



Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan

March 2022

Written by

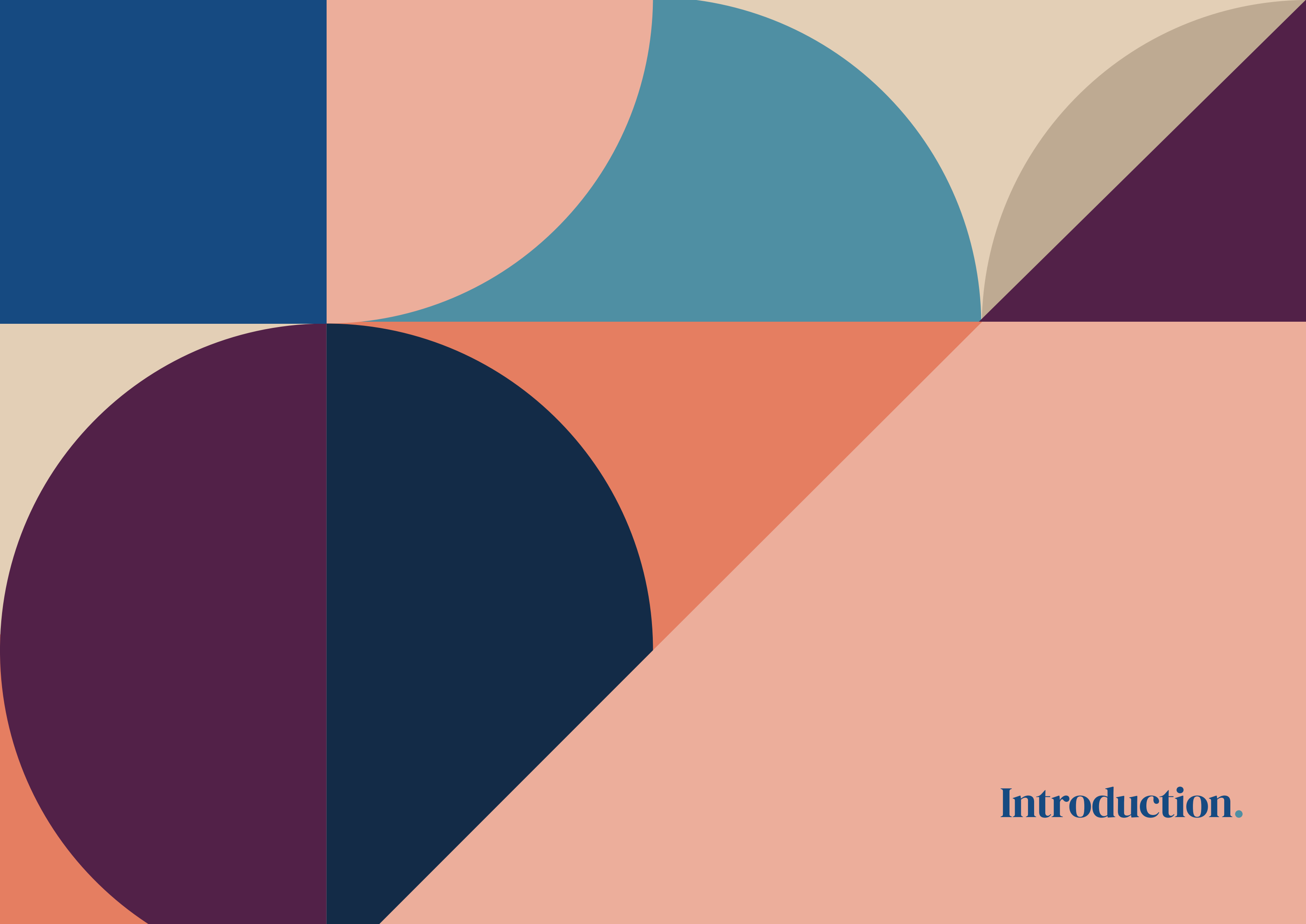


In Collaboration with



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Introduction.



Foreword

Over the years, Ramsbottom has developed into a strong and attractive visitor destination, supported by the East Lancashire Railway, a high-quality restaurant scene, a good range of independent retailers, a popular annual events programme and a growing reputation as one of the best places to live in the region.

This diversity has helped Ramsbottom to perform relatively well as both a town centre and a visitor destination. However, past success cannot be taken for granted and it is important that the town centre builds on its strengths and exploits opportunities for improvement.

We would not want to see wholesale changes that would fundamentally change the very character that makes the town centre so attractive, but there are opportunities to enhance Ramsbottom as a place by making it a more attractive and usable town centre for local residents, businesses and visitors.

Whilst the heritage and layout of Ramsbottom is one of its key assets, this does cause some tensions with its function as a key visitor destination. For

example, the centre can be difficult to navigate, there are issues with pedestrian and vehicular conflict when visitor numbers are particularly high, linkages between attractions are, in some cases, poor and the centre has a longstanding problem with the quantity and location of parking for visitors.

The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan includes a number of strategic objectives, high level proposals and longer term concepts that will help to improve the appearance and function of areas of public realm as well to improve linkages between town centre assets and the movement and circulation of all town centre users – helping to attract increased footfall to support Ramsbottom businesses and the wider economic strength of the town centre.

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Leader of Bury Council



Purpose of The Plan

In Spring 2021 Bury Council appointed a consultancy team to prepare The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan to set out a series of initiatives to improve public realm, townscape and movement within the town centre and explore opportunities to improve its visitor offer in order to help maintain its role as a quality destination for the next 10 to 15 years.

Working collaboratively with Bury Council, the consultancy team is led by Landscape Architect Layer Studio and partnered by:

- Curtins – Transport planning
- Fourth Street – Destination development/place narrative
- Paul Butler Associates – Public engagement specialists
- Appleyard & Trew – Cost consultants

The work comprises two main phases.

Phase 1 of the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan sets out a series of high level proposals and concepts to improve the future of the town for residents, businesses and visitors.

Phase 2 will develop the concepts and proposals in more detail where opportunities arise. These are likely to be developed on an individual project basis and there would be further engagement and consultation in Phase 2 prior to implementation.

Report Format

The plan commences with an introduction to the town, making reference to its historic development as a place.

Next, Ramsbottom is considered as it is today,, listing key strengths and issues associated with elements such as public realm, movement and parking. This section finishes with a summary of stakeholder consultation completed to date.

Having reviewed Ramsbottom today, the Council's aspirations for the town's future are set out using a high level vision. The way in which this vision will be realised is set out in the strategic objectives and site specific proposals.



The Evolution of Ramsbottom

Ramsbottom is a comparatively 'young' town, born of the industrial revolution. Before the late-18th century there was no known settlement on the site of modern-day Ramsbottom.

Originally part of the Forest of Rossendale, scattered settlements and farmsteads first emerged in the area during the Anglo-Saxon era, as the woodland was felled. It was only when mills and factories were built along the River Irwell – notably by Sir Robert Peel – that Ramsbottom began to take its current shape.

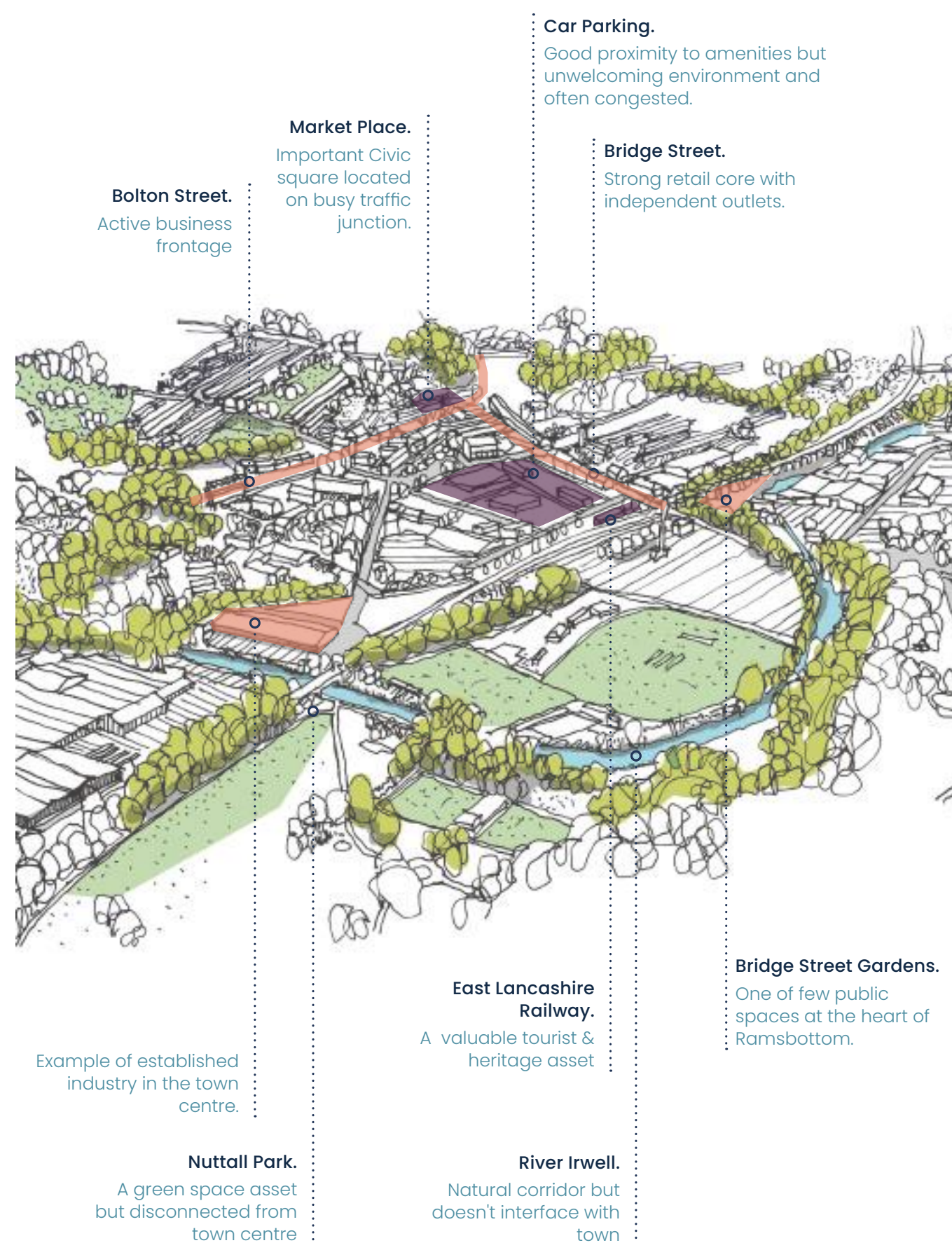
It still carries the hallmarks of these origins, from the dense pattern of terraced housing to the prominence of the railway line and the prevalence of industrial uses along the river's edge. Indeed, the town is remarkable for its relatively intact layout, form and scale, with many original features. The Ramsbottom of 1890 is still recognisable in the Ramsbottom of 2021 – right down to the regular whistle of the East Lancashire Railway. There are many steam trains operating as tourist attractions in the UK – but very few that stop so close to a town centre, much less a town centre that is still so evocative of that industrial period.

Bucking the trend of many post-industrial towns, Ramsbottom has remained relatively prosperous. Industry continues and the housing market is buoyant. There is a strong retail core but recent years have seen a move towards a food and drink offer and the evening economy. The town is also an apparent beneficiary of Manchester's growth as a creative capital, with many self-employed creatives and freelancers choosing Ramsbottom as a place to live. Local culture and creative industry is another differentiating factor.



Ramsbottom Today.

Ramsbottom as a Place



The Current Experience

Ramsbottom presents a strong sense of character brought about by the presence of heritage buildings, green space, independent retail and a visual connection to the surrounding countryside. These features are valuable assets to the town but improvements to the public realm and the infrastructure that helps people travel around is yet to meet its full potential.

Character areas

Immediately evident during baseline surveys was the variety of land uses within the town. At the heart of Ramsbottom, the historic core is evident in the form of retail and business frontages along Bridge Street and Bolton Street. These key thoroughfares come together at a busy crossroads overlooked by the civic space of Market Place. The prevalence of independent shops, and food establishments gives Ramsbottom a unique identity but the pavements which serve them are often narrow, steep and uneven, often making the environment challenging for pedestrians, especially when large vehicles regularly pass by.

South of the retail corridor and linked to a number of supermarkets, is a large tract of surface level car parking. Parking is located close to retailers but is disorganised, difficult to navigate and the poor quality surfacing is unwelcoming to visitors.

Industrial use is common place and in proximity to the retail core as well as residential areas. Buildings typically have larger footprints and areas of hardstanding, served by delivery vans and HGVs.

To the south of the town, Nuttall Park is a great outdoor recreational resource and a destination that draws in visitors. This and the River Irwell are important natural assets that contribute to the town's character, however both elements could be better connected to the town centre and engage with the community more successfully.

Green Infrastructure

Nuttall Park is Ramsbottom's primary greenspace and provides a range of facilities including tennis courts, bowling green and jogging track. There are swathes of other green assets and mature trees to the edge of the town centre but there's little provision of green features close to the heart of the town centre and as such, options for somewhere to stop, rest or enjoy a green setting are limited.

Bridge Street Gardens, next to the railway signal box is a quiet oasis and is enriched by the incorporation of public art. More should be made of this space.

Civic spaces

The town centre offers little in the way of inviting formal places that people can sit, meet, chat and potentially hold events. Market Place and the station frontage are areas of hard landscape but these are small and adjacent to busy road junctions meaning that they are not the most desirable environments in which to spend time. St Paul's Church gardens offers some local amenity.

Heritage and culture

The architecture in the heart of Ramsbottom has a sense of quality and history instilled by a series of listed buildings and

heritage assets. This includes the Civic Hall, Co op Theatre and the railway station, to name but a few. This character is acknowledged by the Conservation Area which covers much of the town centre.

There is also a notable presence of the arts which is physically manifested in the Irwell Sculpture Trail, the Tilted Vase and The River installations. In terms of built form, The Theatre Royal and Ramsbottom Library offer additional cultural opportunity to the community.

Strengths

- Characterful townscape.
- Notable architecture and heritage assets such as ELR station, Co op Hall, Civic Hall and Market Chambers.
- Proximity to countryside and outdoor pursuits.
- Independent shops and eateries.
- Proven ability to stage events.
- Nuttall Park and East Lancashire Railway as visitor attractions.

