6 the council then had to work on what best suited the bid and agreed the following 3:-

- Station Arrival and Town Centre Connections
- Improved Town Centre Gateway – road layout and bus station
- Folca, Sandgate Road and Town Centre Public Realm

The final LUF bid totalled £19,791,819 with the Council part £2,199,091.

Members can see within the plans attached the desire to improve the station arrival area and Cheriton Road moving towards Folkestone Town Centre, with improvements to Middelburg square, bus station area and the area around Shellon street and part of Sandgate Road.

Stagecoach have agreed the relocation of the bus station and approve the plans put forward following traffic management proposals.

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Welfare and Support

Andrew Hatcher

Revenues & Benefits Lead Specialist

What Government support has been delivered

- Energy Support Package - £650 one off Cost of Living Payment for those on means tested benefits
- Energy Bills Support Scheme - £400 through to March 2023 for all UK households
- Cost of Living Payments:
 - Households on means tested benefits to receive an additional £900.
 - Pensioner households receive an extra £300.
 - Individuals on disability benefits to receive an additional £150.

What do we do?

- Council Tax
- Council Tax Reduction
- Housing Benefit
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Financial Support Payments
- Household Support Fund

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are an emergency short term fund to be used to alleviate hardship to allow customers time to find alternative solutions to their shortfall in income.
- Applicant must be in receipt of Housing Benefit or housing element of Universal Credit.
- For the year 2021/22 The Council's allocation from DWP was £289,421.
- The Council received 492 applications, making 393 awards.
- Fund for 2022/23: £205,129
- Current spend: £174,080
- Applications: 346
- Awards: 263

Financial Support Payments (FSP)

- A Financial Support Payment is designed to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are facing 'exceptional hardship'.
- This is to provide further assistance where an applicant is in receipt of Council Tax Reduction but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council Tax liability.
- For the year April 2021 to March 2022 the Council received 697 applications, making 493 awards to a value of £246,771.
- 2022/23 spend so far: £134,658
- Applications: 401
- Awards: 272
- Arrears payments also considered outside of the FSP scheme.
 - For 2021/22 the Council awarded £31,620 to 88 households.
 - For 2022/23 so far the Council has awarded £41,853 to 114 households.

Household Support Fund

- In October 2021 Government allocated additional funding to Councils to support vulnerable households under a new scheme called the Household Support Fund.
- Funding is devolved from Kent County Council.

- Phase 1

- Phase 1 ran from January 2022 to March 2022: FHDC funding £171,358.62.
- Council received a further £50,000 in funding.
- Bed project for children without beds/mattresses.
- By the end we had delivered 25 beds, mattresses or bed frames to 18 families.
- On top of this work the team also supported KCC and voluntarily took some of their cases for issuing fuel vouchers to over 800 residents to help support them with their bills.

Household Support Fund split by Household Composition			
	Households with children	Households without children	Total
Spend	£167,459	£53,900	£221,359
Volumes	893	526	1,419

Household Support Fund split by type of award				
	Food	Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider essentials	Total
Spend	£105,599	£103,760	£12,000	£221,359
Volumes	977	421	21	1,419

Household Support Fund

- Phase 2
- Phase 2 ran from 1 August 2022 to 30 September 2022
- A larger emphasis was placed on support to pensioner households.
- We used analytics to identify cases who may be eligible.
- FHDC funding split into two categories:
 - To support pensioners with energy bills £364,150
 - To support other vulnerable households £95,519
- Essentials includes white goods and boilers
- Wider essentials includes beds and carpets
- Some additional funding received due to underspends in other Councils.
- Phase 3
- Due to start soon, FHDC awaiting final confirmation of targeted spend from KCC.
- Professional referral routes for energy support administered by KCC.

Household Support Fund split by Household Composition				
	Households with children	Households with Pensioners	Other households	Total
Spend	£55,275	£306,925	£39,275	£455,475
Volumes	336	885	310	1,531

Household Support Fund split by type of award						
	Energy and Water	Food	Essentials linked to Energy & Water	Wider Essentials	Housing Costs	Total
Spend	£321,619	£74,650	£34,400	£14,000	£10,806	£455,475
Volumes	850	599	34	30	18	1,531

The Welfare Team

- Using analytics to identify and support vulnerable residents:
 - Pension Credit take up
 - CTR take up
- Community Engagement
 - Armed Forces veterans
 - Nepalese community
 - Roma community
 - P&O event
 - KCC community wardens
- Wide range of training including loan sharks and problem debts.

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The Welfare Team

- Using Refernet, an online signposting service created by Kent and the pilot for it began on the 25th July:
 - This aims to mitigate the action of signposting by ensuring that robust, simple referrals can be made between organisations. The system has been designed to support residents of Kent who are at risk of or in financial hardship and the wider issues that this can cause.
- Members of the Money Advice Network since June 2021
- KCC fuel voucher scheme:
 - By application to KCC, FHDC can refer into the service as trusted partner.
- UK Prosperity Fund projects.
- The team offer wider support to those that need the support the most.



