

A VISION FOR

# RAMSEY HUNTINGDONSHIRE

JUNE 2023



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# INTRODUCTION

The aim of this document is to set out the context and the socio-economic case for change for Ramsey, identify individual projects to potentially help towards this case for change. And finally look at how these projects can be delivered.

In more detail here is how this document is structured:

- **Context** – this section looks at setting the scene in terms of current situation, policy summary and vision for Ramsey.
- **Socio-economic Case for Change** – this section sets out the socio-economic case, looking into more detail at the human capital, place, infrastructure, business growth, knowledge, ideas, sustainability, and the impacts of Covid-19.
- **Options Assessments** – this section provides details of opportunities which address the needs of the town centre identified through the Baseline Assessment.
- **Project Assessment** – this section provides details on strategic fit, need, impact, viability, cost, deliverability, and risk. The result from this assessment produces the benefit cost ration for the individual projects.
- **Delivery Strategy** – this section sets out the design delivery to increase the individual projects deliverability.

This Vision document presents the case for change including the key projects that can help to regenerate Ramsey and promote growth, enterprise and a renewed and enhanced public realm and townscape. The projects are illustrated and the key financial and economic outputs reviewed. A delivery strategy is under preparation at this time.



# CONTEXT

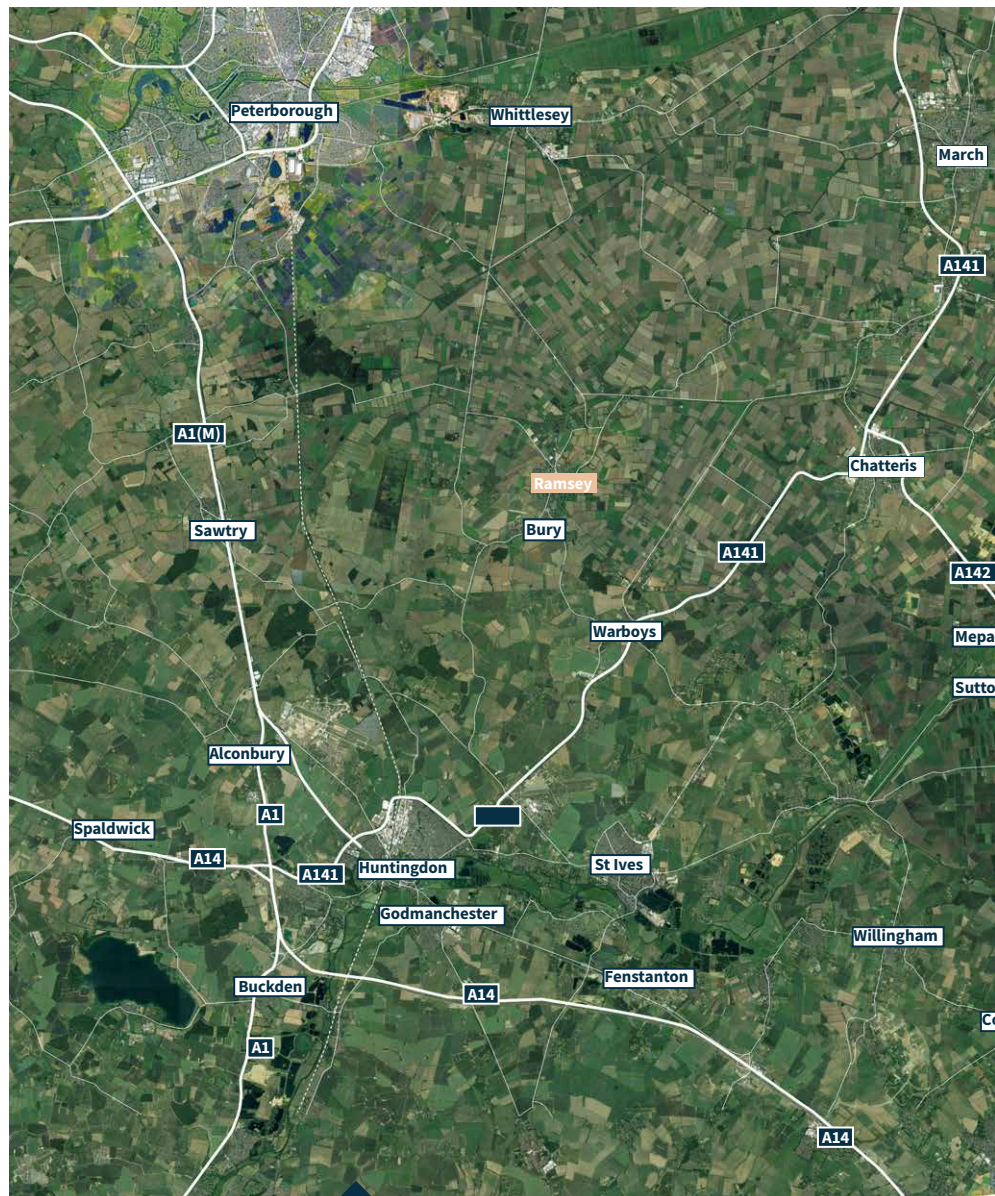
## Situation

Ramsey is a Fen Town and has a population of 8,500 (Census, 2011). It is located about 14km north of Huntingdon and is surrounded by the villages of Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey St Mary's and Ramsey Mereside. Including the town's village hinterland, the total population is 10,000.

Ramsey is served by local buses, having direct routes to St Ives, Huntingdon, Peterborough as well as nearby villages. Despite its relatively close proximity to Peterborough, there are no train links between the two locations, and with the exception of the local buses and active transport options, the only way to travel from Ramsey to Peterborough is by car, approximately a 30-minute journey.

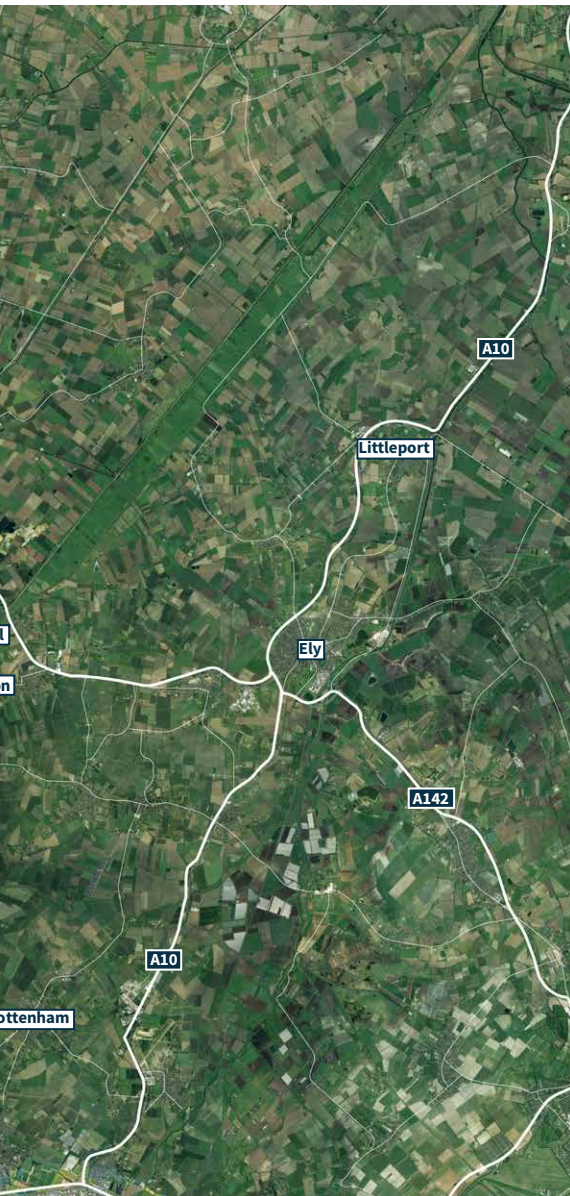
The primary commercial thoroughfare is the Great Whyte, which runs north to south for 500m with a combination of residential units, independent shops, cafes and community facilities. Although the town has facilities, it relies on access to Huntingdon, Peterborough and St Ives for higher order facilities and employment.

The town has rich heritage assets including the 15th century abbey gatehouse and the parish church of St Thomas Becket. It is close to the Fens, a rich wetland ecosystem offering opportunities for recreation.



Site Context Plan





### Policy Summary

Ramsey's Vision and Briefing Paper, published in May 2021, sets out its vision to be a prosperous market focusing on creating a distinct identity, ensuring business and trade are encouraged and delivering balanced growth through connectivity and opportunities. It highlighted the importance of balanced development, a focus on uplifting employment, providing better transport, and encouraging tourism through enhancing the town's identity.

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 identifies Ramsey as an important market town, it highlights the town's importance as a key location for future housing and employment growth and recognises the need to boost its retail and commercial offering to support growth and prosperity.

Lastly, Ramsey's A Prospectus for Growth places emphasis on the town's need to grow to survive, its population is ageing, and transport connections are poor. Building on the area's strengths of heritage, waterway and community spirit are a focus going forward.