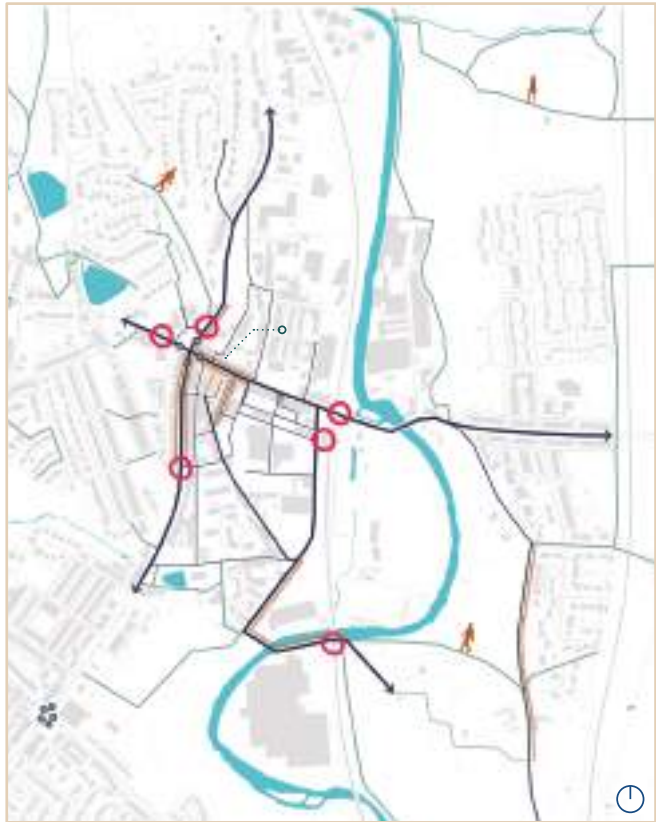
Issues

- Lack of civic space
- Lack of workspace
- Nuttall Park disconnected from town centre.
- Difficult to navigate around town centre
- Poor quality pavements

Movement



Regional Context



Pedestrian Movement



HGV & Vehicle Movement



Sustainable Transport

The Baseline Position

The way in which people and vehicles travel to, through and beyond a place has a huge bearing on how those people feel about a place and the character that is instilled upon it. Site visits, detailed analysis of existing data and stakeholder engagement provided the baseline position. It is noted that although movement and place have been identified as two key strands to Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan, they are naturally and inherently linked. A full set of baseline drawings are appended to this report.

Vehicle Movement

The infrastructure network is well served by routes that pass north-south but opportunities to travel east-west are limited, meaning that Ramsbottom is a key link across the valley. This includes Bury New Road / Bridge Street which acts as a critical link for vehicle movement for residents and businesses in the town. This often creates congestion in the town and this sometimes creates difficulties for pedestrian movement in the town centre.

This issue is compounded by the presence of a number of important businesses in the town which rely on HGV movement as part of their operations. Bury New Road/Bridge Street acts as a vital link for these businesses who require access to the motorway network.

Other local constraints such as a height restriction at Stubbins bridge and steep gradients and tight junction radii further limit the options available to transit of large vehicles.

Owing to the fact that pavements along Bridge Street are narrow,

the town centre often feels dominated by vehicles, including HGVs that need to access the essential businesses in the town. The scenario is made worse by the tight urban grain at the crossroads with Bolton Street, where this important gateway into Ramsbottom is congested with traffic and as such becomes an unappealing environment for pedestrians.

Regular congestion hotspots result in locally knowledgeable people short cutting through nearby residential streets, thus having a negative impact upon people and the street scene of those areas.

Pedestrian Movement

Ramsbottom has a compact town centre meaning that amenities are within short walking distances of each other. The lay of the land does however make for paths on steep gradients making journeys more challenging. Added to this narrow footpaths along Bridge Street and traffic congestion often make for an environment that feels dominated by vehicles.

Gateways are poorly announced for those arriving on foot and the connection between the town centre and Nuttall Park is particularly poor meaning that this green asset is not obvious.

In terms of strategic connections, the Irwell Sculpture Trail passes through the town and Rossendale Way is located on within surrounding countryside.

Sustainable Transport

Ramsbottom is served by buses which enable travel to Manchester, Bury and Bolton. However, the frequency of services is not optimum and was repeatedly raised as a barrier

to connectivity throughout stakeholder engagement.

In terms of rail travel, Ramsbottom is served by a train station but this is operated by East Lancashire Railway, a tourist attraction rather than a commuter line. As a valuable business and heritage asset, it brings day trippers to the town but does not provide transport for those wishing to go further afield by more sustainable modes.

For those travelling by bike, National Cycle Network 6 passes north-south through the town centre. While this infrastructure is welcome, practically the route follows busy roads which are often congested. Furthermore, signage and demarcation are limited making it difficult to navigate and unwelcoming, particularly for a novice cyclist.

Cycle stands are few and far between with only a couple outside the station and a single stand at the Leisure Centre.

Strengths

- Compact town centre.
- Car parking in proximity to shops.
- Within commutable distance of central Manchester.

Issues

- Congested highways often conflicting with pedestrian movement.
- Poor public transport.
- Difficult to navigate around the town.
- Poor sense of arrival for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike.
- Poor quality pavements

Car Parking



Existing provision

Car parks are provided by Bury Council and private landowners with the main cluster of spaces at the heart of the town centre behind Bridge Street, around supermarkets. While this provides visitors parking close to the town's main amenities, the car parks are hard to find, poorly signed and arranged. Furthermore they appear unsightly and sprawl across a large area of the town centre. It is questionable whether this is the best use of land in the heart of Ramsbottom. The drawing opposite shows the location of car parks with further detail included in the appendix.

- Council Owned Car Park
- Private Car Park

Existing Parking Provision



An Established Challenge

Engagement with residents, businesses, visitors and Council Officers has on the whole identified parking as an area of concern.

So, in 2015, in response to concerns from businesses and traders, Bury Council commissioned a series of parking surveys and an online parking survey to fully understand parking in Ramsbottom.

The online survey received over 200 responses with almost 30% of these stating that insufficient parking was the biggest issue in Ramsbottom. A further circa 30% stated that parking on residential streets and/or dangerous/inconsiderate parking were the main problems. Circa 11% said that difficulties parking due to market activities and employees parking in the spaces were the biggest problems.

Only 18% of respondents stated there were no parking issues in Ramsbottom.

When asked what would improve the situation responses included

- More parking
- Restricting all day parking by workers
- Pay and display
- Park and ride facilities,
- Better enforcement
- Implementation of resident parking schemes.
- The introduction of a 3 hour short stay parking regime on all Council owned car parks;
- Investigation regarding the possibility of creating a long stay car park on the periphery of the town centre;
- Increasing on-street parking from 60 minutes to 2 hours;
- Engagement with residents regarding the possibility of residents only parking schemes for those streets most susceptible to non-residential parking; and
- A review of Town Centre signage and provision of clear directional signs to long and short stay car parks.

The parking surveys that were commissioned counted how many cars were parked in each car park at certain times of the day and how long they stayed. The study area included all town centre car parks including private

and public car parks, albeit there was some delineation between areas.

The average stay was just 2 hours 23 minutes. However, the average stay in some car parks such as the Council owned market car park and the Civic Centre car park was significantly longer. The survey also revealed that circa 20% of users parked for 4 hours or more and circa 10% parked for 6 hours or more. The same pattern was found on a Saturday and a Sunday. It is considered that users staying such a long time were in some cases likely to be employees, which is further evidenced by the fact that most long stay users arrived early in the morning.

In response to the surveys and questionnaire, it is understood that some recommendations were suggested that would see:

- The introduction of a 3 hour short stay parking regime on all Council owned car parks;
- Investigation regarding the possibility of creating a long stay car park on the periphery of the town centre;
- Increasing on-street parking from 60 minutes to 2 hours;
- Engagement with residents regarding the possibility of residents only parking schemes for those streets most susceptible to non-residential parking; and
- A review of Town Centre signage and provision of clear directional signs to long and short stay car parks.

For a variety of reasons, many of the recommendations were never implemented.

Recent Activity

In 2021 as part of The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan, Curtins undertook a number of site visits to review car parking and held discussions with all key stakeholders. The conclusion of this exercise is that many of the parking issues that were present in 2015 remain and parking is a major concern for local residents, businesses and visitors.

For clarity, there are still no parking charges or time restrictions at any of the Council owned publicly available car parks and as a result, one single bay can still be occupied by a single user for the whole day. Whilst this may be convenient for employees, ramblers or commuters, it is likely reducing the capacity available to visitors and other town centre users and is not an efficient way to maximise usage of the asset. The lack of parking for visitors in turn impacts on nearby residential streets which are used for parking at the detriment of local residents.

Strengths

- Car parking in proximity to shops.
- No parking charges.

Issues

- Car parks poorly signed and difficult to find.
- Car parks often at capacity.
- Few charging points for electric vehicles.

Early Stakeholder Engagement

Work Completed to Date

An integral part of getting to know the town was early engagement with a range of stakeholders.

The objective was to introduce the consultancy/officer team, outline the scope and outputs of the commission and promote initial dialogue around key themes, issues and opportunities. The opinions of key stakeholders provided a 'baseline' level of raw information which guided the conceptual phase of the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan.

Key stakeholders for were:

- Political (Ward Councillors and the local MP)
- Commercial (Ramsbottom Town Centre Board and representatives and local businesses)
- Community representatives

The early sessions helped to paint a picture of Ramsbottom today and get a sense of local aspiration for the future.

The format of engagement was predominantly virtual workshops where the consultant team presented their thoughts and then gathered feedback in a open forum. In parallel with these interactive sessions, stakeholder opinion was also gathered via phone and email.

A summary of common themes are noted opposite, many of which correlate with the strengths and issues outlined on the preceding pages.

Culture & Heritage

- Strong fabric of listed buildings
- Community have a vested interest in buildings such as The Co op Hall and Civic Hall

Pedestrians

- Narrow pavements along Bridge Street.
- Temporary closure of Square Street has been well received.
- Few bike stands and cycle routes poorly signed/demarcated.
- Space to gather is limited.

Sustainable Transport

- Frequency of bus service is poor.
- East Lancashire Railway is an asset to town
- Difficult to reach Manchester and neighbouring towns.

First Impressions

- Poor sense of arrival. Hard to know when you've entered the town.
- Difficult to navigate on foot or by car.

The Offer

- Great ranging independent retail and food offer.
- Parking close to shops.
- Good connection to rural surroundings.
- Community spirit reflected in varied events programme. Struggled through pandemic and must be reinstated.
- Nuttall Park is a great green space resource but disconnected from town centre.

Car Parking

- Car parks hard to find and signage is poor
- Free to park with no time restriction. Change to these principles will be contentious.
- Car parks are often full so it can be hard to find a space.

Vehicles

- Congested town centre, often dominated by HGVs.
- Poor sense of arrival. Hard to know when you've entered the town.

The Future

- Short term plans and ideas must sit within a long term vision.
- Ramsbottom needs to think big.



The Vision.

A Place Making Narrative for Ramsbottom

A Unique Place

Ramsbottom has several notable strengths that serve to distinguish it from other places:

- A characterful townscape, with beautiful architecture and quaint, walkable streets. It is a picturesque place.
- A cluster of high quality independent shops, restaurants, café and pubs.
- Easy access to the countryside of the Irwell valley.
- A large and high quality local park.
- The East Lancashire Railway.
- A rich grassroots cultural community of artists, musicians and performers.
- A vibrant night time economy.
- A strong, cohesive and supportive local community.
- A proven ability to stage periodic events of scale, quality and imagination (e.g. chocolate festival, music festival, food markets and the World Black Pudding Throwing Championships)

It is qualities like these that make Ramsbottom such a popular destination for visitors and such an appealing place to live.

Set against these strengths, however, are a number of challenges that prevent the town from fully crystallising its economic opportunities.

- Traffic congestion in the town centre – with such a high volume of vehicles – detracts from its sense of place and identity.
- High levels of local car traffic, encouraged by the concentration of supermarkets in the town centre, and abundance of free car parking.
- Lack of good quality workspace for home, ‘hybrid’ and freelance workers – a group that has grown as a result of Covid 19 In due course, there will also be a need for ‘grow on’ space to keep successful small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ramsbottom.
- Lack of a large and adaptable outdoor civic space in which to host events that can be disruptive to local traffic. Market Square is small, while Bridge Street events are too disruptive to regular traffic.
- Under-provision of arts and cultural infrastructure – e.g. theatre, music venue, art gallery – especially of a community scale to encourage more grassroots participation.
- A pedestrian route to Nuttall Park that is poor and unsightly, discouraging active travel.

The Future for Ramsbottom

Ramsbottom owes its existence, and much of its present look, layout and form, to a 19th century factory system. Industrialists came, built mills on the river, and homes for their workers. That was the direction of cause-and-effect – Ramsbottom as a place to live was the consequence of Ramsbottom as a place to work.

A gradual reversal of that process was already underway, when it was massively accelerated by the pandemic and its impact on lifestyles and travel-to-work patterns. If the notion of a fully remote, work-from-home workforce is unlikely, unhealthy and probably undesirable, we are certainly seeing a shift towards ‘hybrid’ lifestyles where workers have the flexibility to strike a home/work balance that suits them best.

The assumption that companies must migrate toward large city centres as they grow has also been relaxed. Start-up companies that begin at the kitchen table and grow into formal offices can now stay closer to home. There is no longer a pressing need to be central and to be physically visible, when so much of our communication is now virtual.

In this new paradigm, the direction of cause-and-effect is different – where we work is a consequence of where we live.

There is already evidence of this happening in

Ramsbottom. The concentration of self-employed freelancers is higher in Ramsbottom than it is elsewhere in Greater Manchester, which points to the fact that ‘footloose’ and nomadic workers are already choosing to base themselves in Ramsbottom.

The same can be said about Ramsbottom as a visitor destination. Its principal attractor is a picturesque townscape full of character – a place that is reminiscent of a bygone age – that is punctuated by independent shops and restaurants of quality. This is what makes Ramsbottom the most popular stop for the East Lancashire Railway. But it too is the product of a local population that takes pride in the place and supports local traders. Ramsbottom is a great place to visit because it is a great place to live.

Acceptance of this principle – especially at a time of limited resources – allows for a measure of prioritisation. Focus on the needs of residents and their quality of life and, by extension, Ramsbottom will be a better place for business and better place to visit.

Historically, communities came to live in Ramsbottom because the factories made it a place to work; in the future, people will come to visit and work in Ramsbottom because the community has made it a great place to live.





Recommendations

This narrative naturally points to a number of specific recommendations that could inform the evolving Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan.

Create strong civic space in the town centre

Every town needs a place to celebrate and congregate. A place for people to meet, for children to play and teenagers to hang out. It needs a fit-for-purpose place to stage events and activities of different type and scale. Ramsbottom has the resource and pedigree for developing a strong annual events calendar, but lacks the physical infrastructure to fully exploit this opportunity.