The Welfare Team

David owed over £2000 on his council tax and £1600 on a housing benefit overpayment.

He has on-going health problems and was a victim of domestic abuse and cuckooing

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He was awarded a financial support payment for his council tax and the overpayment was reduced to amount he could afford and would be cleared within 12 months.

David has moved house and his financial situation has greatly improved and he can see a more positive financial future.

Grant was self-employed and identified on a self-employed list.

Impacted by Covid he had no idea about what benefits were available to him. To make things more complex he was of pensionable age but his partner was not.

His savings had been used up and he had used his credit cards to keep going.

Being a mixed age couple they were entitled to UC until his partner was of pensionable age. This was explained to Grant and financial help with their council tax was given.

Grant commented that the way the council dealt with him demonstrates humanity, understanding coupled with professionalism

The Welfare Team

Angela was identified from a PIP list as potentially eligible for a DHP

Calls were made to her but she was frightened to answer them as she thought she would be hassled for money.

Page 17 Eventually she answered the phone and was told we were phoning to help her, she was struggling with her mental health due to the reduction in her support because of the pandemic.

She was encouraged to contact her doctor, was signposted to 'Release the Pressure' and Livewell Kent

After a few weeks she was called again and the officer was able to go through budgeting and debt support as her medication had been changed and she was feeling much better.

Janice was impacted by Covid and was identified via a PIP list

Janice lost her job, her partner walked out and this impacted her mental health. With the help of the welfare team Janice applied for a financial support payment for arrears accrued whilst living with her ex-partner.

Financial support was given, the amount Janice had to pay was reduced on her current account and she had found a job so was able to make an affordable arrangement.

She was very grateful for the support given at a time when she was in desperate need.

Mr and Mrs P were having trouble with their heating. Three generations of the same family were living together and were not able to afford to fix their hot water system. They had no hot water for washing or for heating. They were using pans on the kitchen stove in order wash themselves.

They applied for help through the household support fund and were awarded a grant of £8,800 to update and fix the plumbing. Working with Swale Heating, the work is due to commence on 21/11/2022.

Recognition

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**BENEFITS AND / OR
WELFARE REFORM
TEAM OF THE YEAR**

Folkestone & Hythe District Council



**EXCELLENCE IN
SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Folkestone & Hythe District Council



IRRV Performance Awards 2022

FINALIST

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
AND / OR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Folkestone & Hythe District Council



What is coming?

- Alternative Fuel scheme to be launched. This has now doubled following the Autumn statement to £200 support for households that use alternative fuels. No further information at present but expected winter 2022/23.
- Household Support Fund will continue in 2023/24.
- Additional cost of living support for 2023/24:
 - Households on means tested benefits to receive an additional £900.
 - Pensioner households to receive an additional £300.
 - Individuals on disability benefits will receive an additional £150.
- Benefits will uprate by 10.1% (measured by September CPI).
- Cap on social rent at 7%.

Questions?

andrew.hatcher@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils Joint Committee

The Carbon Innovation Lab and District Wide Carbon Plan

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17 November 2022



Minute Item 10

District-Wide Carbon Plan

Climate & ecological emergency declaration to: *“develop a strategy for Folkestone & Hythe District Council to play a leadership role in community, public and business partnerships for our Carbon Neutral 2030 commitment throughout the district”*

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Proposal put forward to Cabinet on 23 March 2022

Council facilitating, rather than leading or directing

Following an approach used by the London Borough of Hounslow

Formation of a Carbon Innovation Lab - an informal voluntary forum to drive forward local actions to reduce carbon emissions in the district.

Three meetings have been held – June, July and, September

District Wide Carbon Plan - 5 Priority Areas of Focus





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CI – Lab Objectives

To develop and deliver actions to reduce carbon emissions, energy use and the impact of climate change through collaboration across our communities and businesses in the district

To understand the opportunities and address local hurdles to achieving net zero, including signposting to resources, funding opportunities and support with bid applications to enable transition

To deliver quick results both in the public realm, private sector and the community

Folkestone & Hythe Carbon Innovation Lab (CI- Lab)

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Main themes

Meeting 1 - 13 June 2022

- Improving council communications
- Exploring behavioural change
- Sustainable transport in a rural district

Meeting 2 - 18 July 2022

- Green Business Grant Scheme
- Kent Local Transport Plan 5
- Behavioural change – key concepts and approaches

Meeting 3 - 5 September 2022

- Update on Local Government Association's Behavioural Insights Project
- Examples of achievements from Hounslow
- Virtual whiteboard of ideas

Emerging Priority Areas for CI -Lab



Sustainable Transport



Behavioural Change

Emerging Projects 1 – Our Schools

Focus on Eco-Schools Pilot

Possible roles for CI-Lab

- Find schools willing to participate
- Engage with heads, governors & PTA
- Engage with parents to support project delivery
- Identify to KCC potential energy reduction / green generation projects for funding

Possible roles for F&HDC

- Link with KCC for major projects for schools
- Safety in public areas (e.g., beach cleaning)
- Wider publicity and community Eco- fairs