### Vision

Work commissioned by Huntingdonshire District Council produced the following vision for Ramsey, in May 2021:

*"A prosperous market town in the heart of the rural Fens, with a distinct identity and pride in its heritage and setting. A community where business and trade are encouraged and growth is balanced by excellent connectivity and opportunities for young people, residents and the wider community."*

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CASE FOR CHANGE

### People/Human Capital

Huntingdonshire as a whole has a lower percentage of population qualified to NVQ4+ (42%) than Cambridgeshire (47%) and England (43%). This indicates challenges in attracting skilled workers, providing opportunities for education, and attracting and retaining high value employment opportunities.

In the district as a whole, employment is concentrated in more traditional sectors. 31% of employment is in public admin, education and health (the same as the national average), but there are high relative concentrations in construction (5% higher than national average).

Although having a small employment total (3,100 in December 2020, Professional/Scientific Services and Information and communication rank in the top five of its employment sectors, indicating that there is potential here for growth in high value sectors.

Deprivation around Ramsey is relatively high compared to the rest of Huntingdonshire District, and in some areas compared to England. Deprivation is, however, unevenly spread, with the area to the south of the town ranking in the top 10% least deprived areas in England. The inequality in Ramsey is highlighted by data on Universal Credit claimants, where it has a relatively high claimant rate at 70 per 1k population. Improving connectivity between employment and housing is a priority for Ramsey.

Universal Credit claims rose rapidly from March 2020-May 2020 and have remained high since throughout Huntingdonshire, highlighting that there are still significant challenges for people looking to return to work.

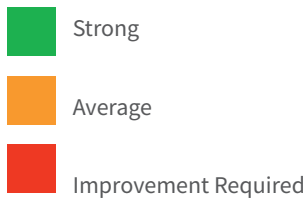
### Place/Infrastructure

Ramsey has low relative levels of use of train, bus, and bicycle for commuting (1%) when compared with Cambridgeshire (5%), and England (3%). This indicates that it is poorly connected to nearby larger towns by public transport and active transport routes, as further highlighted by high relative use of cars and vans for commuting. Creating more options for transport for residents will be important in improving employment opportunities.

Ramsey's night-time economy is very small, with a small catchment area (c. 70% of spend in the town centre comes from people residing within 10km of the town). The high levels of out-commuting from Ramsey to neighbouring larger towns and Peterborough again indicates the importance of connecting the town to other employment sites to boost employment prospects for those who require public transport to commute.

Visitors to Ramsey tend to be from local areas and spend a short time in the town centre, with around 72% of visits being under 1 hour in length. A higher portion of visits to Ramsey are for shopping for essentials and running errands (72% combined) compared to other towns in Huntingdonshire. Visitors to Ramsey noted that the three most important things that they expect from a high street are local retailers, sufficient car parking, and dining/drinking providers. Visitors also expressed a desire for more seasonal events, improved safety, better communication of events, and a larger variety of independent shops.

House prices in Ramsey are below the national average by around £90k, highlighting opportunities to attract residents under new more flexible patterns of work. However, to capitalise on this affordability and the attractive natural assets of Ramsey, will need to be improved.




**Attractive Countryside**




The fens are a great natural asset with a rich ecosystem that links to the canal network.

**Poor Digital Connectivity**



Digital connectivity in NW Cambridgeshire is poor and effects the ability to work from home.

**Heritage Assets**



Abbey Gatehouse and the parish church of St Thomas Becket are under-utilised opportunities.

**Poor Public Transport**



Limited connectivity restricts the ability to access employment.

**Limited Employment Options**



Limited employment offer. Demand for more independent businesses in the town centre

**Affordable Homes**




Relatively low house prices at £236k, £94k below the national average.

**Inequality**




Inequality is highlighted by Universal Credit claimants, where the rate is 70 per 1k population.

**Few Learning Opportunities**



Huntingdonshire's NVQ+ rate is 5pp lower than Cambridgeshire

**Ageing Population**



Proportion aged 65+ (21%) is higher than the national average (19%)

Source: NOMIS, Claimant Count

### **Business**

Business growth in Huntingdonshire is sustained but grew 12 percentage points (pp) slower than the national average between 2010 and 2020. Furthermore, business survival rates at 3 years are 9 pp behind England. This improves to a 2pp deficit for 5-year survival rate, but highlights the challenges starting businesses in the District.

However, the significant and increasing number of businesses in Professional, scientific and technical activities (which increased 55% 2018-19) indicates that the high value economy in the town is showing promising signs of growth.

### **Knowledge and Ideas**

The knowledge economy is a provider and creator of high value employment and GVA. It relies heavily on businesses', universities' and peoples' ability to commercialise and spin-out new ideas, approaches, and knowledge. A strong flow of ideas and innovation is critical to the performance of any competitive economy.

As highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036, it will be important to encourage and support businesses in high value sectors such as Health and Professional, scientific and technical activities. This, added to provision of skills support will provide opportunities for residents of Ramsey to access better paid jobs.

### **Low Carbon/Sustainability**

As indicated in the Local Plan to 2036, environmental challenges and opportunities exist in Huntingdonshire, and it will be important to consider these in all future developments in Ramsey.

Huntingdonshire emits almost double the carbon emissions per capita than the national benchmark. The high use of cars for travel, is an attributable cause for emissions per capita to be substantially higher than other areas. According to the 2011 Census, 85% of households from the parliamentary constituency of North West Cambridgeshire owned a vehicle, well above the national average of 74%. This highlights the importance of encouraging public and active travel modes for work and leisure travel in Ramsey, particularly to surrounding villages, which will reduce pressures on car parking in the town centre.

The Dashboard overleaf summarises the key strengths and areas requiring action which Ramsey's vision should capitalise on and address.

### **Ramsey's Case for Change**

As summarised in the dashboard, Ramsey has a number of contextual challenges to overcome and opportunities to take advantage of, to achieve its Vision to be a prosperous market town where business and trade are encouraged and growth is balanced by connectivity and opportunities for residents.

The concise Theory of Change below indicates how the desired outcome of realising Ramsey's Vision can be achieved. In other words, the case for change, which this Vision seeks to address.



**Context**

- Poor transport connectivity
- Limited employment, entrepreneurship and learning opportunities
- Lack of town centre offer, meaning stays are short and from local areas

**Rationale**

- If suitable transport options aren't provided, economic disparity will remain
- Demand for local businesses in the town centre is high, but lacking in suitable infrastructure
- Visits to Ramsey will not increase in number and length of stay without a focal point attractor

**Activities Required**

- Improved sustainable infrastructure
- Improved public realm and space for local businesses to trade and grow
- Facilities for learning
- A place and space to build identity and hold events

**Outcomes**

- A well connected town locally and to Huntingdonshire and beyond
- Increased employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, infrastructure and support
- A strong identity of place

## PROJECTS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

Following on from the socio-economic analysis, a long list of projects that best address Ramsey's opportunities and threats were selected for assessment.

The projects were assessed against the following criteria: Strategic Alignment; Need; Impact; Cost; Deliverability; Timeline; Viability; and Risk. Following on from the assessment, projects were refined to create a package that would have the greatest positive impact on the town of Ramsey. A summarised list of the finalised projects is presented adjacent.

### Economic Case

The economic benefits of the regeneration and placemaking projects have been quantified and monetised to provide a value for money assessment in the form of a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), indicating the likely wider economic benefit of investment relative to the cost of delivery.

The BCRs have been calculated for each project individually and for the Illustrative Concept Plan as a whole, using MHCLG's Land Value Uplift methodology to help calculate and monetise economic benefits. Land value uplift (LVU) is the change in overall land values in an impact area arising from an intervention/change. It is assumed to represent most/all of the impacts of an intervention/change as these impacts are translated via market signals to land values. It is the preferred method of appraisal for MHCLG and central government place-based funding, such as the Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund.

It is sometimes difficult to apportion benefit to individual options (for example an urban realm improvement that is supporting the renovation project of a commercial building) and in this case it is recommended that the BCR is calculated for a package of options.

Although direct LVU represents a significant proportion of private benefits, e.g. willingness to pay for a home, there are a number of external benefits (and costs) that may not be accounted for. To capture the full range of benefits, wider LVU (the impact of an intervention on neighbouring and surrounding residential and commercial values), crime cost savings, learner benefits and health benefits were all considered alongside direct LVU. The definitions of these external benefits are outlined below.