Market Square is attractive and well-designed, but it is small and awkwardly located at a busy intersection. Larger events must therefore spill into Bridge Street, which is hugely disruptive to local traffic, or migrate to other sites like the cricket ground or Nuttall Park.

There is potential to develop a larger and fit-for-purpose civic space, ideally on land behind Railway Street, which would 'soften' what is currently a jarring transition from the picturesque experience of Bridge Street to the more functional utility of supermarket car parks.

Furthermore, this space could be enhanced if 'framed' at one end by a modestly scaled building of civic character and community use. This could host the types of activities that currently use the Civic Hall, releasing that building for conversion to office use, which is more fitting in that location.

Pedestrianisation

Square Street was pedestrianised as a response to the pandemic and we understand that this was welcomed by residents, appreciated by visitors, and helpful to local traders. It allowed for restaurants to 'spill out' with an al fresco offer that is not possible on Bridge Street which is far too narrow and busy.

This was a makeshift response to the pressures of lock down, but was a valuable experiment in the benefits of pedestrianisation. The change can ideally be made permanent and, indeed, extended as much as possible to neighbouring streets.

If a new civic square is developed, the pedestrianisation of these 'lanes' between Bridge Street and this new space will be even more

important.

Reclaim the River Irwell

A potent symbol of the suggested vision is the River Irwell and the opportunity to 'reclaim' it for residents and visitors.

A picturesque river flows through the middle of the town, but access to it is limited and intermittent. This is itself the legacy of a factory system that placed industrial uses and railway lines at the river's edge. Today, waterfronts are far more valuable as a natural amenity for the enjoyment of residents, workers and visitors. Riverfront areas and green spaces have time and again been shown to contribute to health and wellbeing, notably by encouraging active travel and improving people's enjoyment of the outdoors.

There is a clear opportunity in Ramsbottom to reclaim the riverfront for public access, especially through redevelopment of the Mondi site, but –

ideally by completing the riverfront promenade from Bridge Street Gardens all the way to Nuttall Park, along the boundary of the cricket club. This 'blue ribbon' could potentially extend further up the valley to the leisure centre and beyond.

In addition to reclaiming a natural feature and beautiful asset for the town, this could make a material impact in other areas. It creates a more appealing route into and through the town centre, encouraging more active travel, with resulting reduction in local traffic and improvements to health and wellbeing.





Flexible Workspace

The suggested vision is predicated on the idea that in a post-Covid, digital economy, more inward investment decisions will be driven by quality of life perceptions. Ramsbottom has the qualities to compete in this market.

But even freelancers and micro-businesses need space to work. Lack of suitable workspace is a significant constraint to Ramsbottom's economic development and diversification.

Some level of new workspace is needed. Much of this demand is 'latent', however, and difficult to verify until the offer is provided. We therefore suggest that the market is tested and validated, for example through the refurbishment of existing buildings, in whole or in part. These might include a repurposed City Hall or a reconfigured library.

We understand that institutional investors and other asset managers have been responding to the large post-pandemic changes in working patterns through the development of satellite 'hubs' in suburban locations – giving people the opportunity to work near home, if not from home. This kind of opportunity would be ideal for a place like Ramsbottom and should be investigated.

Relocation of car parking

As they are covered extensively elsewhere, we exclude – for the purposes of this paper – any specific measures around parking and transport, except to make the following general point: delivering some of the measures described above

(e.g. civic space, pedestrianisation) will invariably displace some of the existing town centre spaces.

This is already an emotive topic and source of frustration for town centre visitors and workers. Improvement of the central core would thus need to be accompanied by the re-provision of at least some parking, ideally near to, but not within this central area. The fallow land around the leisure centre is ideally located for this and should be explored as an opportunity.

Longer Term Concepts

To its credit, Ramsbottom has held onto a number of important industrial and logistics businesses – and their jobs – where other post-industrial towns have lost them all. This is of huge benefit to the economy of the town.

The downside, however, is the incongruence of a semi-rural town that is now best known as a great place to live and visit but still retains a strong industrial base providing important local jobs for residents.

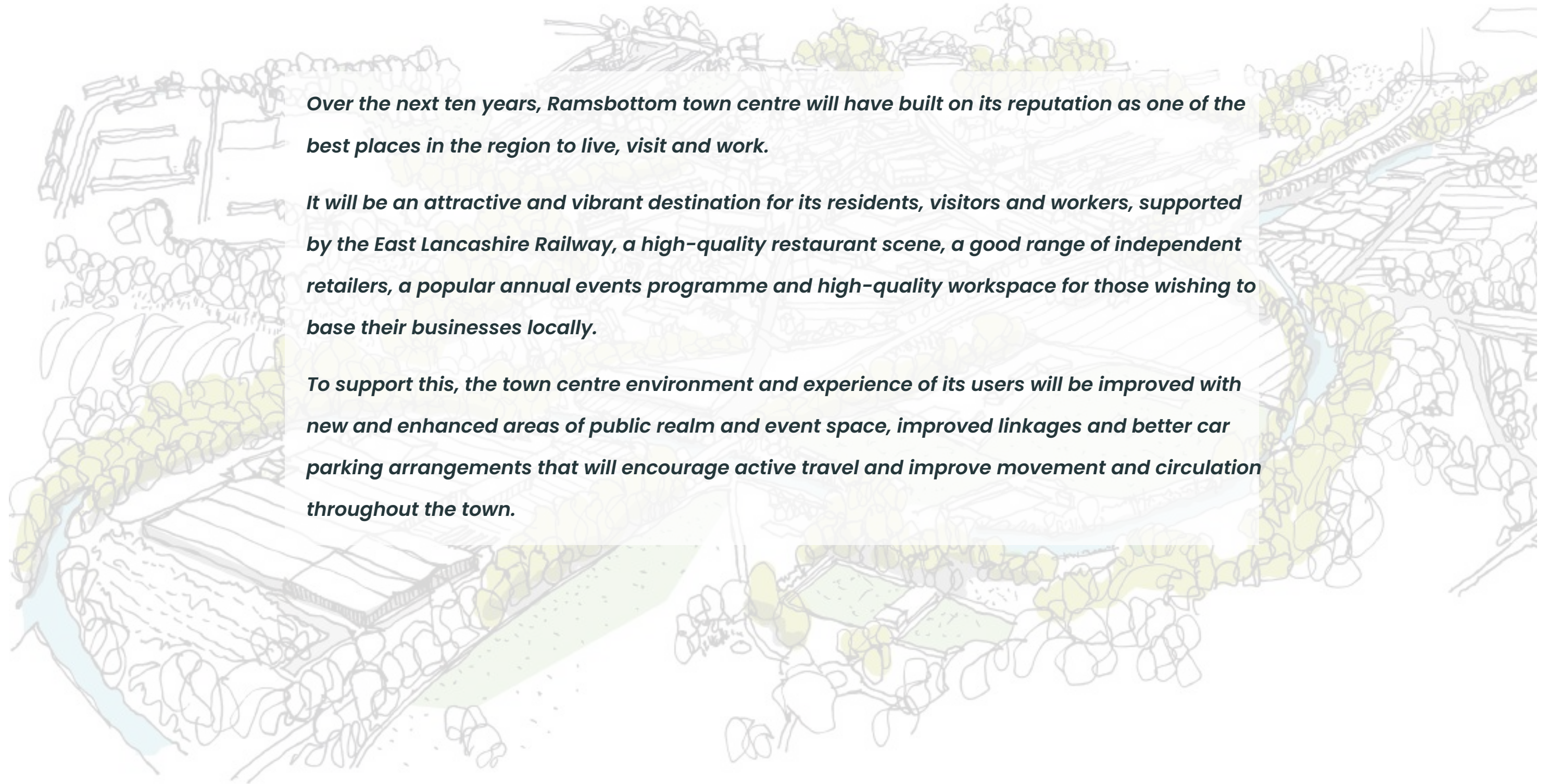
There needs to be further consideration as to traffic movements within the town centre to reduce congestion and the conflict this has with pedestrians.

The Vision for Ramsbottom

Over the next ten years, Ramsbottom town centre will have built on its reputation as one of the best places in the region to live, visit and work.

It will be an attractive and vibrant destination for its residents, visitors and workers, supported by the East Lancashire Railway, a high-quality restaurant scene, a good range of independent retailers, a popular annual events programme and high-quality workspace for those wishing to base their businesses locally.

To support this, the town centre environment and experience of its users will be improved with new and enhanced areas of public realm and event space, improved linkages and better car parking arrangements that will encourage active travel and improve movement and circulation throughout the town.





**Place Management &
Movement Plan.**

Strategic Objectives

To achieve the Vision set out by this plan, Ramsbottom must:

Be a better place for the community by:

- Providing workspace for those who wish to base their business locally.
- Supporting provision of local amenities via independent retail.
- Improving pedestrian legibility.
- Encouraging people to leave their cars at home for shorter journeys but provide a framework of parking for those who need it.
- Supporting sustainable means of travel.
- Creating a network of external places where the community to come together, both formally (eg organised outdoor market) or informally (eg coffee on a bench with friends).
- Supporting the longevity of the town's existing heritage assets.
- Supporting local desire for community events.

Improve visitor experience by:

- Better advertising points of arrival.
- Reducing dominance of vehicles on key roads in the core town centre.
- Improving the environment for pedestrians.
- Creating infrastructure to host outdoor events.
- Making parking work more effectively for a range of users and easier to find.
- Helping to support independent retail and restaurants/cafes as a unique selling point.
- Encouraging greening through tree planting and creation of new outdoor spaces.
- Strengthening connections to natural assets such as the river and surrounding countryside.
- Better connecting existing tourist assets (eg East Lancashire Railway and Nuttall Park) to the core town centre.



The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan sets out a series of potential projects to implement change within the external environment. These include:

Public Spaces

- A new civic space in the heart of the town centre as a place for local people to gather and a location to host events.
- Changes to the junction of Railway Street and Bridge Street to create an enhanced eastern gateway.
- The permanent pedestrianisation of Square Street to support the independent restaurant offer following the success of the recent temporary road closure in response to Covid restrictions.



Active Travel

The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan will encourage sustainable travel by:

- Improving the established National Cycleway Network by rerouting along less congested roads and providing a better connection between the town centre and Nuttall Park.
- Creating new active travel corridors that connect to and engage with the river and/or the East Lancashire Railway.



Car Parking

To strike a better balance between all users, The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan proposes to:

- Introduce time restrictions on council owned car parks in the core of the town centre.
- Provide long stay parking at the leisure centre to increase capacity for short stay spaces in the town centre core.
- Increase provision of electric vehicle charging points.
- Introduce resident's parking schemes if needed.

Longer Term

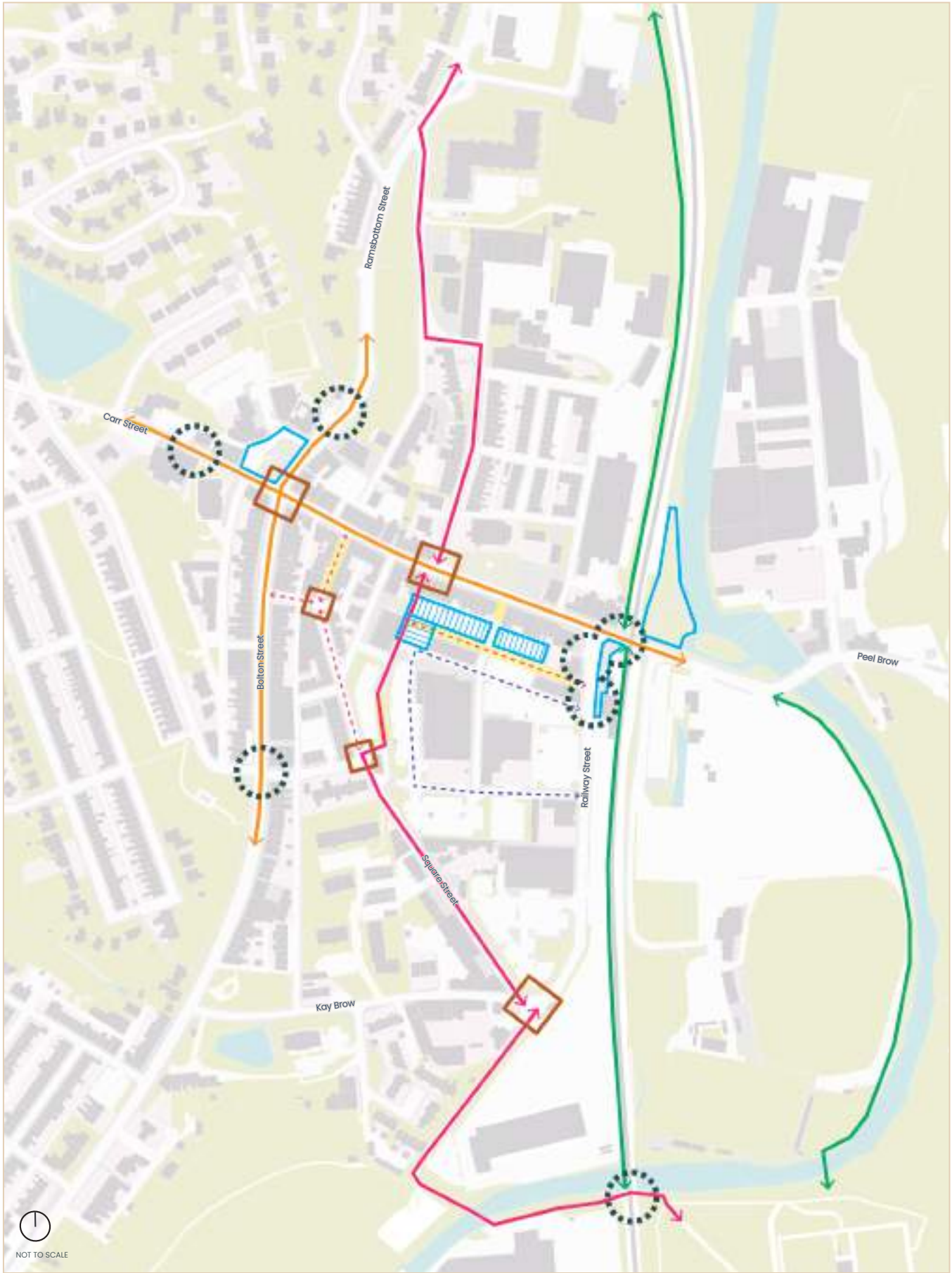
- The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan identifies a number of projects that would require further detailed consideration. The conflict between pedestrian and traffic movement on Bridge Street, for example, is something that has been highlighted as an issue but this requires more detailed survey work to determine whether public realm improvements can help to address this.