Emerging Projects 2 – Local Businesses

Focus on becoming greener

Possible roles for CI-Lab

- Utilise existing networks to reach business leaders
- Guide on making application for grants
- Support local project delivery
- Communicate success

Possible roles for F&HDC

- Identify to KCC potential energy reduction / green generation projects for funding
- Co-identify grants and opportunities

Emerging Projects 3– Privately Occupied Homes

Focus on energy efficiency to reduce costs of living

Possible roles for CI-Lab

- Encourage individuals to participate
- Engage with private landlords' networks
- Identify the real hurdles

Possible roles for F&HDC

- Provide advice on funding applications and measures

Emerging Projects 4– Active mobility

Focus on cycle and footpath improvements

Possible roles for CI-Lab

- Encourage communities to identify & prioritised routes
- Create maps with the changes needed
- Review the Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan LCWIP (website)
- Encourage schools to ask for cycle training

Possible roles for F&HDC

- Support KCC funding applications & actions
- Communicate what has been done to date
- Link with KCC and cycling groups e.g., Cycle Shepway

What can the district and parish councils do?

- Lead parish-wide push to improve health & wellbeing and to decarbonise
- Highlight examples of initiatives in your area so others can participate or replicate

#Sharethewarmth
campaign

Know someone who is worried about energy bills?

#sharethewarmth

Keep your loved ones warmer and healthier this winter, by helping them save energy and reduce their energy bills.

You can #sharethewarmth in 3 easy steps:

1. Sign up to the free platform
2. Learn about energy saving
3. Share tips and advice to help loved ones save energy at home.



sharethewarmth.org





Thank you

Contacts:

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Martin Kerlake martin.kerlake@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

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Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils Joint Committee

Date: 17-11-22 at 7pm

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
 - Levelling Up Fund (LUF)
- Presented by :
 - Rod Lean : Chief Officer for Place and Growth

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) £2.6bn of new funding for local investment by March 2025, as part of a suite of complementary levelling up

Key UKSPF priorities are:

- Community and Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People and Skills

Revenue and capital funding – via a funding formula, not a competition.

FHDC Allocation £1,000,000 over 3 years

Investment Plan (**IP**) required, setting out districts priorities, then signed off by Central Gov to unlock allocation.

Strategic Context

- Recently adopted Corporate Plan
- Current Community dynamic re Post Covid and Cost of Living
- People centred priorities
- 41 Interventions across 3 objectives
- Interventions not all relevant to FHDC.
- Small amount of Money
- Focus on 2 main themes, Cost of living and Skills



Selected Themes



- ‘Capacity building and infrastructure support local groups’

Enhance Community Hub service re advice on reducing cost of living, hardship grants, ‘Our Food Club approach’, finance management (link to vol sector).

Benefit **Upskilling Local community on reducing the cost of living**

Improve community health

Impact **Create more resilience in vulnerable communities**

Improved diets for Children, impact on educational attainment



Rainbow Centre

Selected Themes

- 'Community measure to reduce the cost of living'

Energy saving advice, fuel poverty interventions, green initiatives to help reduce the cost to residents of transitioning to a low carbon economy. Expand Bed Project, updating inefficient equipment (capital spend), Oil boiler tune ups

Benefits **Greenhouse gas reductions**

Increased take up of energy efficiency measures

Impact **reduced spend on Energy**

Reduced CO2 output



Selected Themes

- ‘Green skills /Upskilling ’

Green skills targeted around ensuring we have the skilled workforce to achieve net zero and wider environmental ambitions

Aligning with other District Council’s and Linking with East Kent College to provide green skills programme

Retro fitting skills linking in with energy efficiency.

Benefits **Upskilling local workforce as industry evolves**

Reskilling local people where existing jobs are becoming automated

Preparing to create local workforce for construction opportunities ie Otterpool

Impact **Create a resilient qualified local workforce**

Enabling self employment opportunities

Ensuring local people benefit from good growth



Timeline

April - May Develop longlist of projects /interventions for consideration

April - June Work with Cabinet and stakeholders to develop local Investment Plan

July Local Partnership Group established, Cabinet

August Investment plan submitted in August 2022

TBD Investment Plans approved and first payment to Council
(note -can start to spend from April ahead of approval 'at risk').

March 2025 Investment Plan delivery complete

Levelling Up Fund

Levelling Up Fund - Overview

- FHDC in Category 1 priority list
- FHDC can submit one bid
- Must demonstrate consultation, 'buy-in' of local stakeholders and support of MP.
- Can be a **single project** or **package of up to 3 projects** which are clearly linked
- District Councils can bid for up to a value of £20 million LUF funding
- 10% Match Funding required from public or private sector
- Need to demonstrate deliverability of projects by 31 March 2025 (March 2026 in exceptional cases) and some spend in 2022/23
- Application deadline 2nd August 22