### Wider LVU

The potential positive land value uplift from regeneration of a site on neighbouring sites or the wider market should be considered, quantified and monetised as "wider regeneration property uplift". As the regeneration projects would have a significant positive impact upon the attractiveness of the town centre, providing a boost to job creation, footfall and enhance the perception of Ramsey to residents, businesses and visitors. It stands to reason that both residential and commercial property in the vicinity will become more attractive to occupiers/purchasers, and values are likely to increase once the projects come to fruition. For Ramsey, the wider regeneration catchment was calculated from the centre point of the proposed developments, indicating

No.	Title	Project	Description	Rationale
R1	Cycle & Digital Infrastructure	Cycle and Digital Connections Pilot Project	Up to 17km of cycle route improvements with new digital infrastructure. The first 2.3km route selected as pilot project from Ramsey Town Centre to Ramsey Forty Foot	Alignment with town strategies seeking improved transport connections
R2	Pedestrian Friendly Space	Public Realm Improvements to Great Whyte	6588sqm of Public Realm improvements overall. A 1st phase of 1588sqm is suggested as part of this project.	Integrating the town centre landscape to improve visitor experience
R2	Traffic Calming	Pedestrian Crossings	3 Pedestrian Crossings	Integrating the town centre landscape to improve visitor experience
R3	Great Whyte: A Destination	Market/Produce Hall	370sqm Footprint	Few retail options within the town. This will improve tourism offering and encourage local business growth.
R3	Great Whyte: A Destination	Accessibility Hub	150sqm cycle hire and EV charging hub	Encouragement of use of sustainable modes of transport for town centre visits
R3	Great Whyte: A Destination	Business, Work Space & Learning Centre	1350sqm Footprint	Residents' desire for more independent businesses to operate in Ramsey and provision of space to improve learning options
R4	Fen Links Visitor Economy	Moorings	3 new moorings at public realm around High Lode to the north of Great Whyte	Potential to increase tourism and expenditure from tourism
R4	Fen Links Visitor Economy	Public Realm Improvements	2,500sqm public realm improvements	Potential to increase tourism and expenditure from tourism
R5	Ramsey Abbey School Redevelopment	Former Country House Redevelopment	Estimated 2300sqm Floorspace	Provision of high quality accommodation in an underutilised building
R6	Housing Delivery	Northern Stocking Fen Rd	125 housing units in a waterside development	Option to provide funding for shove through capital receipts

how many properties fell into different distance categories from the intervention (<500m), as shown in the figure below. The wider regeneration uplift was then calculated by multiplying the number of residential within the 500-metre radius by the average house price for Ramsey and then by the proportion by which property values in that specific radii are expected to increase by as a result of the intervention. The uplift was then adjusted to reflect the in-scope number of commercial properties likely to benefit from the interventions.

#### Crime Cost Savings

The impact of some interventions (particularly those increasing footfall and lighting) on crime, including net additional reduction (as opposed to displacement) has been evidenced from a variety of studies. The potential benefits of the public realm projects in this Vision document on crime rates and, therefore, costs have been incorporated into this analysis.

#### Learner Benefits

Evidence of a continued strong return on investment through provision of Further Education activities has been evidenced in studies by the UK government studies. This return on investment has been included in the economic evaluation where appropriate.

#### Health Benefits

Greenspace, such as parks, woodland, fields and allotments as well as natural elements including green walls, roofs and incidental vegetation, are increasingly being recognised as an important asset for supporting health and wellbeing. The economic benefits derived from this increase in health and wellbeing are captured in the economic analysis, using evidence from a 2020 Public Health England review of greenspace access.

### **Regeneration and Placemaking Benefit-Cost Ratio**

The total benefits were calculated by adding the economic benefits (derived from the wider regeneration uplift and other benefit components associated with enhanced learning/training, better health and improved safety) to the estimated gross development value of the proposed interventions (net of their existing use value). The Benefit Cost Ratio was derived by dividing the total Benefit by the estimated project Cost, including contingencies. If a project has a BCR greater than 1.00:1, the project is expected to deliver a positive net present value, typically a project generating a BCR of 1.50 or above is considered to provide a good value for money case, and a very strong case with a BCR of 2.00 or above. The aggregate BCR for the 12 regeneration and placemaking projects considered for Ramsey was 1.63:1. The BCR for each individual project is presented in the following sections, where the projects are summarised in more detail. Financial Case

Further to the Economic Case BCR's, which outline the wider economic benefits of the Vision and projects, a Financial Case sets out the capital and revenue requirement for the spending proposal over the expected life span of the projects – essentially their viability. Furthermore, it assesses the impact of the projects on the balance sheet, income, and expenditure account of Huntingdonshire District Council. The methods used are compatible with HM Treasury Green Book and Business Case guidance, and are provided.

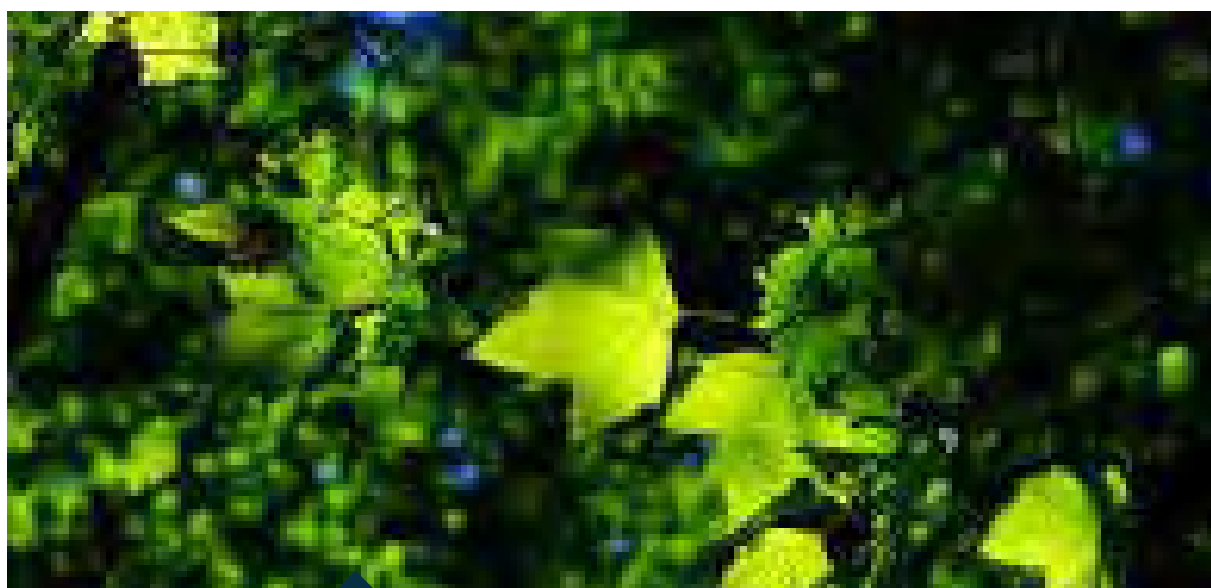
A financial Appraisal has been developed for a package of interventions around the Great Whyte which potentially could support a UK government Levelling Up funding bid.

### **Regeneration and Placemaking Projects**

This section detailed the methodological approach to options selection, the Economic Case for the options selected, and a summary of the Financial Case. The following sections of this document provide more detail on the individual projects, including:

- a more detailed project overview;
- a depiction of the project visuals; and
- a summary site assessment, including the BCR and any risks.





Health Benefits

## REGENERATION AND PLACEMAKING PROJECTS

### Regeneration and Placemaking Response

This Vision document provides details of opportunities which address the needs of the town centre identified through the Baseline Assessment and respond to the case for change. Each of these projects is ambitious and, together, provide an opportunity to transform the town centre.

This report outlines the project interventions which directly address the areas of action and direction of travel. In summary, these include:

- R1** R1 – Cycle and Digital Infrastructure
- R2** R2 – Pedestrian Friendly Space and traffic calming
- R3** R3 – Great Whyte as a Destination – Local Business Support
- R4** R4 – Fen Links and Visitor Economy
- R5** R5 – Ramsey Abbey School Redevelopment
- R6** R6 - Housing Delivery

Ramsey presents a challenge in identifying transformational regeneration projects. This is in part due to the size of the town (which is relatively small) and its rural location, with limited connectivity. These factors impact upon the potential market opportunities and Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of projects. Reflecting this the strategy is for small scale, high impact interventions, which can support placemaking and commercial activity. Being relatively small and compact, well-targeted projects can have a major positive benefit.

Public realm improvements will greatly benefit Ramsey from a pedestrian experience and safety perspective. Being a rural town, with no by-pass, through traffic including HGV's and rural traffic impinge on the quality of the walking environment. Enhancing public realm and adding traffic calming through pedestrian crossing will be important. The BCR's of public realm are always low, but these projects bring added value in terms of additional spending in the town centre.

The anchor projects in the centre of Ramsey include the Produce Hall and the Business Centre. The Produce Hall can create a focal point for local businesses, makers, growers and sellers. It can showcase new and existing business locally and will be curated by the District Council. In combination, the Business Centre will provide flexible space for a diversity

of individuals and businesses to work and develop in a collaborative and in a modern environment with business coaching and support.

Enhancements to car parking and the creation of an Accessibility Hub are integral to allowing the Business Centre site to be developed. A car parking study should be undertaken to provide a clear baseline for any changes to town centre parking and this scheme.

A residential project has been identified. This will create a new residential opportunity to support the housing residential market in Ramsey. Of modest scale, this will present new private homes for sale and new affordable housing, bringing additional residents close to the town centre.