Business Support

To make Ramsbottom a better place to live and work, The Plan:

- Supports proposals that provide a viable future for council owned assets.
- Supports cultural development

Concept Plan



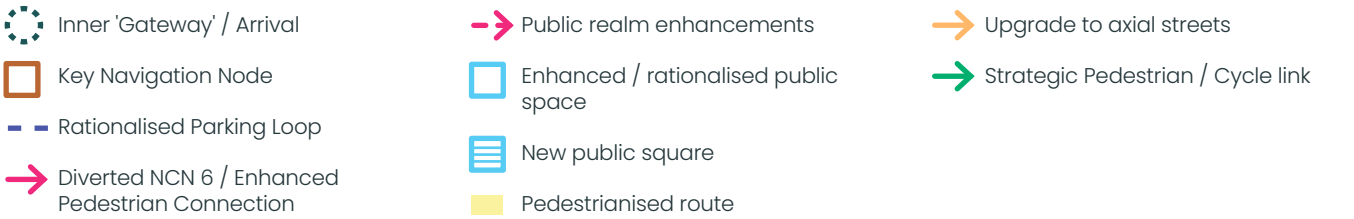
Initial Ideas

The Concept Plan illustrates how changes to the town's streets and spaces could help meet The Plan's Strategic Objectives. These ideas are shown diagrammatically opposite and in 3D form above.

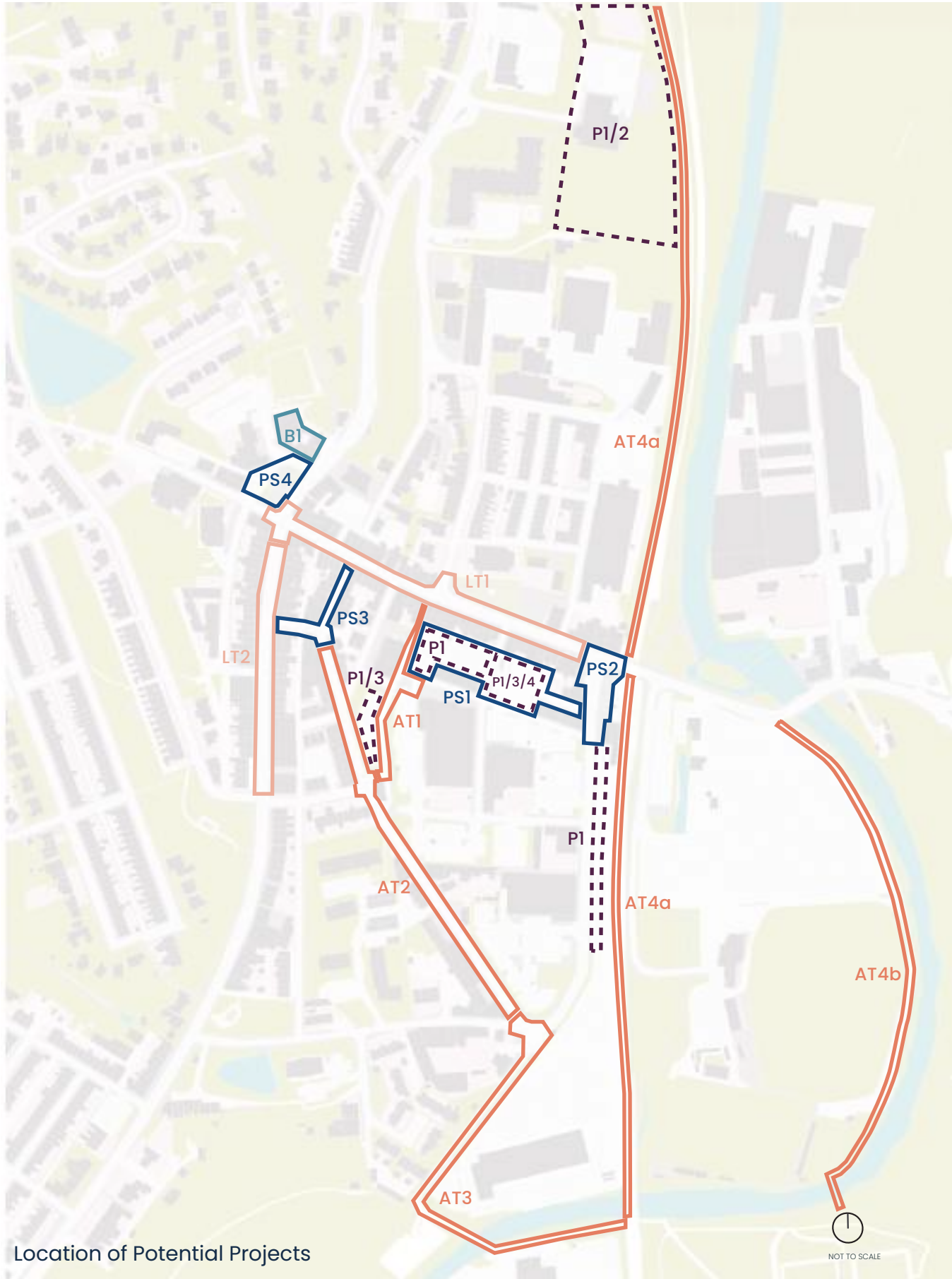
Key themes are:

- Enhancement to key arrival points when approaching from the north, south, east and west. This aims to aid navigation and create a sense of identity.
- Better announcement of navigational nodes for motorists and pedestrians.
- The rerouting of National Cycle Network Route 6 to provide cyclists (and pedestrians) with a more legible and appealing journey on quieter streets. This will also strengthen the wider north-south strategic link through the town centre and improve connectivity with Nuttall Park.

- Upgrading of public realm along the key axial routes of Bridge Street and Bolton Street. This could involve enhancement of surface materials, widening of pavements, where opportunities exist, changes to shop frontages or tree planting.
- Creation of a new public square on car parking to the rear of Bridge Street. This will provide a valuable space for the community to gather and to host events. It will be a more inviting setting for retail and leisure uses.
- Pedestrianisation of some streets to build upon the recent success of al fresco dining at Square Street and support pedestrian flows associated with the new public square.



Potential Projects



Location of Potential Projects

Making it Happen

The Concept Plan is explored in greater depth using a series of linked projects that could be completed in isolation and/or logically phased into more manageable chunks.

The projects are high level proposals and concepts which reflect on discussions with stakeholders and the consultation process and which aim to meet with the objectives of the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan and the place narrative.

As such, all of the proposals will require further detailed work and surveys where necessary, which would be subject to consultation before being progressed.

Projects fall under one of the four following categories:

- Public Space
- Active Travel
- Car Parking
- Longer Term Concepts

Each project includes a plan proposal and "artist's impression" to illustrate the idea. This is accompanied by written commentary to explain the benefits to the town and how the project might be brought to fruition.

- Public Space (PS) Project
- Active Travel (AT) Project
- Parking (P) Project

The Projects

Public Space Projects

These projects establish a network of better connected streets and spaces by improving existing infrastructure and creating new focal spaces. In addition to supporting local pedestrian movement, these interventions will better announce a visitor's arrival into the town and create a stronger sense of place at the heart of the community.

Active Travel Projects

These projects aim to support transit through the town via sustainable modes. They fundamentally review the way in which people travel on foot and by bike from Nuttall Park in the south to the Leisure Centre in the north.

They consider how the existing cycle network may be rerouted and improved so that the more congested roads are avoided and conflict between modes is minimised. Potential new routes are also identified which seek to create new active travel corridors that provide a more appealing environment.

Car Parking

These projects seek to find a better balance for all users. This includes people that require provision on a regular basis (eg employees and local shoppers) as well as those who visit the

town more occasionally (eg day trippers). Within both of these categories of user, the strategy for parking must also accommodate the requirements of short and long stay visitors.

Longer Term

Realising that some projects have a more complex set of challenges than others, some of the proposals are therefore considered to be longer term concepts.

Public Space Project (PS1): New Public Square

Description

Creation of a new public space at the heart of the community.

Objectives achieved

- Creates a network of external places where the community to come together, both formally or informally.
- Supports desire for more community events and creates infrastructure to host outdoor events.
- Better connection to ELR.



Benefits to the town

- A focal place for gathering and enjoying outdoor space.
- A location to host events without the need for highway diversions.
- Dual purpose space that could be used for parking and public amenity (see diagrams below).
- Greening through planting of new street trees.
- More presentable interface to rear of Bridge Street properties.
- Could include a cycling hub or stands.
- Parking rationalised.

Making it happen

- Integration of a robust parking strategy including mitigation for loss of spaces.
- Continuation of servicing to rear of Bridge Street and adjacent areas.
- Detailed design to be developed including engagement with key stakeholders and further consultation.
- Detailed design to fully consider traffic and pedestrian routes.
- Support for change of use.
- Approval of closure of Union Street to vehicles.
- Provision of storage for temporary market stalls.

Linked projects

- Eastern Gateway
- Upper Link
- Long Stay Parking

Phasing opportunities

Public space could be implemented independently of car park consolidation and changes to NCN6.

Deliverability

The table below indicates the way in which provision of spaces may be impacted by the proposals.

Scenario	Spaces
Existing	76
a) Square in use	40
b) Square not in use (parking permitted)	70
c) Big event (using square & car park)	0

If the square is flexible to accommodate different uses, the reduction in car park capacity will vary between approximately 0-76 spaces.



Scenario a) Public Square hosting market

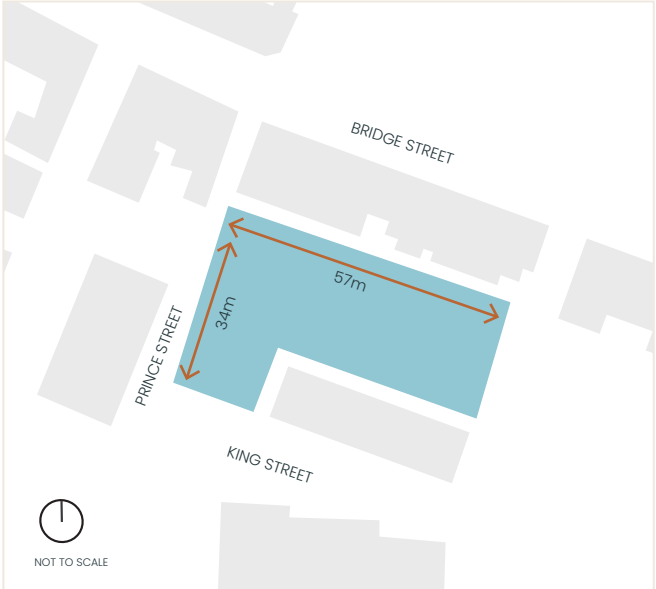


Scenario b) Public Square with car parking

Public Space Project (PS1): New Public Square

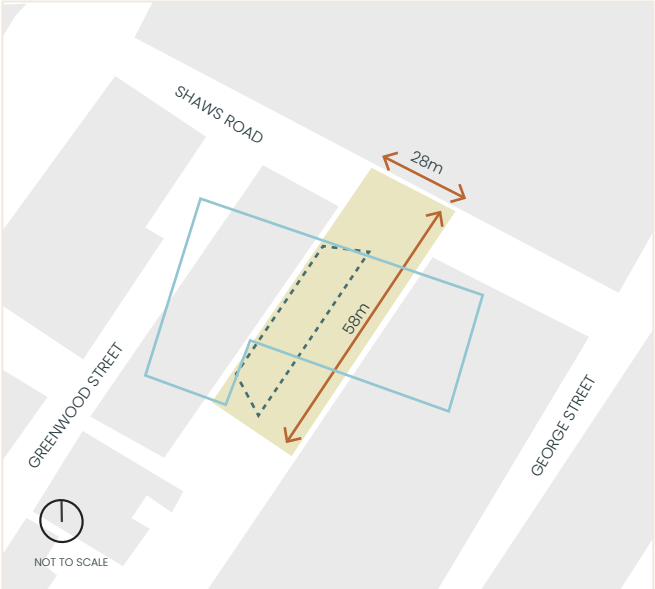
Space Comparison

To help understand the scale of space that has been suggested as part of this potential project, a spatial comparison has been made with a number of other town centre squares.



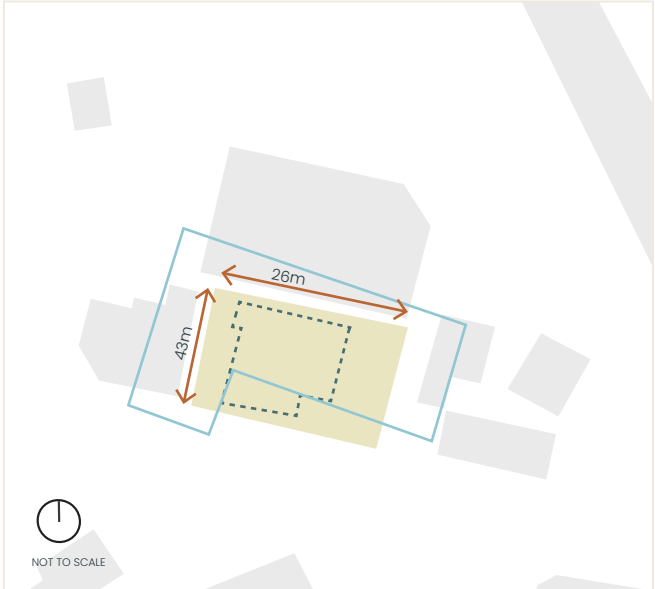
Proposed Market Square, Ramsbottom

1574 m²



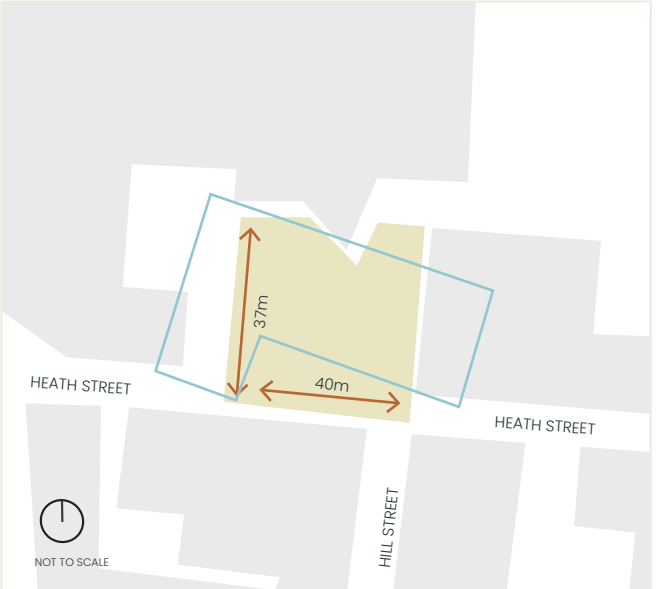
Altrincham Market, Greater Manchester

1236 m²



Rawtenstall Market, Rawtenstall

1033 m²



Lyceum Square, Crewe

1623 m²



Public Space Project (PS1): New Public Square



Artist's Impression - New Public Square

- 1 Space for a temporary market
- 2 Clusters of street furniture
- 3 Street trees and grilles as a feature
- 4 Greening through specimen trees
- 5 Welcoming after dark



Public Space Project (PS2): Eastern Gateway

Description

Upgrade public realm to announce arrival for those arriving via Peel Brow or the East Lancashire Railway.