Evolving Stages of the LUF submission

- Place Plan <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/folkestoneplaceplan>
- **6 Priority Projects**
 - Station Arrival and Town Centre Connections
 - Improved Town Centre Gateway – road layout and bus station
 - Folca, Sandgate Road and Town Centre Public Realm
 - F51 Environs and Payer Park
 - Harbour Line and Tram Road
 - Sunny Sands
- **Narrowed down to 3**
 - Station Arrival and Town Centre Connections
 - Improved Town Centre Gateway – road layout and bus station
 - Folca, Sandgate Road and Town Centre Public Realm

Folkestone & Hythe LUF Bid

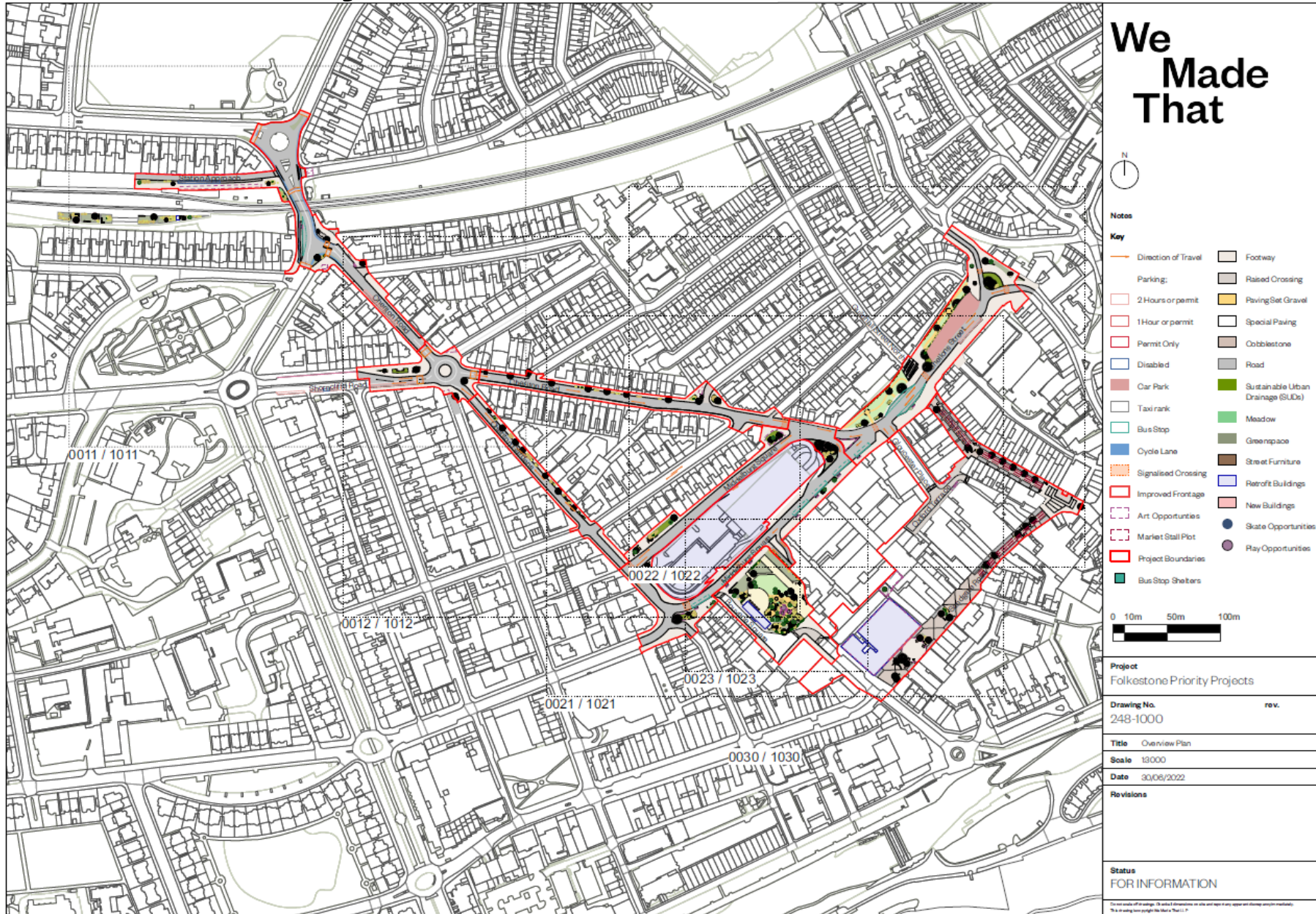
Single project called **Folkestone – A Brighter Future**

Project components include:

Station Arrival and Town Centre Connections	£4,246,806
Improved Town Centre Gateway – road layout and bus station	£11,690,369
Folca, Sandgate Road and Town Centre Public Realm	£6,053,735
TOTAL	£21,990,910