The projects in Ramsey have varying delivery timescales, as detailed in each project summary. The projects are made up of a series of interventions packaged together to deliver transformational change. Responsibility for delivery of the project packages will remain with the District Council, who will work with partners directly to secure the positive changes required.



Illustrative Concept Plan



# R1

## CYCLE & DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PILOT

Ramsey is a rural town with a population of 8,479 (2011 Census). Given its strategic location and size, the town centre has a limited catchment and as such growth has been restricted. In order to increase GVA and promote growth of the town centre, it is proposed that cycle connectivity to the neighbouring villages is improved, and electric bikes provided for hire.

There are opportunities to connect cycle links to Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Upwood, Wistow and Warboys. These connections could be provided adjacent to vehicular roads or by providing improvements to existing public rights of way (PRoW). There is a further opportunity to provide digital connections within these routes.

Improving sustainable travel into Ramsey town centre would increase the potential local population with sustainable means to visit the town centre.

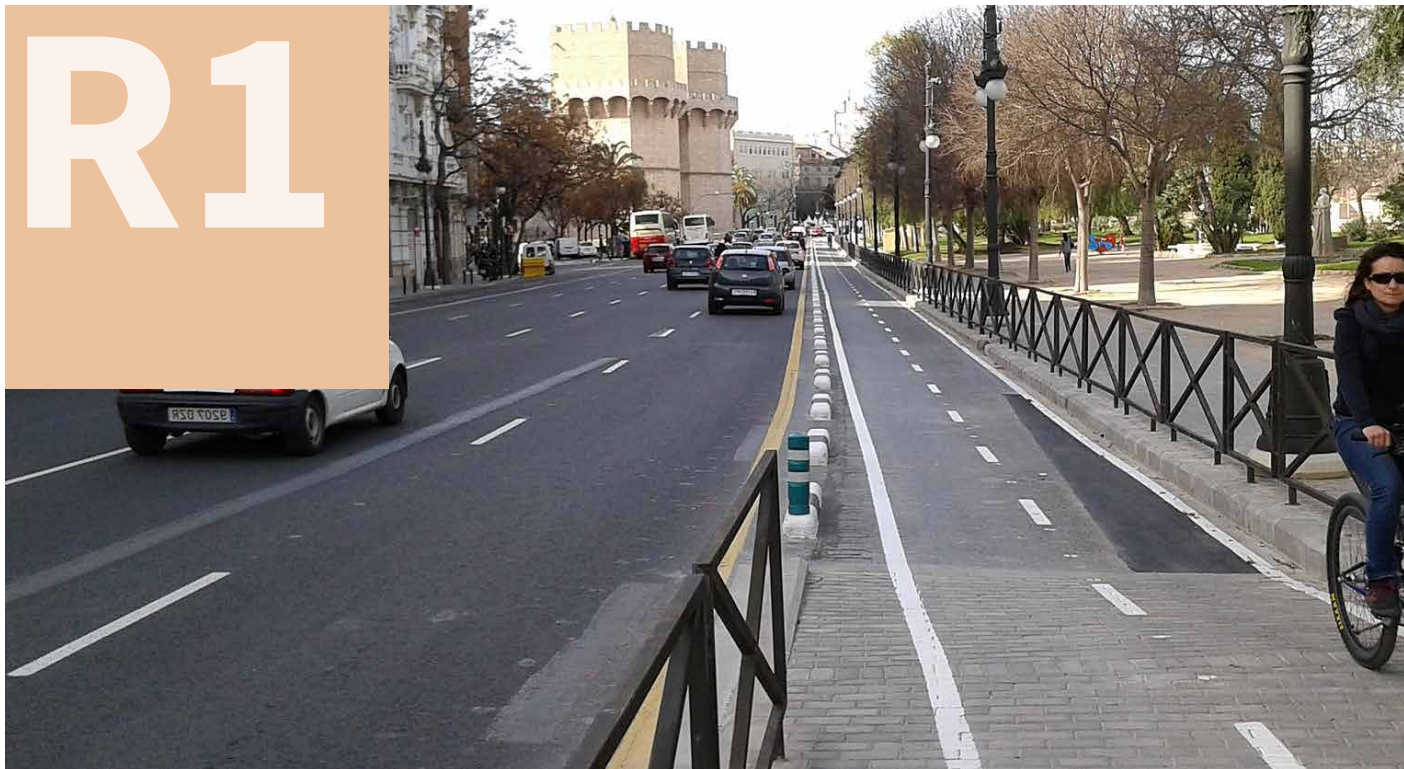
### 01 Cycle and Digital Connections Pilot Project

Up to 17km of cycle route improvements with new digital infrastructure.

The first 2.3km route selected as pilot project from Ramsey Town Centre to Ramsey Forty Foot.











- 01 Segregated cycle lane, Valencia
- 02 Segregated cycle lane
- 03 Cycle infrastructure (overleaf)









# R1

## PROJECT ASSESSMENT

<b>LOCATION</b>	<i>Ramsey, Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Upwood, Wistow, Warboys</i>
<b>CURRENT USE / CONDITION</b>	<i>Public rights of way across primarily agricultural land or adopted highway and neighbouring agricultural land</i>
<b>LAND OWNERSHIPS</b>	<i>Various private ownership and adopted highway County Council</i>
<b>TIMESCALES</b>	<i>Long term</i>

### Strategic Fit

Ramsey's Vision and Briefing Paper encourages balanced growth, partly through providing better transport, and Ramsey's Prospectus for Growth recognises that transport connections are poor.

### Need

Ramsey has low relative levels of use of bicycle for commuting and poorly connected to nearby larger towns by active transport routes. Town centre consumer.

### Impact

Provision of high quality active travel connections would increase the catchment of population able to visit Ramsey town centre by bicycle. This could reduce car use and increase footfall and town centre spend.

### Cost

£2.8m for public realm and pilot active travel route (2.3km).

### Viability

Not a commercial project. Requires public sector funding for the whole project.

### Deliverability

Delivery is dependent on resourcing from Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

### Risk

Active travel route: Land ownership dependent on pilot route selected. Must meet highway safety standards. No commercial receipt.

Public Realm: Requires maintenance scheme to be established. No capital receipt.

### Value For Money

If a project has a BCR greater than 1.00:1, the project is expected to deliver a positive net present value. The BCR is calculated by adding the total value of benefits (£3.1m) to the net gross development value (£0) and dividing it by the total cost of the project (£2.9m). This gives a BCR of 1.10.

# R2

## PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY SPACE

Great Whyte forms one of the two main streets upon which Ramsey town centre is built. The High Lode watercourse runs beneath the eastern side of Great Whyte, above which car parking is provided for local businesses. The high level of parking detracts from the character of the adjacent buildings and there is a major opportunity to improve this space along the length of Great Whyte in order to create an attractive setting to the town centre.

This public realm improvement scheme connects to the proposals outlined in R3 and in R4. It will also provide connections across Great Whyte east to west which will highlight the desire lines of pedestrians, slowing traffic and changing the priority within the town centre.

Along the length of Great Whyte a series of activity hubs will be provided. These will include:

- Cycle hire and repair hub;
- Pocket parks; and
- A cafe pop-up.

A cycle connection will also be provided along the length of the street.

Traffic calming will be an integral part of the public realm scheme to reduce traffic through the town. There are heavy goods vehicles circulating through the village at the moment. These measures of traffic calming will help mitigate these issues by different measures.

The goal is to improve greenery around the public realm increasing vegetation and tree planting throughout Great Whyte.

### 01 Public Realm Improvements to Great Whyte

6588sqm of Public Realm improvements overall. A 1st phase of 1588sqm is suggested as part of this project.

### 02 Pedestrian Crossings

3 Pedestrian Crossings.



Public Realm and Crossing Improvements



# R2



- 01 The fashion district, Milan
- 02 Example of public space replacing parking
- 03 Example of small-scale community space
- 04 Small scale seating and cycle storage
- 05 Ishihara Park seating
- 06 Public realm enhancements, Bath (overleaf)











# R2

## PROJECT ASSESSMENT

<b>LOCATION</b>	<i>Great Whyte</i>
<b>CURRENT USE / CONDITION</b>	<i>Public Realm and Surface Car Parking</i>
<b>LAND OWNERSHIPS</b>	<i>Huntingdonshire District Council</i>
<b>TIMESCALES</b>	<i>Short-medium term</i>

### Strategic Fit

Ramsey's Vision and Briefing Paper seeks to encourage balanced development, enhancing the town's identity.

### Need

Activating and integrating the Great Whyte is important to make it more pedestrian friendly and encourage longer dwell times.

### Impact

Potential to increase pedestrian footfall in the town centre.

### Cost

£0.5m.

### Viability

Not a commercial project. Requires public sector funding for the whole project.

### Deliverability

Delivery is dependent on resourcing from Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

### Risk

Public Realm: Requires maintenance scheme to be established. No capital receipt.