Objectives achieved

- Better advertises points of arrival for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Improves pedestrian legibility.
- Reducing dominance of vehicles
- Encouraging greening through tree planting



Benefits to the town

- Gateway for those arriving via Peel Brow.
- Sense of arrival for those alighting the ELR.
- Strengthens pedestrian connection along Bridge Street. This is of particular relevance if Mondi site developed for residential use.
- Gives identity to public realm outside ELR and contributes to network of usable, outdoor spaces within town centre.
- Offers enhanced cycling facilities for visitors.
- Creates larger outdoor space for pub.
- Greening through the planting of street trees.
- Improvements to existing outdoor public space taking advantage of the river frontage.

Making it happen

- Detailed feasibility work and engagement to understand how the proposals would ensure that HGV manoeuvres and logistics would not be impacted
- Detailed design and consultation required
- Utilities survey to avoid conflict between underground services and new trees.

Linked projects

- New Public Square

Phasing opportunities

Interventions to east and west side of Railway Street could be implemented independently of one another.

Deliverability

This project is connected to Union Street and so it's development should be considered in the context of changes there. A consistent materials palette would ensure continuity across all three projects and visually link them together.

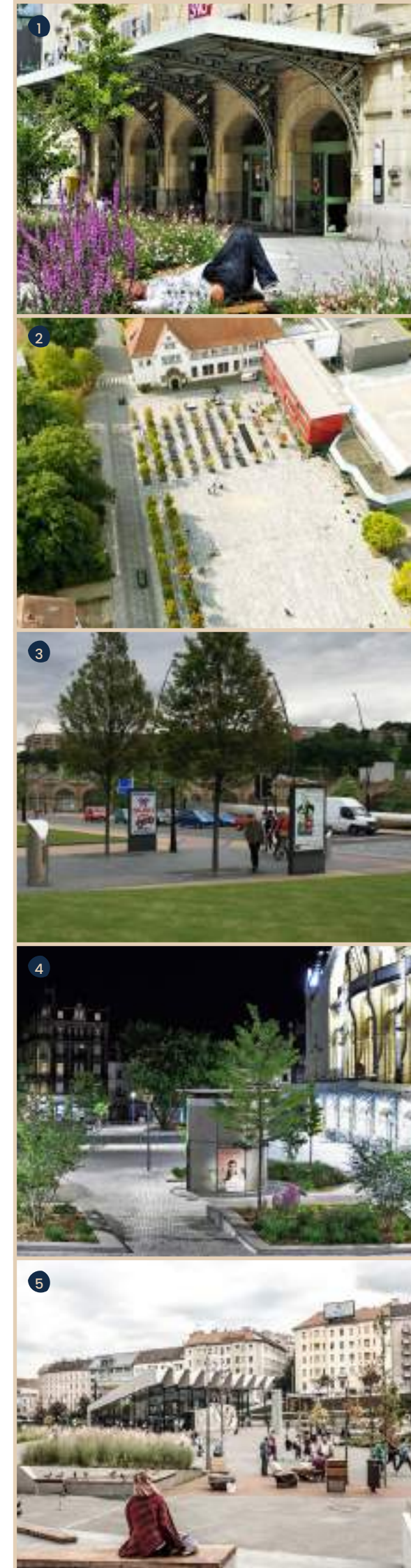
Public Space Project (PS2): Eastern Gateway



1
Bridge Street Gardens

- 1 Attractive green entrance to the town
- 2 Pedestrian and cyclist centric space
- 3 Designated crossing routes
- 4 Welcoming after dark
- 5 Space for sitting / meeting / greeting

Artist's Impression - Eastern Gateway



Public Space Project (PS3): Square Street

Description

Permanent pedestrianisation of upper part of Square Street to accommodate outdoor dining.

Objectives achieved

- Promotes independent retail and restaurants/cafes as a unique selling point.



Pedestrianised zone.
Single surface with high quality paving to create a permanent environment for outdoor dining.

Pedestrian priority square.
Raised table and resurfacing to complement finish to pedestrianised zone. Creates a relationship between uses on both sides of the street. Greening via the planting of street trees.

Benefits to the town

- Supports evening economy, making permanent the temporary closure of Square Street to vehicles.
- Creates a safe space for pedestrians and diners.
- Establishes a connection between restaurants and theatre.

Making it happen

- Support required from residential neighbours in terms of change of use, noise and servicing.
- Support required from businesses that use Square Street for drop off.
- Blue light access in the event of emergency.
- Drainage implications of a single surface.
- Detailed design with input from stakeholders and further consultation.

Linked projects

- Lower Link

Phasing opportunities

Could be divided into three smaller pieces.

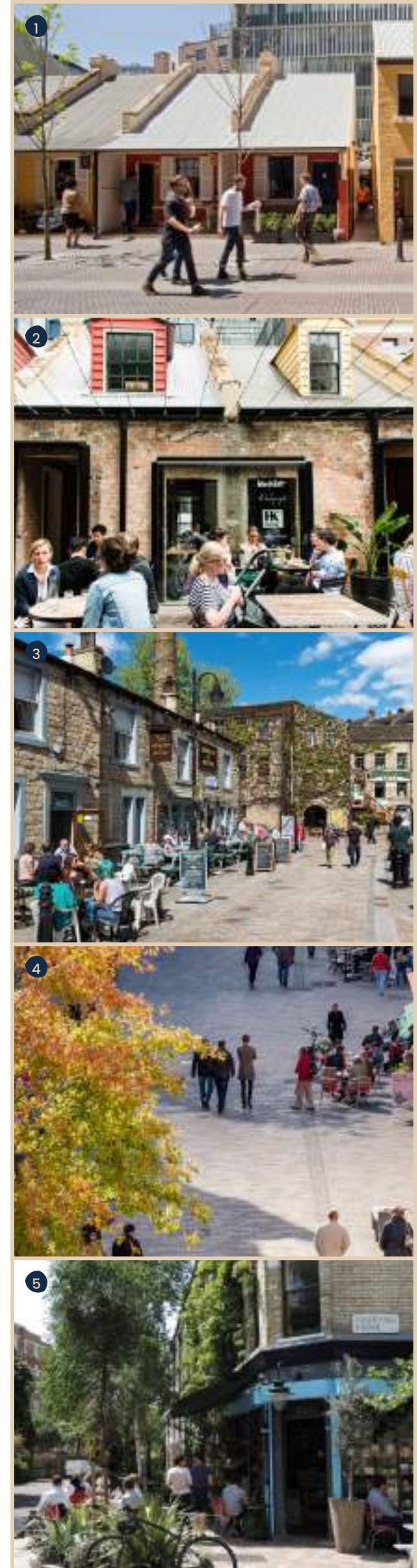
Deliverability

The success of the temporary closure of the street should set a positive precedent for the change to become permanent. Consultation with residents and businesses and further exploration of servicing requirements is required to understand how the street will be maintained and operate if closure is formalised.



Artist's Impression – Square Street

- 1 Open walking space for pedestrians
- 2 Overhead feature lighting
- 3 Considered material palette
- 4 Uniform flush surfacing
- 5 Space for spill out seating / cafe



Public Space Project (PS4): Market Place

Description

Small scale enhancements to hard and soft landscape to refresh this valuable civic space.

Objectives achieved

- Creating a network of external places where the community to come together, both formally or informally.
- Better advertising points of arrival for pedestrians and cyclists.



Benefits to the town

- Enhancement to important gateway from the north.
- Provides valuable amenity space for neighbouring businesses and supports the concept of outdoor dining.
- Improves biodiversity through the introduction of new soft landscape.

Making it happen

- Develop a palette of materials fitting of the setting.
- Liaise with street cleansing and maintenance teams.
- Investigate the potential for a community group to maintain planting.

Phasing opportunities

This could be a stand alone project or bolted onto projects associated with the adjoining Bridge Street or Bolton Street.

Deliverability

Interventions in this area are small scale. The existing space successfully accommodates the Tilted Urn and provides a civic location on an important gateway into Ramsbottom, Proposed changes serve as a short term refresh to predominantly soft landscape. The existing change in level to the rear of the space creates enclosure and this should be retained. In addition, a refresh of furniture would also bring new life to the space.

Longer term, user experience of this space could be significantly improved with a better balance between pedestrian and vehicle traffic. At this point, the way in which the civic space integrates with the road could be revisited so that pedestrian activity took greater priority.

Active Travel Project (AT1): Upper Link

Description

Enhanced link between car parks and Bridge Street. This forms the upper part of a potential diversion of National Cycle Network 6, strengthening link between town centre and Nuttall Park.

Objectives achieved

- Encourages people to leave their cars at home for shorter journeys.
- Improves pedestrian legibility.
- Betters connecting with Nuttall Park.



Benefits to the town

- Better quality, more legible route from Nuttall Park.
- Diversion of National Cycle Network Route 6 away from the more congested Railway Street and Bridge Street.
- Connects to proposed public square which could host a cycle hub.
- Potential for Brewery to extend their outdoor seating offer.
- Greening through the planting of street trees.

Making it happen

- Partial closure of Prince Street.
- Change of layout/priority on remainder of Prince Street.
- Conservation Area consent for parts of the proposal.
- Buy in from residents of Square Street.

Linked projects

- New Public Square
- Lower Link

Phasing opportunities

Route could be implemented in stages to tie in with delivery of adjacent projects.

Deliverability

This project could create a short term link to improve the connection between Nuttall Park and the heart of the town centre. This could be implemented ahead of, or in parallel with an alternative strategic connection that utilises the railway or river corridor.

As a residential area with on street parking, the introduction of an enhanced active travel route, should not compromise the environment for people who live in the locality. Further survey work is needed to understand the intricacies of how the street functions now and the feasibility of accommodating different users.



Artist's Impression - Upper Link

- 1 Harmonious shared surface
- 2 Increased cycle parking
- 3 Direct movement for cyclists
- 4 Increased street tree planting
- 5 Seamless surface treatments



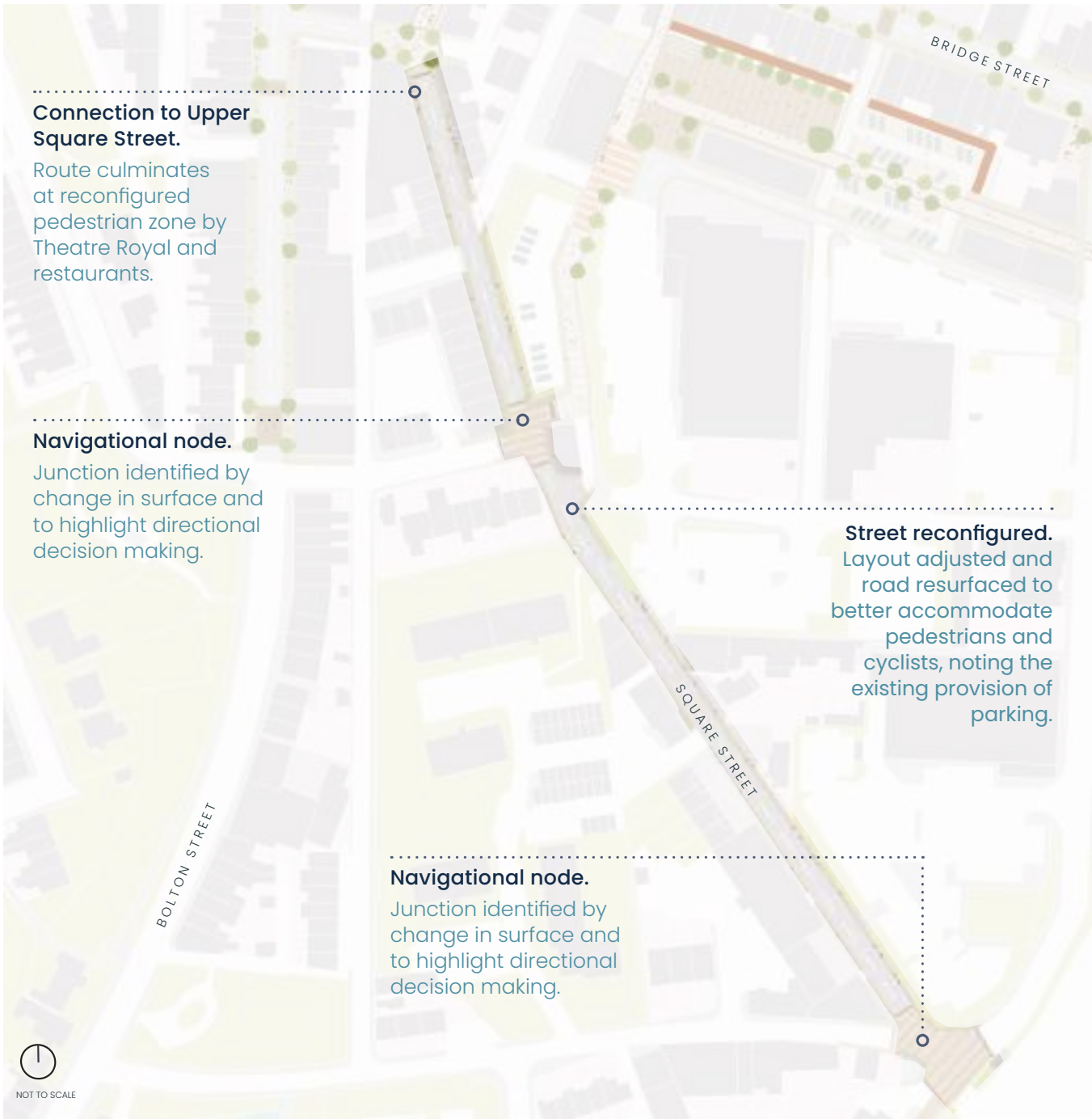
Active Travel Project (AT2): Lower Link

Description

Diversion of National Cycle Network 6 to strengthen connection between town centre and Nuttall Park.

Objectives achieved

- Encourages people to leave their cars at home for shorter journeys.
- Improves pedestrian legibility.
- Better connections with Nuttall Park.