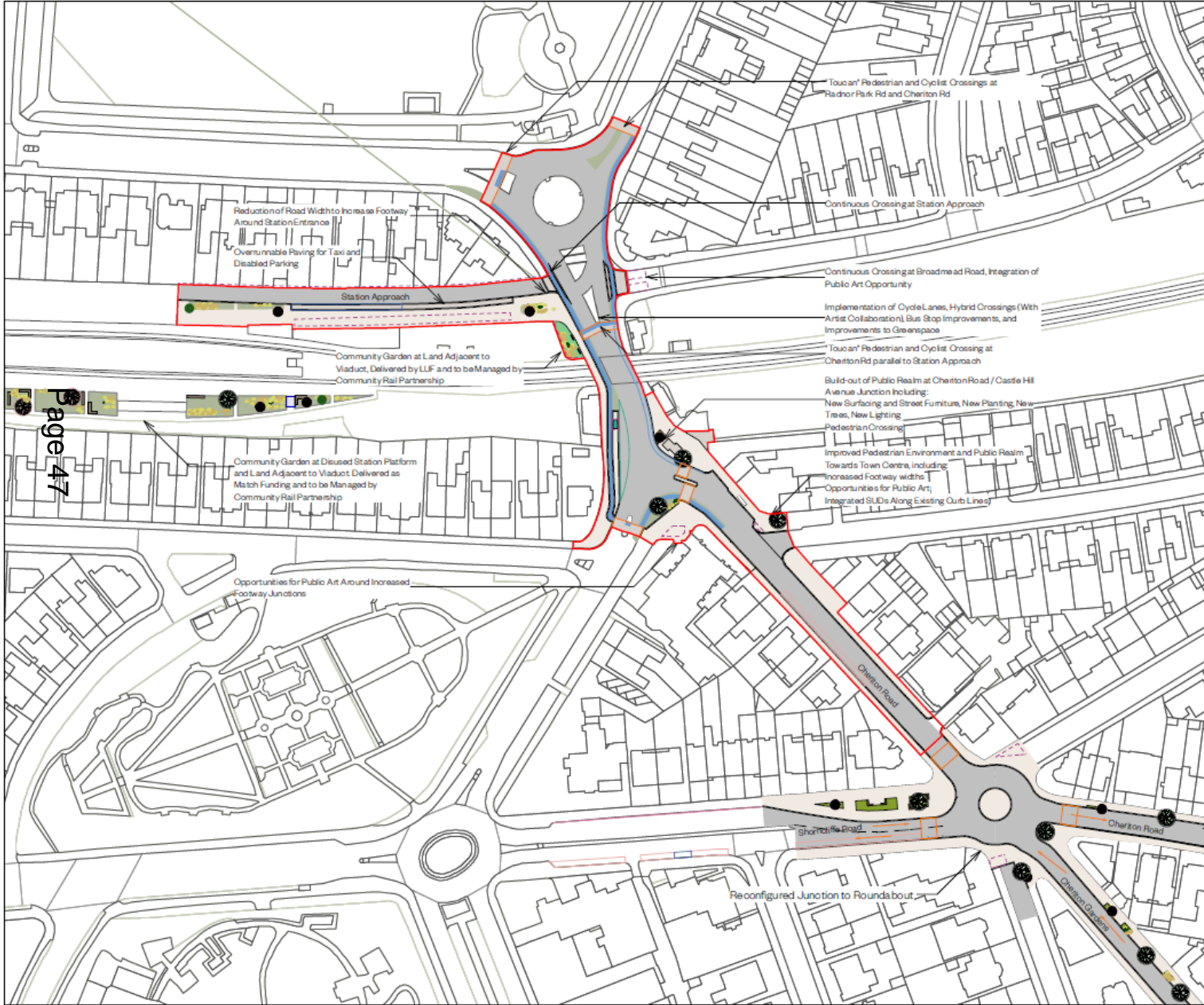
LUF 'ask'	£19,791,819
FHDC funding	£2,199,091

Overall Project Area



The final quality of the drawings, the extent of the information on the site and the appearance of any approved drawings are the responsibility of the client.