### Value For Money

If a project has a BCR greater than 1.00:1, the project is expected to deliver a positive net present value. The BCR is calculated by adding the total value of benefits (£330k) to the net gross development value (£0) and dividing it by the total cost of the project (£517k). The gives a BCR of 0.64.

# R3

## GREAT WHYTE: A DESTINATION

Despite being a market town, Ramsey does not currently run a regular market. Ramsey is connected to a number of local producers and small businesses which could enhance the town centre provision through taking retail space from which to sell their products.

A new hub for local businesses is proposed at the southern end of Great Whyte. This is proposed to house up to 10 retail units, available to local businesses at reduced rates on a short term. The aim of this project is to bring produces and local retailers into town for trade.

The building must be temporary in design and engineered to sit above the High Lode culvert. It will be architecturally designed and sustainable and will provide a focal space within the town centre, linked to a wider public real scheme.

Further to this provision, it is proposed that a local business support scheme is developed to help successful small businesses grow and take space in larger retail units within the town centre.

Developed in combination with the hub and managed together, a sister facility is proposed to further support business and enterprise in Ramsey. This project is the new business workspace and learning centre, it will provide self-contained and managed workspace, training space, and business support.

The accessibility hub will include upgraded car parking, including EV charging points, secure sheltered bike storage and potentially bike repair facilities.

### 01 Market/Produce Hall

370sqm Footprint

### 02 Business, Work Space & Learning Centre

1350sqm Footprint

### 03 Accessibility Hub

Bike storage and electric vehicle charging.

### 04 Car Park Improvement

Resurfacing and enhancements to approximately 80-90 car parking spaces.



Business Hub



# R3

01



04







- 01 Flower market, Mexico
- 02 VA waterfront local produce stalls
- 03 Example of small scale streetside businesses
- 04 Flower market, Mexico
- 05 Precht food market
- 06 Pop-up shops, Dalegate Market

# R3

## PROJECT ASSESSMENT

<b>LOCATION</b>	<i>Great Whyte</i>
<b>CURRENT USE / CONDITION</b>	<i>Public Realm and Surface Car Parking</i>
<b>LAND OWNERSHIPS</b>	<i>Adopted highway County Council</i>
<b>TIMESCALES</b>	<i>Short-medium term</i>

### Strategic Fit

Ramsey’s Vision and Briefing Paper states the town’s ambition to be a prosperous market town with a distinct identity, ensuring business and trade are encouraged and delivering balanced growth through connectivity and opportunities.

### Need

There are few retail and food and beverage options in the town centre. Residents want to see more local businesses, and these businesses need space to set up (pop-ups) and grow (managed workspace). A focal point for the town centre is required, which can host markets and events.

### Impact

Increased footfall in the town centre. Establishment of additional businesses and the jobs and GVA that this provides. Business survival rates increased through the business support hub. Learning opportunities provided if space can be utilised by a Further Education provider.

### Cost

£5.2m.

### Viability

Commercial viability is dependent on 80% occupancy rate of pop-ups and business space at the HDC Led Business Support Hub.

### Deliverability

High costs. Delivery is dependent on resourcing from Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. Delivery of benefits is dependent on agreement with a Further Education provider to generate learner space.

### Risk

Requires maintenance scheme to be established. Commercial receipts dependent on untested market demand in Ramsey. Will need transparent public consultation.



### Value For Money

If a project has a BCR greater than 1.00:1, the project is expected to deliver a positive net present value. The BCR is calculated by adding the total value of benefits (£9.7m) to the net gross development value (£1.4) and dividing it by the total cost of the project (£5.2m).

Individual BCR's may be provided for the produce hall, business support hub and accessibility hub. The resurfacing and setting out of the car parks are envisaged to support the existing retailing and services in the town centre.





# MARKET/PRODUCE HALL



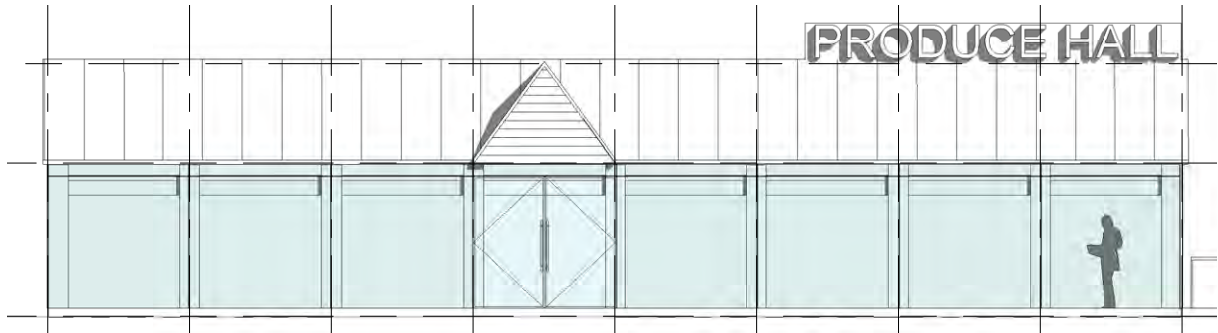
Market/Produce Hall CGI



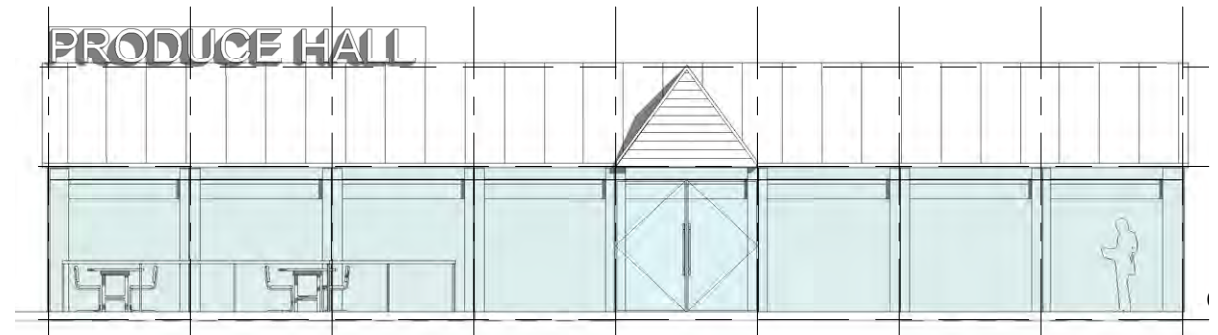




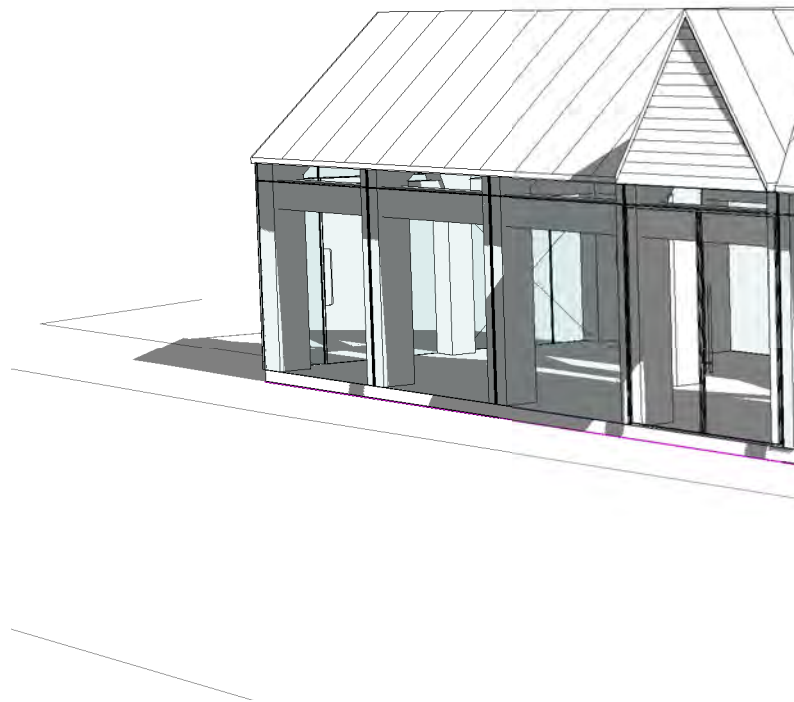
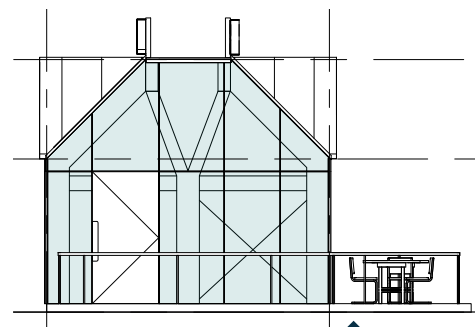
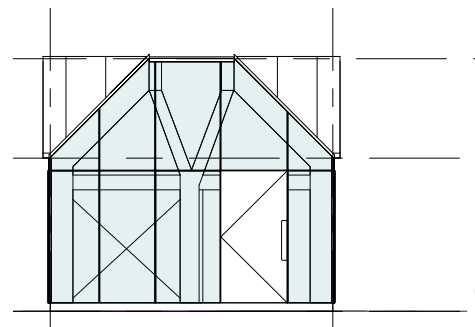
# MARKET/PRODUCE HALL