Benefits to the town

- Better quality, more legible route to and from Nuttall Park.
- Diversion of National Cycle Network Route 6 away from the more congested Railway Street and Bridge Street.
- Connects to proposed upper parts of town including Theatre Royal, Square Street restaurants and retail to Bolton Street.

Making it happen

- Conservation Area consent for parts of the proposal.
- Buy in from residents of Square Street in terms of increased activity and adjustment/removal of on street parking.

Linked projects

- Upper Link
- Square Street
- Nuttall Park Link

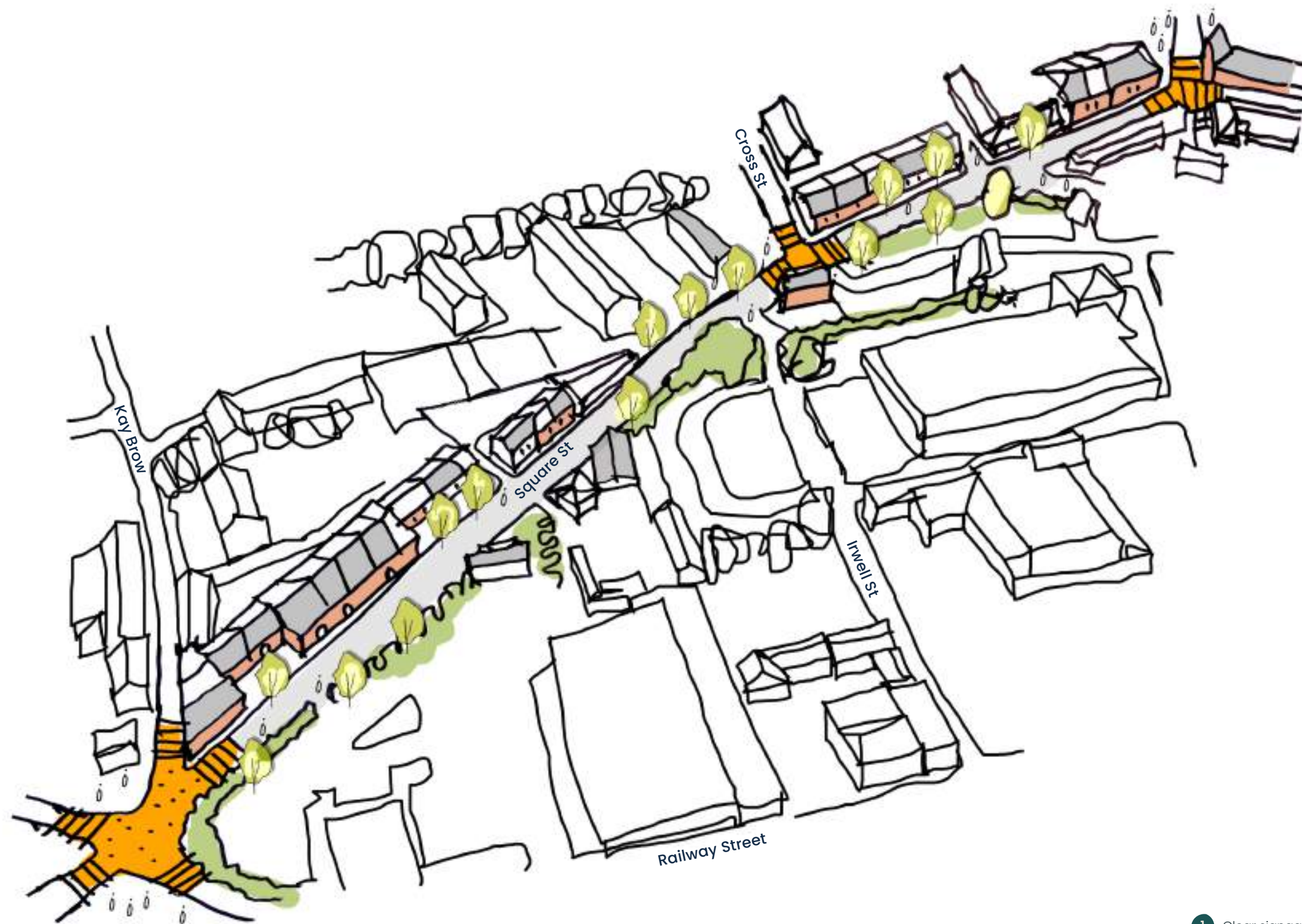
Phasing opportunities

Navigational nodes could be implemented independently. Northern and southern parts of the street could be delivered one after the other.

Deliverability

This project could create a short term link to improve the connection between Nuttall Park and the heart of the town centre. This could be implemented ahead of, or in parallel with an alternative strategic connection that utilises the railway or river corridor.

As a residential area with on street parking, the introduction of an enhanced active travel route, should not compromise the environment for people who live in the locality. Further survey work is needed to understand the intricacies of how the street functions now and the feasibility of accommodating different users.



Artist's Impression - Lower Link

- 1 Clear signage in a shared junction
- 2 Residential shared surface parking
- 3 Designation between priority of space
- 4 SUDS to help green the streets
- 5 Surface treatments define junctions



Active Travel Project (AT3): Nuttall Park Link

Description

Creation of an enhanced route between Nuttall Park and the town centre. An improved link will create a more enjoyable and legible route for pedestrians and cyclists moving into Ramsbottom.

Objectives achieved

- Encourages people to leave their cars at home for shorter journeys
- Improves pedestrian legibility.
- Betters connections with Nuttall Park.



Benefits to the town

- Improved wayfinding will provide a legible route into Ramsbottom from the town's most valuable green space.
- Improved surfacing and materials to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Creates a link that puts pedestrians and cyclists at the forefront of design.
- Increased cycle parking.
- A more legible junction at the confluence of Railway Street / Square Street.
- A safe and well lit route to walk through in the evenings.

Making it happen

- Residents buy in for boundary treatments to be enhanced.
- Ensuring access is retained for HGV's movements to/from business premises.
- Access to FedEx staff car park must remain.
- Detailed designs developed through engagement with key stakeholders.
- Support required from key stakeholders/landowners.

Linked projects

- Lower Link

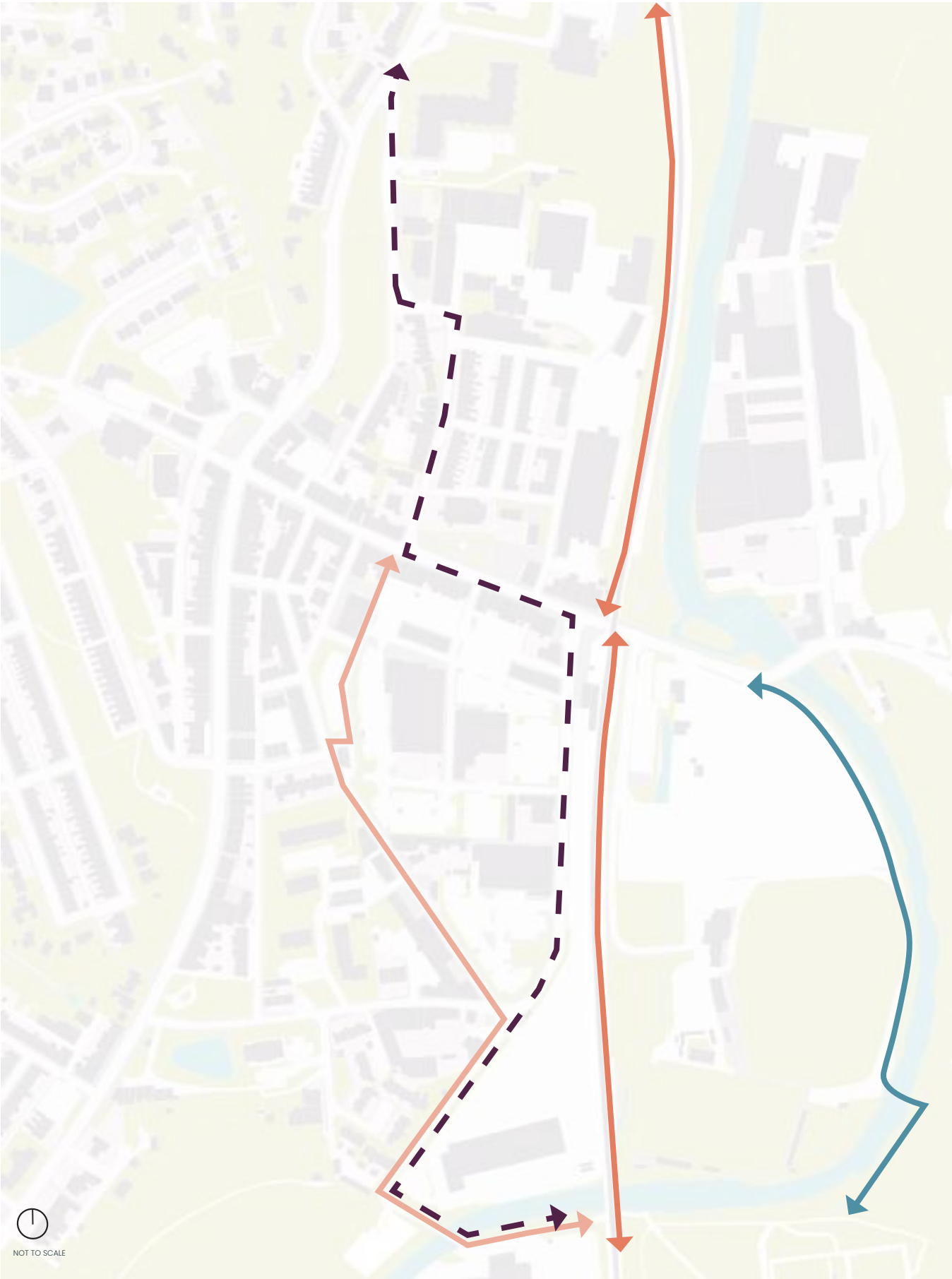
Phasing opportunities

Junction at Railway Street / Square Street could be completed separately to the surface and wayfinding improvements.

Deliverability

This project could create a short term link to improve the connection between Nuttall Park and the heart of the town centre. This could be implemented ahead of, or in parallel with an alternative strategic connection that utilises the railway or river corridor.

Active Travel Project (AT4): Strategic Connections



Alternative Routes

Improving connectivity between the town centre and Nuttall Park plays an important role in meeting a number of objectives identified by this Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan, namely it:

- Improves legibility for pedestrians.
- Improves visitor experience.
- Encourages dwell time.

As illustrated by projects AT1-AT3, this could be achieved in the short term through the rerouting of National Cycle Network 6 via the promotion of an enhanced route along Square Street. This route would avoid heavily congested streets and make for a more appealing environment for pedestrians and cyclists. It does however utilise an existing residential street that may require a degree of remodelling to balance motorists, parked cars and those travelling on foot or by bike. The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan is therefore considering alternative north-south connections and through stakeholder engagement, a number of alternatives are presented.

Railway Link

This route would use the existing rail corridor to provide the most direct connection between the Nuttall Park and Bridge Street, which could also be extended northwards to link with locations on the other side of Ramsbottom, including the leisure centre. This is a desirable connection in terms of efficiency but it is acknowledged that further studies are required to understand constraints such as spatial parameters, vegetation, ground conditions, safety and engineering, not least in terms of the existing bridge over the river.

Riverside

The opportunity to form a stronger relationship with the River Irwell should be explored. As shown opposite this could encompass a route through the former Mondi Mill site and Ramsbottom Cricket Club, entering Nuttall Park via a new footbridge. As with the other routes, there are challenges to overcome such as land ownership but the benefit of riverside amenity means it should not be discounted without completion of further feasibility studies.

- Existing NCN 6

Rerouting of NCN 6 along Square Street (Projects 03 & 04)

Alternative link A: Railway

Alternative link B Riverside
- 1 Clear and legible wayfinding

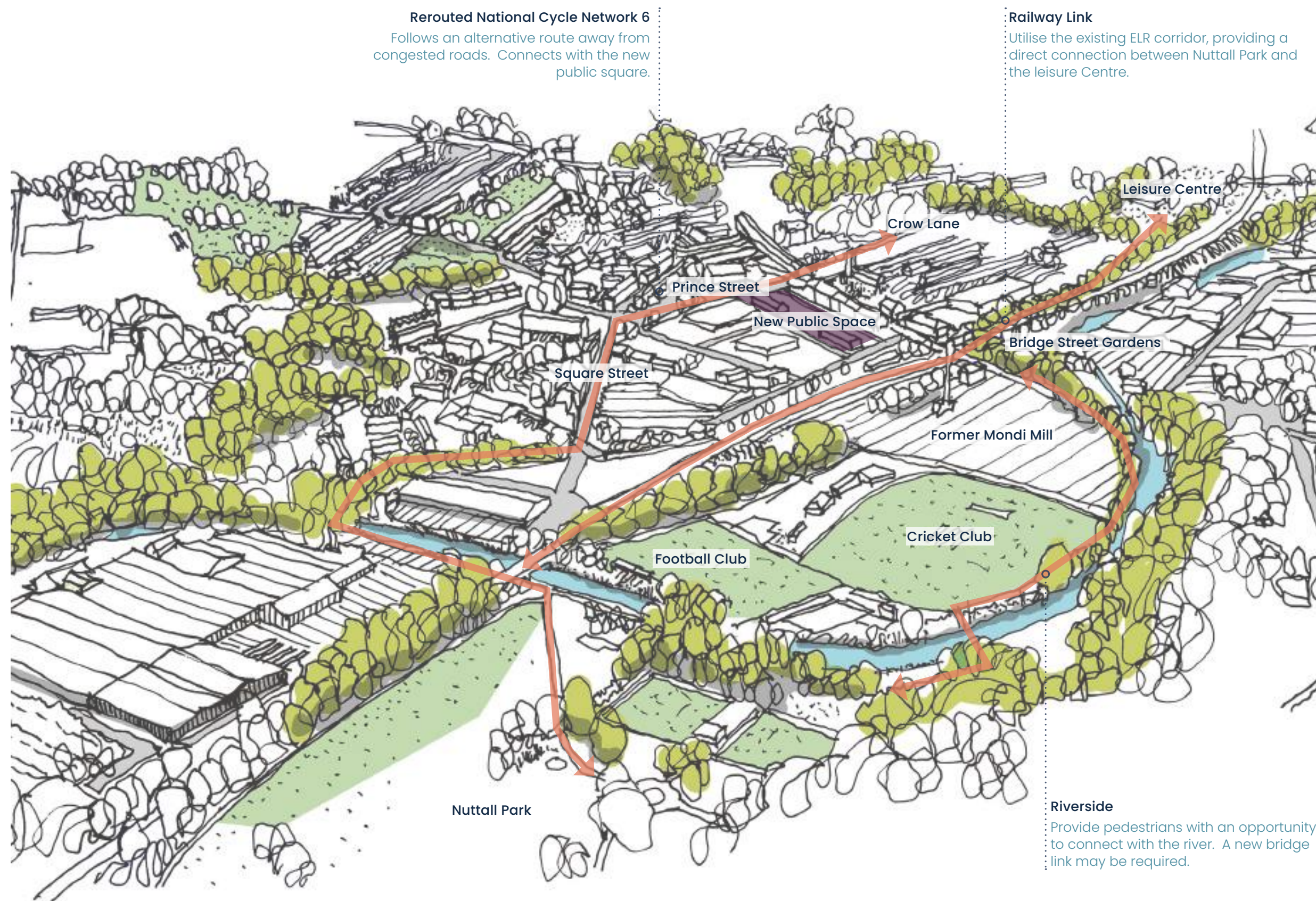
2 Safety through lighting

3 Vehicles and pedestrians work together

4 Improved provisions for cyclists

5 Enhanced pedestrian experience





Location of Possible Strategic Connections

Parking Project: The Context

Car parking is an important part of the way Ramsbottom functions with quantity, type and location often influencing a user's experience of the town. As documented on previous pages, baseline activity and stakeholder consultation has identified a number of existing challenges for those arriving by car.