Station Arrival Plan



We Made That



Notes

Key

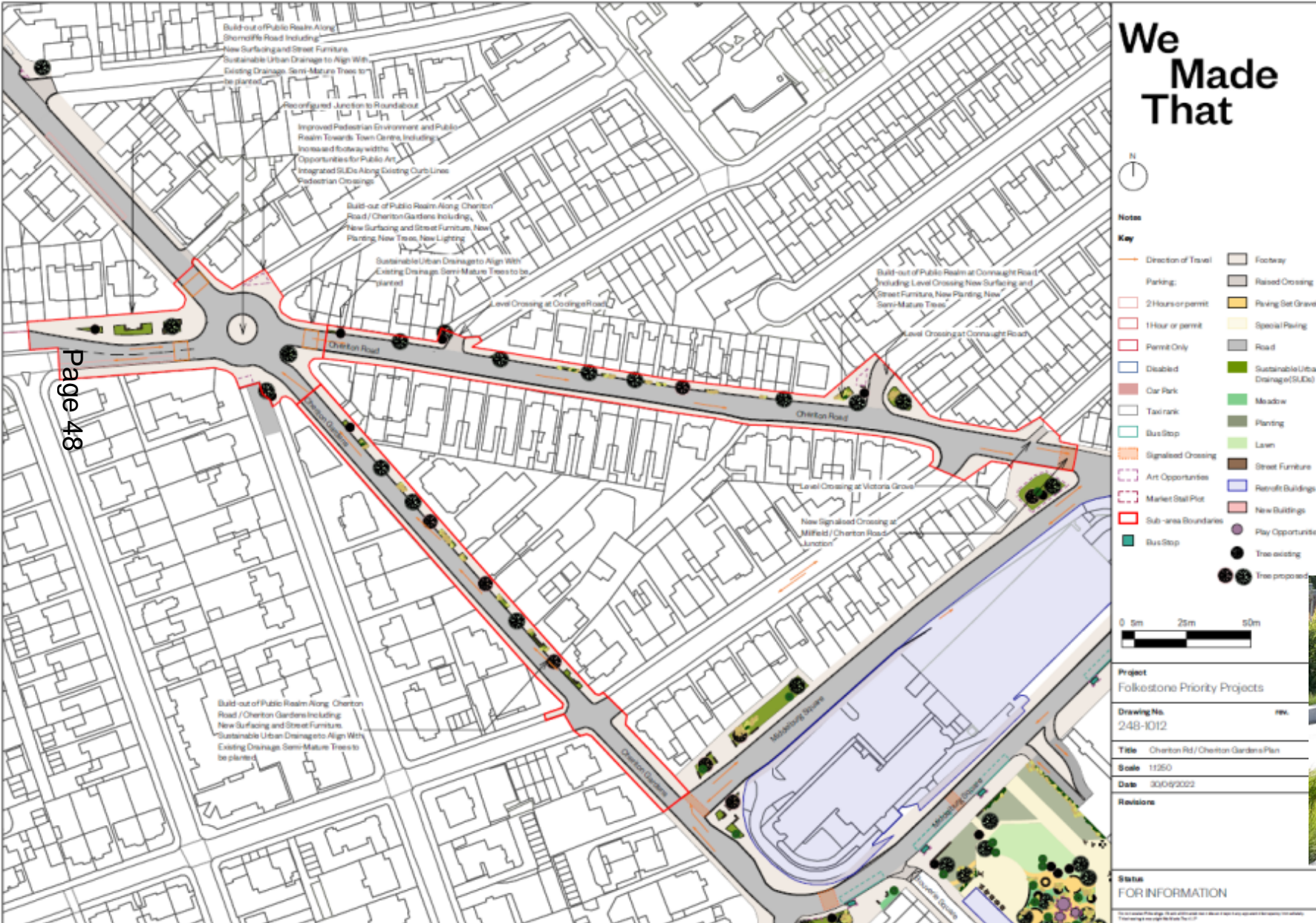
- Direction of Travel
- Footway
- Parking:
- 2 Hours or permit
- 1 Hour or permit
- Permit Only
- Disabled
- Car Park
- Taxi rank
- Bus Stop
- Cycle Lane
- Art Opportunities
- Sub-area Boundaries
- Raised Crossing
- Road
- Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)
- Meadow
- Planting
- Street Furniture
- Tree existing
- Tree proposed



Project	
Folkestone Priority Projects	
Drawing No.	rev.
248-1011	
Title	
Station Arrival Plan	
Scale	
1:250	
Date	
30/06/2022	
Revisions	
Status	
FOR INFORMATION	