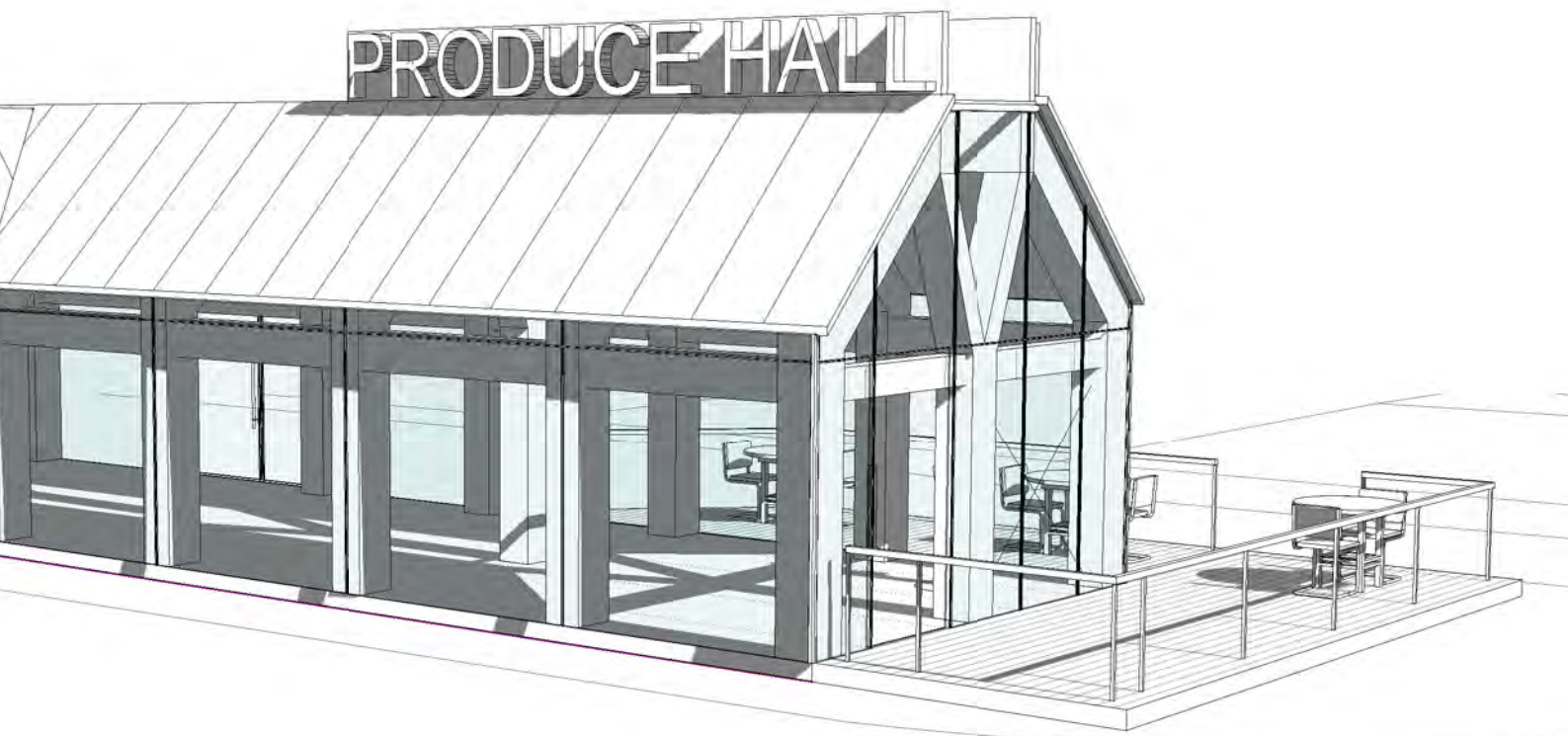


Front



Rear





Market/Produce - 3D View



# BUSINESS HUB



Ramsey's Business Hub CGI



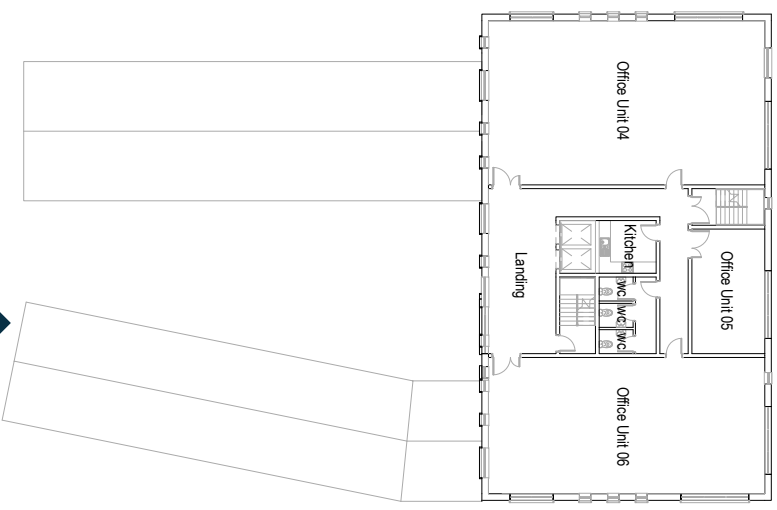




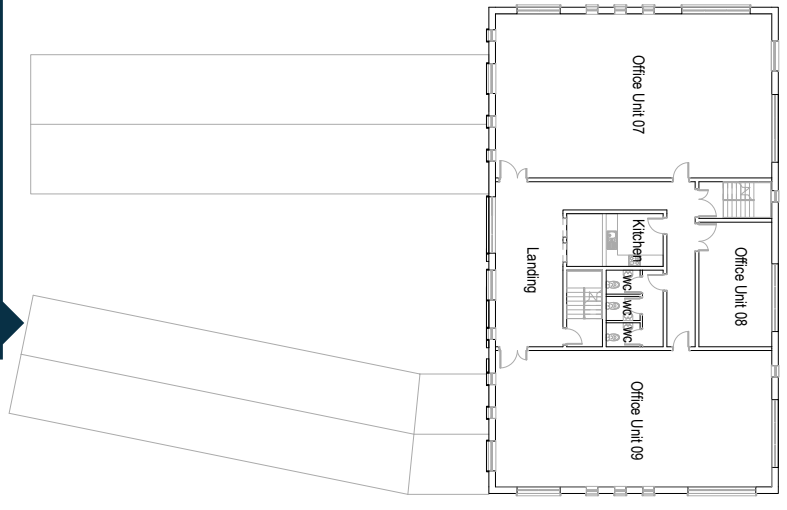
# BUSINESS HUB



Business Hub - Site & GF Plan



Business Hub - 1F Plan



Business Hub - 2F Plan



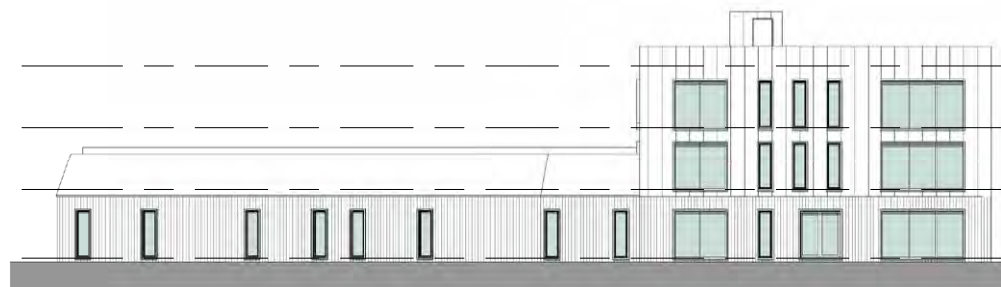
# BUSINESS HUB



*North*



*South*



*East*



*West*





Business Hub - 3D Views

# R4

## FEN LINKS VISITOR ECONOMY

Ramsey is well connected to the fenland infrastructure via High Lode, however as the watercourse runs beneath Great Whyte for much of its route through the town centre, the fenland connectivity opportunities have not been maximised.

It is proposed that the public realm around High Lode to the north of Great Whyte is improved, to provide an attractive setting for visitors arriving by boat. The opportunity exists to provide turning facilities for a 50ft narrowboat and moorings on the western side of the watercourse.

This space could become both an attractive open space within the town centre, but also a hub for leisure facilities. It is proposed that this location could be utilised for watersports launches, with a small equipment hire hut.