The next few pages consider ways in which these stresses may be alleviated and complement the potential public realm projects.

More specifically, one of these projects concerns the creation of a new public square in space behind Bridge Street on the Council owned car park. This could reduce parking provision and therefore a strategy is required to alleviate existing and potential future problems.

Potential Strategy

Curtins is of the view that there must be multiple elements to this strategy as summarised below:

Explore the Introduction of a Time Restriction at all Council Car Parks

A restriction which limits people to 3 hours parking would appear to accommodate the demands of most visitors, whilst restricting employees, ramblers and long stay users. This ensures a higher turnover of spaces and thus more efficient usage.

During the consultation events the prospect of this was reasonably well supported as long as some long term parking could be found for employees.

Explore Construction of a New Long Stay Car Park Adjacent to

Leisure Centre

It is understood that Bury Council has previously explored the possibility of a new circa 200 space car park on land adjacent to the leisure centre. Cost estimates and initial designs were drawn up and with a small charge the construction cost could be recouped in circa 4-8 years. The proposal were not progressed but the principle of additional long stay parking on the periphery of the town to accommodate changes/ removal of town centre parking is something which Curtins supports.

During the consultation events the prospect of this was mixed, with some consultees passionately against the proposals and others seeing the logic. The primary issue appeared to be loss of the site adjacent to the leisure centre rather than the principle of long stay parking.

The land in question is currently identified in the Unitary Development Plan as Protected Recreation in the Urban Area and, as such, any proposal to develop a car park on this land would need to ensure that it included alternative provision to off-set the loss of the protected recreation space. This could be achieved by making replacement provision or by enhancing existing recreational space in the nearby area.

Explore Construction of a New Long Stay Car Park Elsewhere

In addition to consideration of long stay parking at the leisure centre, alternative locations should be considered. As far as council owned land is concerned, there may be scope to introduce additional parking at:

- Factory Street
- Porritt Way – either side of the leisure centre access road;
- Behind the Civic Hall
- On the approach road to the Cricket Club/ Ramsbottom United FC site
- ELR land at East Greaves Road
- Former Mondi Mill site

It is Curtins view that there are potential challenges associated with all of the above parking areas, but these are not insurmountable if there is a strong desire for additional parking.

Explore a New Residents Parking Scheme

If the town centre parking is better managed and a new long stay car park is constructed then this should alleviate impacts on residential streets. If this does not occur then additional traffic regulation orders or residents parking scheme could be implemented.

Increase Town Centre Electric Vehicle(EV) Provision

There are currently two EV parking spaces in the town centre on Prince Street. It is understood that the bays are well used and this should be supplemented to meet increasing demand for electric vehicles in coming years.

Removal of Town Centre Parking or Dual Use

The Council owned car parks behind Bridge Street dominate a central area of the town centre. Removal of some parking in this area or temporary removal of parking to accommodate events/markets/outdoor areas

is something which is supported by the consultant team and the majority of consultees. However, this can only be implemented if alternative parking can be found or the existing stock is better managed to accommodate more users. i.e. restrictions.

Recommendation

Curtins is of the view that the parking analysis completed by Bury Council in 2015 and the recommendations that were suggested after this were logical and could offer significant benefits to the operation of the town centre car parks.

Based on Curtins own analysis in 2021 there is nothing to suggest that the situation has changed and the implementation of a strategy as set out above should be considered.

The remainder of this chapter further describes the component parts of the strategy.

Next Steps

The introduction of any parking strategy for the Ramsbottom Town Centre and will require further detailed survey analysis to develop a full parking strategy which would be subject to further engagement and consultation.

- 1 To rear of Bridge Street
- 2 Market Place
- 3 Railway Station Car Park
- 4 Union Street
- 5 To rear of Bridge Street



Parking Project (P1): Time Restricted Parking

Description

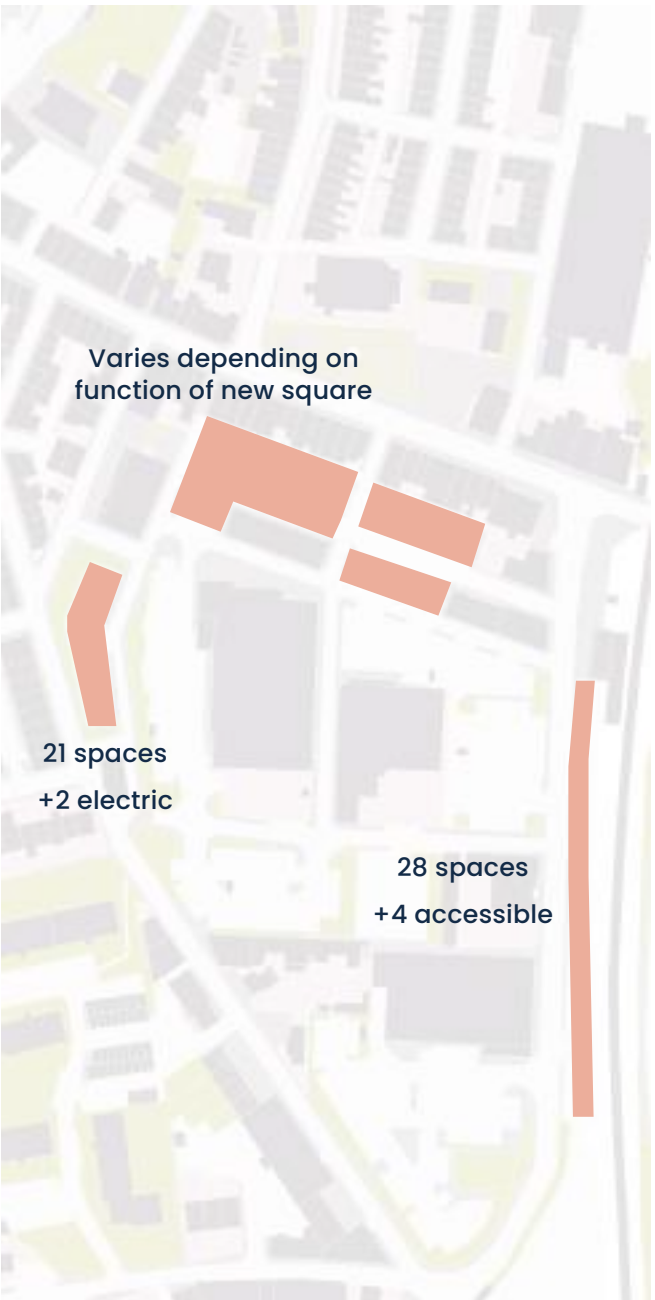
Introduction of a time restriction which limits people to 3 hours parking in all Council owned car parks within the town centre.

Objectives achieved

- Making parking spaces available to visitors and easier to find.



Time Restricted Parking – Existing



Time Restricted Parking – Proposed.
(Assumes new square implemented)

Benefits to the town

- Based on the 2015 surveys, circa 20–30% of users stay longer than 4 hours on some days. This intervention could therefore offer benefits for a comparable percentage of Council owned spaces.
- Higher turnover of parking spaces enables more people to park in the town centre over the course of a day.
- Potentially encourages long stay users to consider more sustainable modes or park outside of the core town centre area.
- Retains free parking for visitors so doesn't discourage trips into the town centre.
- Greater efficiency of existing parking assets by encouraging more regular turnover of parking spaces and preventing a single long stay user from occupying a space for the entire day.

Making it happen

- Bury Council to consult on the strategy
- New signage and enforcement measures will be necessary to manage the restrictions.

Linked projects

- Heavily linked to Project P2 and it would be beneficial to find alternative long stay parking before implementation of any time restrictions.

Phasing opportunities

The time restriction could be introduced in certain car parks as a trial. The most likely place for this would be the car park areas behind Bridge Street.

Deliverability

Time restrictions seek to free up space in the core town centre car parks for short term visitors. The feasibility of this approach relies upon the parallel implementation of a strategy to deal with displaced long stay spaces, i.e those that would be used by local employees and day trippers. This is covered by Project P2.

Current parking provision in this area is 131 spaces, none of which are subject to time restriction or monetary charges.

The implementation of a new public square (Project PS1) will undoubtedly impact upon parking provision, though the extent of loss will depend upon how the square is designed and remaining car parks reformatted. Furthermore, the square may be designed to accommodate flexible use so at certain times, the square could accommodate some parked vehicles. Diagrams are included within Project PS1 to illustrate this.

The table below summarises the way in which parking provision will change following the introduction of a new public square.

Scenario	Spaces
Existing provision with no time restriction	131
Proposed time restricted spaces when square in use	95
Proposed time restricted spaces when square not in use (parking permitted)	125
Proposed time restricted spaces during big event (using square & car park)	55

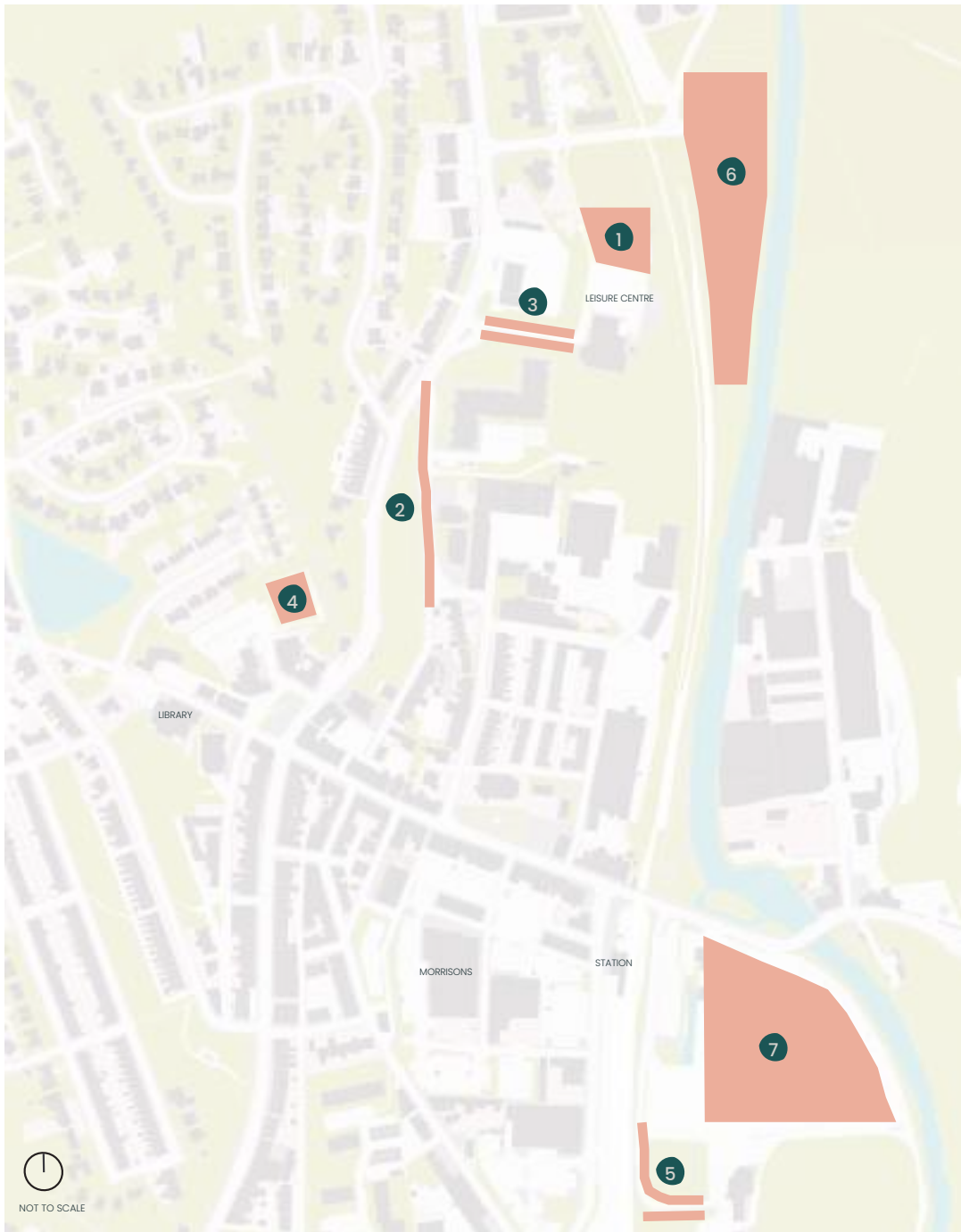
Parking Project (P2): Long Stay Parking

Description

Provide new parking for long stay visitors on the periphery of the town centre

Objectives achieved

- Making parking spaces available to visitors and easier to find.



Benefits to the town

- Creates additional space for visitors and short stay users in the core town centre parking areas behind Bridge Street.
- Enables introduction of the 3 hour time restriction in the core town centre car parks.
- Provides additional parking capacity for times when the new public area and/or events are in use.
- Potentially captures vehicles on the periphery of the town centre thus minimising traffic flows in the core town centre areas.

Making it happen

- There are a number of potential options for long stay parking but each comes with a series of pros and cons which require careful consideration. These are summarised overleaf.

Linked projects

- Time Restricted Parking
- Resident's Parking
- EVC Parking

Deliverability

The table overleaf explores the feasibility of delivering each of these sites as car parking and lists pros and cons associated with each. The development of parking these sites will need to consider a range of pros and cons set out overleaf, and will depend on demand in coming years. At this stage the Plan focuses on the Leisure Centre site and this is explored on the following pages.