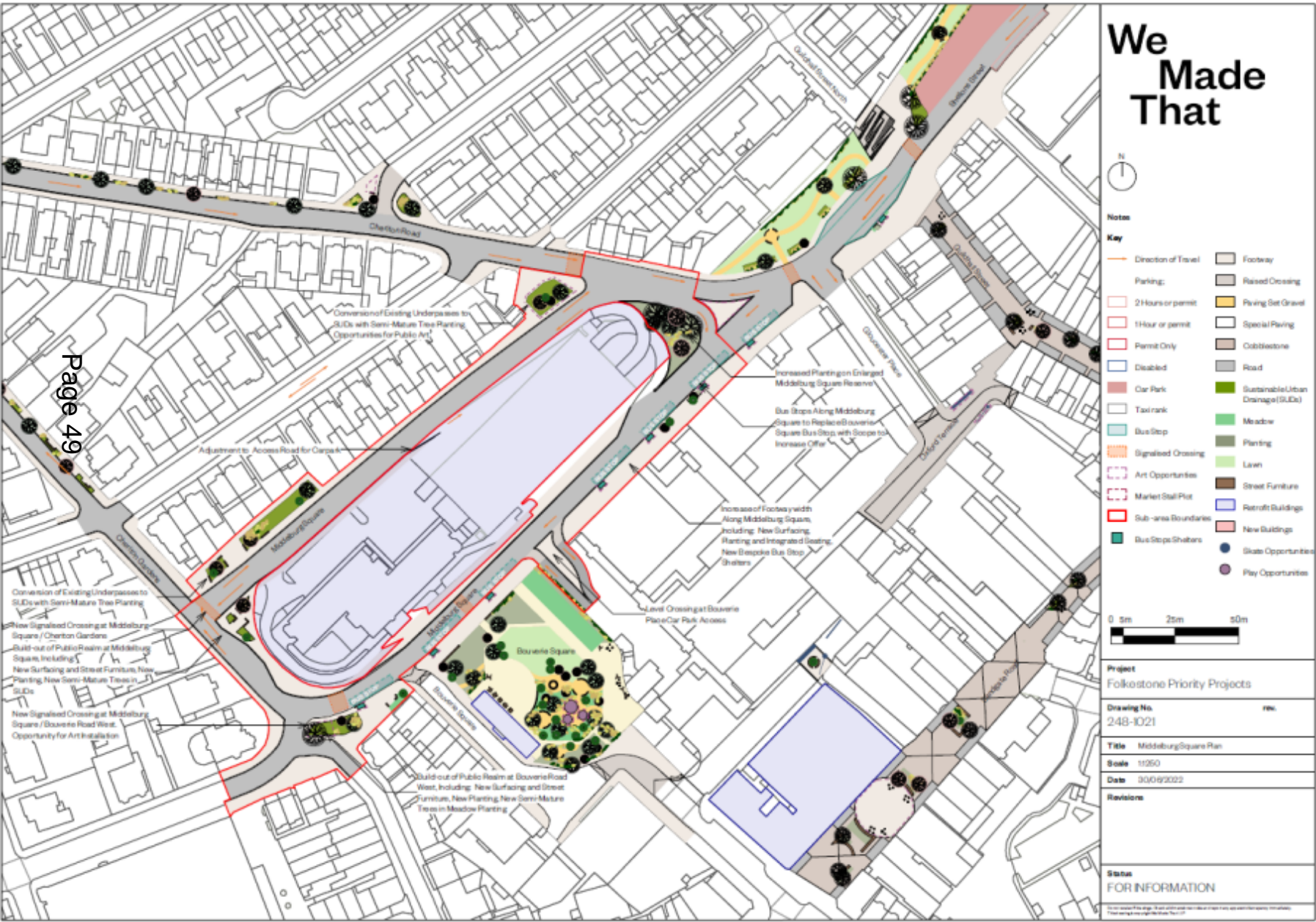
Cheriton Road Cheriton Gardens Plan



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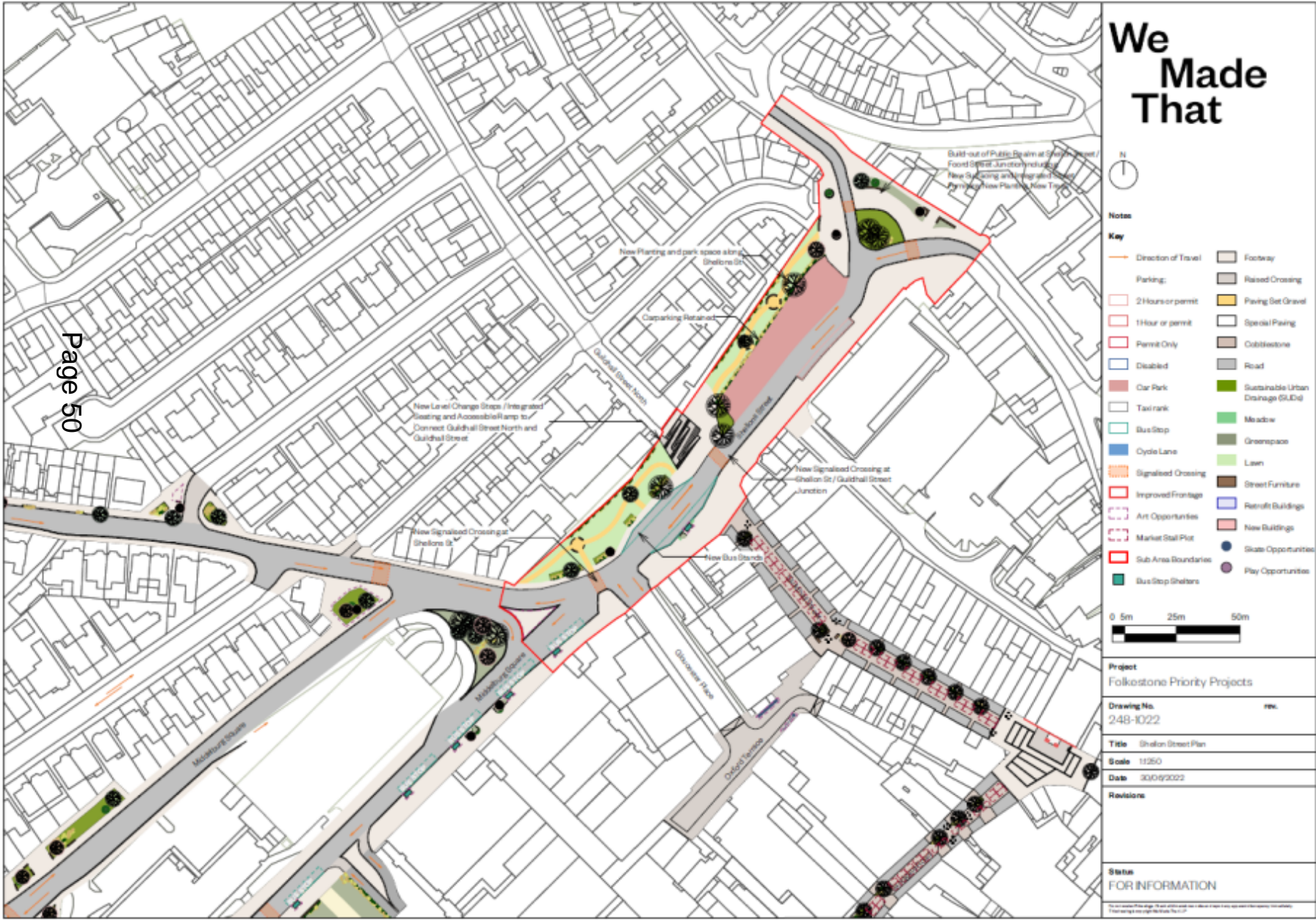