01

### Public Realm Improvements

2,500sqm public realm improvements

02

### Moorings

Three new moorings and turning for 50ft narrowboat





Public Realm Improvements and Moorings

# R4



- 01 Watersports, Thetford
- 02 Waterfront public realm, Kingston Upon Thames
- 03 Moorings and canal-side public realm, Camden
- 04 Paddleboarding, Regents Canal (overleaf)



01



02



03







# R4

## PROJECT ASSESSMENT

<b>LOCATION</b>	<i>Great Whyte/New Road</i>
<b>CURRENT USE / CONDITION</b>	<i>Office Unit owned by HDC</i>
<b>LAND OWNERSHIPS</b>	<i>Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)</i>
<b>TIMESCALES</b>	<i>Short-medium term</i>

### Strategic Fit

Ramsey's Vision and Briefing Paper seeks to encourage balanced development, partly by encouraging tourism through enhancing the town's identity and utilising its position in the Fens.

### Need

Ramsey town centre has limited focal points and attractors at its north end, and the High Lode is underutilised as a public space.

### Impact

Increase in visitors to the town centre via connectivity to the Fens. Increased footfall from the north of the town centre should increase footfall along the Great Whyte.

### Cost

£2.1m.

### Viability

Not a commercial project. Requires public sector funding for the whole project. Benefits delivered through wider land value uplift and savings to crime costs.

### Deliverability

High costs. Delivery is dependent on resourcing from Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

### Risk

Delivery risk given low BCR and requirement for ongoing maintenance plan. No capital receipt.

### Value For Money

If a project has a BCR greater than 1.00:1, the project is expected to deliver a positive net present value. The BCR is calculated by adding the total value of benefits (£2.7m) to the net gross development value (£0) and dividing it by the total cost of the project (£2.1m). The gives a BCR of 1.28.

R5

## RAMSEY ABBEY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT

The Grade I listed former country house sits on the site of a scheduled monument, the former Ramsey Abbey. The site is an exceptional historic asset and the former Abbey Gatehouse is a visitor attraction run by the National Trust.

The former country house was more recently occupied by the neighbouring Abbey College school, however it is currently disused. This building provides an exciting opportunity for Ramsey given its historical significance and characterful architecture.

A number of opportunities have been explored, which include conversion of the building to provide residential, extra care or hotel uses. There is a major opportunity for the house to be developed into a visitor attraction which would generate significant economic benefit for Ramsey.

The future of the building is dependent upon the private owner. It is the aim of the council to work together with the private owner to maximise this opportunity for Ramsey.

### 01 Former Country House Redevelopment

Estimated 2300sqm Floorspace





Former Country House Redevelopment



# R5



Ramsey Abbey School



## PROJECT ASSESSMENT

<b>LOCATION</b>	<i>Ramsey Abbey School</i>
<b>CURRENT USE / CONDITION</b>	<i>Vacant, formerly used by school</i>
<b>LAND OWNERSHIPS</b>	<i>Private ownership</i>
<b>TIMESCALES</b>	<i>Medium-long term</i>

### Strategic Fit

Residential use aligns with the Strategic Plan for Ramsey to deliver responsible community growth with a good balance of rural character and urban growth. It also contributes to Huntingdonshire District Council's Housing Strategy, which indicated the need for 20,000 homes in the District.

### Need

Ramsey Abbey School is a Grade I listed building, which is currently disused and under private ownership. Multiple options are being explored for use, although currently only a residential option has been assessed for value for money.

### Impact

Potential delivery of around 30 2/3 bed apartments towards HDC's requirement for 20,000 more homes 2011-2036.

### Cost

£6.4m.

### Risk

Major risks associated with high costs of delivery. Significant gap funding likely required. Uncertainty around the role of HDC, given the land is privately owned, meaning there is risk of HDC having limited influence on timescales and quality.



# R6

## HOUSING DELIVERY

The residential proposals for Ramsey aim to fulfill a number of strategic purposes.

The Stocking Fen Road completes the northern town and complements existing residential development. This is a scheme of 110 conventional dwellings which will include additional affordable homes for Ramsey. This will bring additional residents into the town centre, who can spend time and money in the town centre.

This site is in the ownership of the DeRamsey Estate. Preliminary discussions (with the Estate) have involved consideration of how these sites can be promoted (through the planning process) to unlock value and then by virtue of the ownership, capture and ring fence a proportion of that value for use to regenerate the town centre. This approach could be applied to other land in the control of the DeRamsey Estate. There is no formal status in planning terms for any residential development on these sites.

Another much smaller three home residential scheme is included in the town centre at Mews Close. This comprises three town houses. This scheme could help cross subsidise the workspace scheme.

### 01 Stocking Fen Rd

Approx. 125 homes

#### Strategic Fit

Aligns with Huntingdonshire's Local Plan which identifies Ramsey's importance as a key location for future housing.

#### Cost

£24.6M

#### Risk

Major risks associated with high costs of delivery. Significant gap funding likely required. Uncertainty around the role of HDC. Planning risk.



Residential Schemes



Stocking Fen Road

Stocking Fen Road - Indicative Layout









## DELIVERY APPROACH

The Vision for Ramsey is formed by a series of projects which together respond to the case for change. The case for change is based on socio-economic and placemaking analysis and the opportunities presented in Ramsey Town Centre.

### Project Programme Overview

The projects require a programme of activity, led by the public and involving private sector support and investment. The public sector will act as enabler and facilitator of change where necessary. The private sector investment and development will be integral to the implementation of the vision and regeneration and placemaking projects and the aim is to maximise and target private investment to best effect.

The projects are summarised as:

- R1 Cycle and Digital Infrastructure
- R2 Pedestrian Friendly Town Centre
  - » R2.01 Public Realm Improvements (traffic calming)
  - » R2.02 Three New Pedestrian Crossings (traffic calming)
- R3 Great Whyte: A Destination
  - » R3.01 Market/Produce Pop-Ups (produce hall)
  - » Business, Workspace and Learning Hub (making/selling/workspace)
  - » Accessibility Hub
- R4 Fen Links Visitor Economy
  - » R4.01 Public Realm Improvements
  - » R4.02 New Moorings
- R5 Ramsey Abbey School Redevelopment (residential)
- R6 Housing Delivery:
  - » Stocking Fen Road

The regeneration and placemaking projects R1-6 provide a comprehensive response to the challenges faced by Ramsey. Funding for this programme will come from a variety of sources. Housing delivery (R6) has a role to play in bringing new residents with disposable income to spend in the improved town centre and, through the promotion of land and development and the ownership of the sites, directly fund part of the programme through an innovative value capture scheme. These will be explained later in this section.



### How will the Project Programme be Delivered?

Project delivery needs to be coordinated. The projects should be treated as a portfolio, with both individual and collective objectives for the portfolio. The programme of activity for that portfolio should be managed by Huntingdonshire Council. This does not place all the responsibility to deliver on the Council, rather it should play a central role in facilitation and coordination. At key moments the Council will need to help unlock and unblock project delivery and will also be the accountable body which secures and assures public investment, including government grant or direct Council investment.

The private sector can become involved in Ramsey through residential development of key sites. The larger residential sites at Stocking Fen Road is in the ownership of the De Ramsey Estate. Developing this land can bring forward new residents and generate value to feed into vision and project delivery. By working in collaboration, the Council and the De Ramsey Estate can generate and ringfence a proportion of the development value to create a legacy in the town. There may be other sites in the control of the De Ramsey Estate which could similarly be developed for residential purposes. No residential sites benefit from formal planning status.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Council has overall responsibility for the portfolio of projects. The public sector has a role in the direct delivery of the following projects in Ramsey:

- Pedestrian and traffic calming works to Great Whyte and the waterside.
- Market/Produce Pop-ups
- Business, Workspace and Learning Hub
- Accessibility Hub

The role of the County Council as Highway Authority is important for public realm and connectivity projects. A working group should be established to ensure connectivity and placemaking projects are delivered in a coordinated manner.

The Cycle and Digital Infrastructure project will require strategic lead from the Council with input from the County, landowners and digital providers.

Public enabling and potential joint working with the private sector will be required to maximise the regeneration around the Market/Produce and the local Business, Workspace and Learning Hub. It is envisaged that the Council manage these facilities or work with others who can manage on their behalf. These two facilities will provide a highly prominent location within the town centre for businesses, entrepreneurs, makers, growers and sellers to come into the town centre to trade. This shop window can drive growth and the local economy.

### Sequencing and Interrelationships

The key areas of activity are closely related in the town centre along Great Whyte and the linked delivery of the Market/Produce and Business, Workspace and Learning Hub.

The Market/Produce Pop Ups are 'shovel-ready' with limited complexity. The Business Hub requires replacement car parking (at the Accessibility Hub), which is within the control of HDC and currently overgrown scrub land. The formation of the new Accessibility Hub will form an enabling project to allow the decant of car parking.

Housing delivery to generate funds in the medium term for town centre investment in regeneration may limit full delivery of the scheme until planning permission is secured and development implemented. This underlines the medium to long-term nature of the scheme.

Cycle and Digital Infrastructure is a potentially vast project which needs to be piloted and tested.

### Funding Approach

The Council should use direct public investment to leverage future investment from local businesses, entrepreneurs and the private sector focused in the town centre. The Vision and its constituent projects should allow for future funding bids where opportunities present. Whilst projects within the Illustrative Concept Plan are not fully 'shovel-ready', they are well-formed and could be quickly advanced to support future bids.