Middelburg Square Plan

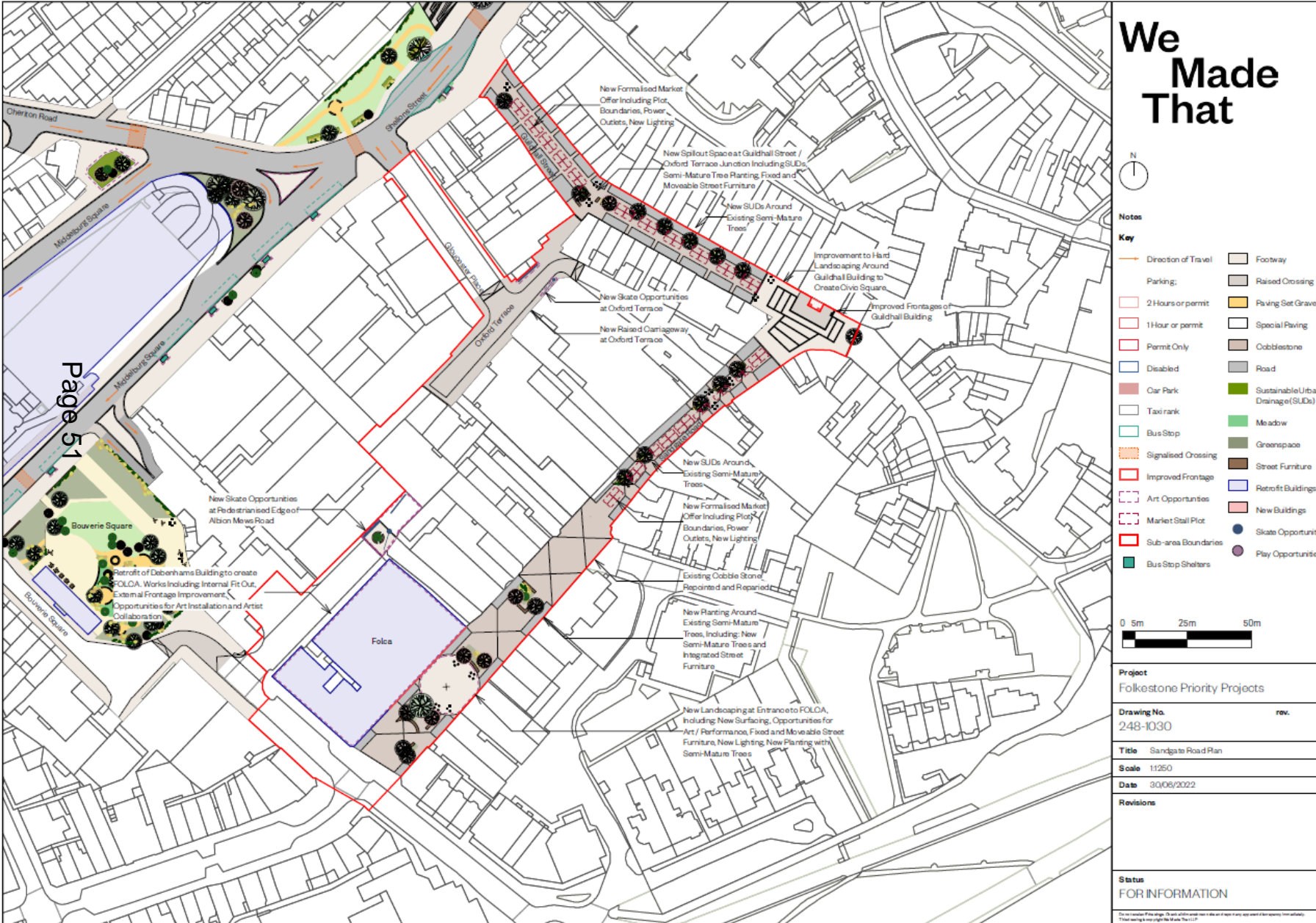


Shellon Street Plan

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Sandgate Road Plan



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