Securing public sector capital investment will be challenging, although the evidence of need and socio-economic analysis does indicate that Ramsey could meet the requirements for a Levelling up Fund round 3 submission. Other grant funding may be available to drive growth and regeneration. One is the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund which could be allocated via regional awards as a replacement for EU funding. Peterborough and Cambridge Combined Authority may offer a funding stream for delivery. The highlighted projects which could form part of funding bids are:

- The Market/Produce Pop Ups
- Business, Workspace and Learning Hub (Ramsey Hub)
- Great Whyte public realm project and traffic calming

Capital investment from the Council from existing programmes, reserves or prudential borrowing may also contribute to a blend of funding.

An additional opportunity in Ramsey is funding regeneration projects by residential development around the town centre on open countryside in agricultural use. Taking an innovative approach to the promotion of these sites, value can be captured and reinvested in the scheme. The Council would procure development management and promotion expertise on a consultancy basis and, working with landowners the De Ramsey Estate, would jointly secure planning and dispose of the land to residential developers. The Thomas Lister Development Appraisals suggest that value would accrue for the landowner and the Council as promoter. The Council could then use a proportion of the value to cover venture costs and risk and put the remainder into the regeneration of Ramsey Town Centre. At this stage, there is no planning status for any such sites.



### Market Analysis and Opportunity

Thomas Lister presented a market and commercial review in the baseline report. That information is not repeated here. The property market context and potential areas for growth and development have directed the projects. There is evidenced market interest in terms of residential development in Ramsey, including higher value dwellings at the right scale and quantum. There is evidence of local businesses, makers and producers currently trading outside of and around the town centre who could come into the town centre; this would attract trade and footfall and would benefit the Market/Produce Pop Ups and Business, Workspace and Learning Hub. The education and business coaching facility at the Hub could support business start-up and survival and provide co-working space for local people.

Market failure is evident in relation to key projects in so far as delivery has not proven possible up to now. The proposed Market/Produce Pop Ups and Business, Workplace and Learning Hub are facilities that can incubate pioneer and established business to the benefit of the town centre and local people/businesses. Presently no such facilities exist. The Council's role will be to enable this change and to provide a focal point for other business and education stakeholders to become involved in the project.

The **Economic Value of Placemaking** should not be underestimated in the revitalisation of Ramsey. Great Whyte reinvents this space in the core town centre as a public place and destination. There is strong economic evidence that investment in public realm and placemaking creates economic value no just amenity value.

The quality and appearance of public realm can have a direct economic impact on the surrounding vicinity. For example, the appreciation of a certain space can lead to increased footfall, which can in turn generates higher revenues for local establishments and promote economic visibility. Moreover, public spaces profoundly influence the surrounding property market and values. Proximity to a healthy public space, for example, a well-maintained park with many amenities, can significantly increase the value of property.

### Delivery Confidence

The ability to deliver the project portfolio within a clear timeframe and budgetary envelope will be important to any funding bid, including a Levelling up Round 2 Bid. Further work will be necessary to define key milestones and deliverables for individual projects. These will need to be profiled in terms of spending profile.

Meeting the strategic objectives of the project and delivering the case for change is essential. The Ramsey Vision will create tangible benefits for the town centre and bring new life and activity. Consideration is already given to aspects of the Vision that can be delivered via Levelling up Fund and other sources and a strong, strategic case will be required.

The ability to deliver the projects through control of land is vital. There is confidence from the visioning process that key landowners are engaged and proactive where the Council is not in control of land. For the Levelling up Fund aspects, the Council has control of land.

The housing scheme, which could raise funding for the wider regeneration plan (beyond a Levelling up bid) carry substantial risk, given that these sites are not allocated in the Local Plan. The promotion of these sites would require careful assessment of risk.

## KEY PROJECTS

### Market/Produce Pop Ups

The Market/Produce Pop Ups and Business, Workspace and learning Hub are related projects and will have the same management in terms of facilities and curation of the space and operation. The Market/Produce hall will provide space and a highly visible central venue for local producers to come into the town centre to trade. The building itself will be of a temporary, lightweight structure (because of ground conditions) and will sit within existing Highway land on space recovered from car parking.

### Business, Workspace and Learning Hub

The Hub will offer nine workspace pods for longer-term, continuous, flexible use by local businesses who want to locate together in the town centre. While the Market/Produce facility may be managed on a weekly or daily seasonal basis, it is envisaged the workspaces in the Hub will be occupied more continually. In addition to the pods there will be co-working space and managed workspace and training venues in the main building, which will include central facilities management. Delivery of this scheme requires the relocation of existing car parking to the nearby Accessibility Hub.





### Great Whyte Public Realm

This is a public realm scheme that seeks to create a more pedestrian-friendly place for local people and visitors to spend time and money. Traffic will be calmed and larger vehicles slowed. The space around Market/Produce will be significantly enhanced and include a water feature rill reflecting the watercourse below Great Whyte. This project will require close working with the County Council and local businesses to avoid significant disturbance to trade. A degree of parking will be removed to create a more attractive central space. The pedestrian linkage between Market/Produce, Business Hub and Accessibility Hub will also be upgraded.



### Housing Delivery

Using housing schemes to diversify and uplift the housing stock in Ramsey will also support the town centre's businesses, attracting more people close to the town centre; making the proposed improvements will encourage greater use of the town by new and existing residents. The more innovative aspect of the residential proposals is working with the De Ramsey Estate to generate and capture value to reinvest in the town centre. This may take different forms, but in delivery terms and for the cost and development appraisal work we have assumed the Council act as land promoter, procuring necessary expertise and funding the promotion as cost effectively as possible and



without initial payments to the Estate. The outturn land value above the baseline agricultural value will be returned to the Estate. The appraisals include a high-level estimation. The promoter/developer profit is where the value capture can be harvested to invest in the town centre.

Since these are relatively small sites it is envisaged that even if housing developers wanted to stage land payments based on sales then value would accrue to be reinvested in a relatively short time period. Further work is needed to explore this concept.

**Delivery Table**

Project	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Barriers	Barriers
R1 Cycle and Digital Infrastructure	HDC	18-22 months	£2.85M	Scale of routes / land ownership	2.3KM of upgraded routeway
R2.01 Public Realm Improvements (traffic calming)	HDC / CCC	20-24 months	£417,000	Highway and parking constraints	6,900sqm of public realm enhanced
R2.02 Three New Pedestrian Crossings (traffic calming)	HDC / CCC	20-24 months	£100,000	Highway and parking constraints	3 pedestrian crossings
R3.01 Market/Produce Pop-Ups (produce hall)	HDC	22-30 months	£616,000	Loss of parking spaces	370sqm Pop up market pop up space
R3.02 Business, Workspace and Learning Hub (making/selling/ workspace)	HDC and partners / stakeholders education and business	24-36 months	£4.82M	Loss of parking spaces / availability of partners / prove demand.	1,016 sqm of workspace / learning space and external amenity space.
R3.03 Accessibility Hub	HDC	18-22 months	£124,000	Possible ecology	150sqm car park with EV charging and bike facilities
R4.01 Public Realm Improvements (phase 2 / northern area)	HDC	18-22 months	£2.1M	Highway and parking constraints	2,500 sqm public realm at waterside plus landscape works to Great Whyte
R4.02 New Moorings	HDC / Waterway Stakeholders	18-22 months	£4,000	Ecology / waterways	3 no. new moorings
R5 Ramsey Abbey School Redevelopment (residential)	Private Landowner	24-36 months	£6.4M	Funding / previous use & legal	2,300sqm of saleable residential floorspace
R6 Housing Delivery Stocking Fen Road	De Ramsey Estate / HDC	24-36 months	£24M	Planning	125 dwellings

\*HDC: Huntingdonshire District Council / CCC: Cambridgeshire County Council



### **Project Management**

Project governance arrangements and responsibilities will need to be mapped, with HDC taking a lead in this area.

A Project Plan will be required once the project advances. This will be a requirement of any government funding and the Council is well placed to develop the Project Plan based on the work to date. The Project Plan should also have a Risk Strategy which includes a risk register and mitigation.

Consultation and engagement will be required to make sure the projects are welcomed by local people. The work to date has not benefitted from community engagement and this step will be necessary to involve local people in the process of regeneration. Consultation has been a common thread in all recent government funding initiatives. In creating 'shovel-ready' projects it is essential to undertake consultation.

As part of the project management of the scheme key data about success and positive change need to be captured. It is important to understand how the investment in the projects has translated into additional economic activity, with more people using and enjoying Ramsey. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) should be developed for the scheme and monitored annually.

Because the project portfolio may be delivered over time, as funding and investment becomes available, refreshing and updating the projects from time to time is advised. With appropriate investment, the programme of work could be delivered over a three-to-four-year period, but some projects may take longer.

Separate governance and management requirements will be required if the Levelling up Fund component schemes are successful in attracting grant funding support.

# RAMSEY HUNTINGDONSHIRE

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