Numbers in regard to potential capacity are approximate.

- 1 Leisure Centre
- 2 Factory Street
- 3 Porritt Way
- 4 Behind Civic Hall
- 5 Approach to Cricket Club
- 6 ELR land at East Greaves Road
- 7 Former Mondi Mill

Location	Potential Spaces	Pros	Cons
1) Leisure Centre	Up to 100	<p>Delivers a significant quantum of parking that could accommodate long stay parking, displaced parking when the public square is in use or extra parking on event days.</p> <p>Easy access to the core town centre via Factory Street. A circa 500m walking distance.</p> <p>Potential to capture traffic from the A676 without vehicles entering the core town centre area.</p>	<p>Loss of protected green space adjacent to leisure centre (current planning policy would require alternative provision to off-set this loss).</p>
2) Western side of Factory Street	40	<p>Easy access to the core town centre via Factory Street.</p>	<p>Relatively modest number of spaces that is unlikely to be transformational.</p> <p>Factory Street is currently used for on-street parking so no actual increase in spaces.</p> <p>Formalisation of bays off the highway would result in removal of green space.</p> <p>Significant level differences could result in significant cost.</p> <p>Potential loss of mature trees.</p> <p>Reversing on and off the highway is generally not favourable.</p>
3) Porritt Way (Approach to Leisure Centre)	40	<p>Easy access to the core town centre via Factory Street.</p> <p>Potential to capture traffic from the A676 without vehicles entering the core town centre area.</p>	<p>Relatively modest number of spaces that is unlikely to be transformational.</p> <p>Formalisation of bays off the highway would result in removal of green space.</p> <p>May result in reversing on/off adopted highway which is generally not favourable for safety reasons.</p> <p>Potential loss of mature trees.</p>
4) Behind the Civic Centre (Former Bowling Green)	40	<p>Easy access to the core town centre via Bridge Street.</p> <p>Forms an extension to existing Council owned car park.</p> <p>Potential to capture traffic from the A676 without vehicles entering the core town centre area.</p>	<p>Relatively modest number of spaces that is unlikely to be transformational.</p> <p>Loss of green space.</p> <p>Outside Council ownership</p>

Location	Potential Spaces	Pros	Cons
5) Cricket Club and Approach Road	30	<p>Easy access to the core town centre via cricket club access road and Bridge Street.</p> <p>Potential to capture traffic from the east without vehicles entering the core town centre area.</p>	<p>Relatively modest number of spaces that is unlikely to be transformational.</p> <p>Railway line acts as a barrier to connectivity.</p> <p>Loss of green space.</p>
6) Land Adjacent to East Lancashire Railway and Great Eaves Road	200	<p>Delivers a significant quantum of parking that could accommodate long stay parking, displaced parking when the public square is in use or extra parking on event days.</p>	<p>Access is only possible via Great Eaves Road which involves crossing the ELR. This introduces a number of safety concerns.</p> <p>Unless a direct pedestrian link can be achieved alongside the River the walking distance to the town centre would be in excess of 600m.</p> <p>Great Eaves Road is a relatively narrow road with on-street parking and residential uses that are not commensurate with a major car park access.</p>
7) Site of former Mondi Mill	300	<p>Utilises a large, brownfield site in close proximity to town centre amenities .</p> <p>Potential to capture traffic from the Bury New Road without vehicles entering the core town centre area.</p>	<p>Land ownership by third party and outside of council control.</p> <p>Subject to current planning application for residential development.</p>

Summary

Each of the sites under consideration comes with its own set of challenges, including that sites 4, 5 and 7 are not in public ownership and notwithstanding the planning policy considerations associated with the site's protected recreation status, the leisure centre seems the most practical choice for long stay car parking. If considered holistically as part of the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan, introduction of new parking provision in this location has the potential to create transformational change in Ramsbottom.

Further studies are required to better quantify the amount of spaces displaced as a result of time restricted parking and the introduction of a new

public square in the town centre. It is however expected that the net gain of spaces at sites numbered 2 – 5 would not be significant enough to outweigh the disruption to the local street scene, mature vegetation and landform.

Parking Project (P2): The Leisure Centre Site

Description

Creation of a new long stay car park on land at Ramsbottom Leisure Centre.

Objectives achieved

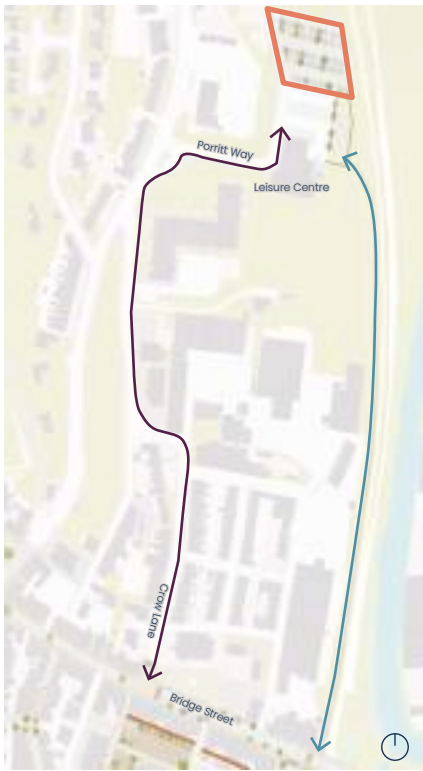
- Making parking spaces available to visitors and easier to find.
- Create infrastructure to host outdoor events.
- Providing local employees and employers with parking capacity.



Accommodating Car Parking

Although the creation of car parking at the leisure centre could support transformational change, the site is currently designated as Protected Recreation in the current development plan and there would be a need for the provision of new or enhanced recreation space in the nearby area to off-set the loss of this space. Previous suggestions to introduce parking in this area have met with mixed public opinion. Rather than look at car parking in isolation, the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan considers how this new provision complements the proposal to create a new civic space and how it could act as a catalyst to an enhanced recreational offer on retained greenspace. The creation of a new active travel corridor alongside the railway will also establish a better connection north-south through the town.

To encourage use of this facility, the pedestrian connection between the car park and town centre needs careful consideration. The short term solution is to guide people along the existing street network using Crow Lane. As part of the longer term objective to create new corridors for active travel, the aspiration is to introduce a new link along the East Lancashire Railway corridor. In both instances, personal safety and wayfinding will be a priority.



Path Connections

Benefits to the town

Strategically as part of the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan, long stay parking could:

- Free up town centre spaces for short stay users.
- Have capacity to accommodate event parking.
- Replacement provision or enhancement to existing areas of recreation space in Ramsbottom.
- Connection to a new active travel corridor north-south through town
- Provide a leisure/recreation hub to north of town, complementing Nuttall Park in the south.
- Include facilities to support sustainable travel such as cycle parking and provide charging points for electric vehicles.

Making it happen

The development of a new car park on this site would involve the loss of an area of protected recreation. The loss of this area would need to be off-set by the provision of alternative recreation space or the enhancement of existing recreation space in the nearby area. Further surveys and data collection is also required to appreciate the constraints on site and to determine the most appropriate quantity of spaces needed.

In the context of building on greenspace, the design will carefully consider the principles of sustainable drainage and management of surface water.

The number of spaces shown indicatively on the diagram opposite is 80. Detailed design and an understanding of site constraints would determine the final capacity.

Linked projects

- Strategic Connection along the railway corridor

Phasing opportunities

This project will have to be phased in conjunction with the creation of a new civic square so that there will be no net loss of spaces.

Parking Project (P3): Rationalise Parking

Description

The creation of a public space at the heart of the community includes the rationalisation of existing car parking to make the remaining spaces and circulation most efficient.

Objectives achieved

- Making parking spaces available to visitors and easier to find.



Benefits to the town

- Facilitates the implementation of the new flexible public space.
- Enhanced way-finding and safety through a better parking layout and amendments to the road hierarchy.
- Enhanced public landscaping and surface treatments.

Making it happen

- Justification/mitigation for loss of circa 76 car parking spaces when public square (& wider car park) are in use.
- Consultation regarding operation of the car park and service access to rear of Bridge Street properties.
- Approval of closure of Union Street to vehicles.

Linked projects

- Time Restricted Parking
- Long Stay parking
- Electric Vehicle Parking

Phasing

Public space could be implemented independently of the car park.

Deliverability

Any change to car parking is subject to detailed design using accurate topographical surveys and informed by a comprehensive data in regard to existing vehicle movements and behaviours. New layouts would need to be digitally tracked to ensure ease of movement by car park users and larger vehicles required to service the rear of adjacent residences/businesses.

The new public square may be designed as a flexible space whereby it could accommodate some parked cars at certain times and have spaces vacated at other times.

The net change to parking provision is currently estimated and any loss would need to be mitigated as part of the parking strategy.



Parking Project (P4): Electric Vehicle Charging

Description

Introduction of additional electric vehicle (EV) spaces in the town centre in prominent locations. There are currently 2 spaces on Prince Street that are not particularly visible or accessible.

Objectives achieved

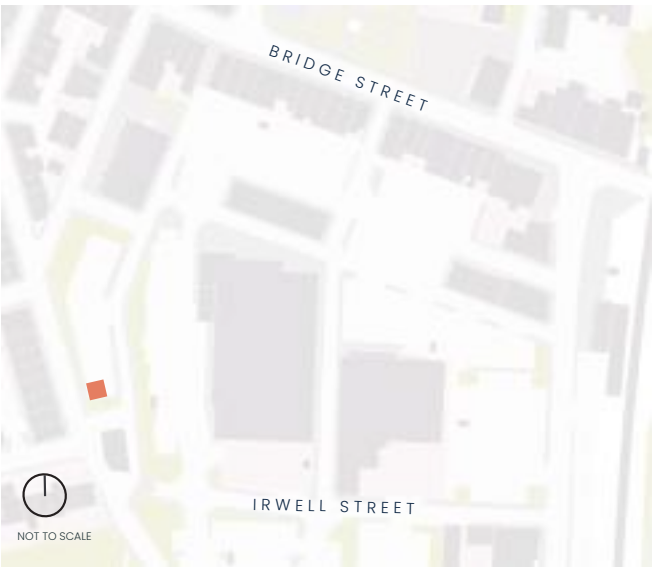
- Support sustainable means of travel.

Benefits to the town

- Ensuring that there is sufficient space to accommodate the needs of EV owners as usage increases in coming years.
- A potential reduction in emissions and pollution in the town centre.
- Compliance with emerging Greater Manchester policy on the provision of EV spaces.

Making it happen

- Assessment of energy requirements and impact on electricity supplies within the town centre to see if the bays can be accommodated or if reinforcement of the network is needed.
- Convert 8 existing spaces that are in prominent locations in the Council owned car parks into EV spaces. Suggested locations are adjacent to the railway station, the car parks off Bridge Street and the car park to the north of the Civic Hall.



EV Charging Spaces – Existing

Linked projects

- Time Restricted Parking
- Long Stay Parking
- Rationalise Parking

Phasing opportunities

Usage of the EV spaces can be monitored and if demand exceeds what is introduced, more spaces should be considered for conversion.



EV Charging Spaces – Proposed

Parking Project (P5): Resident's Parking

Description

If the parking time restrictions and/or long stay parking does not alleviate residents' concerns a residential parking scheme could be implemented/expanded.

Objectives achieved

To protect residents amenity via the introduction/extension of a residents parking scheme.

Benefits to the town

- Protection of residential amenity.

Making it happen

- Monitor parking usage and demand via surveys and consider implementation if required. However, this is currently considered as a fall back option.

Linked projects

- Time Restricted Parking
- Long Stay parking
- Rationalise Parking

Phasing opportunities

Any resident parking scheme could be introduced on a phased basis with certain streets achieving priority over others.

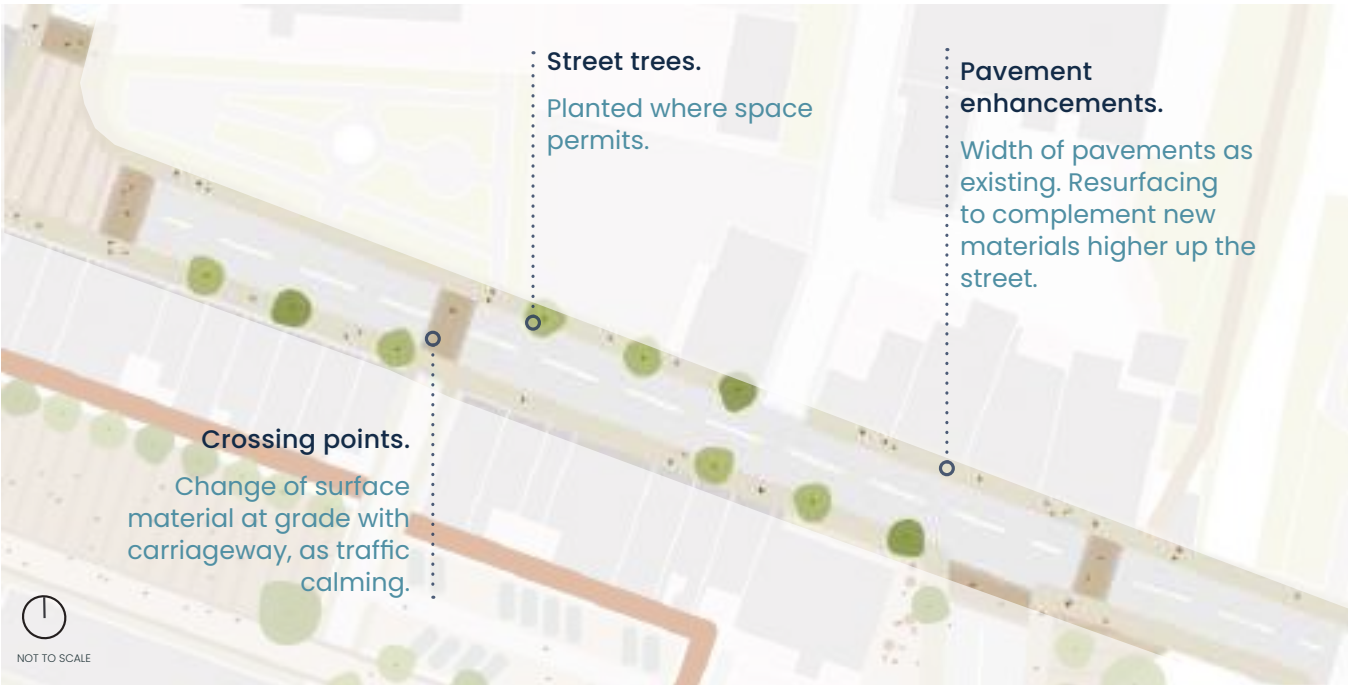
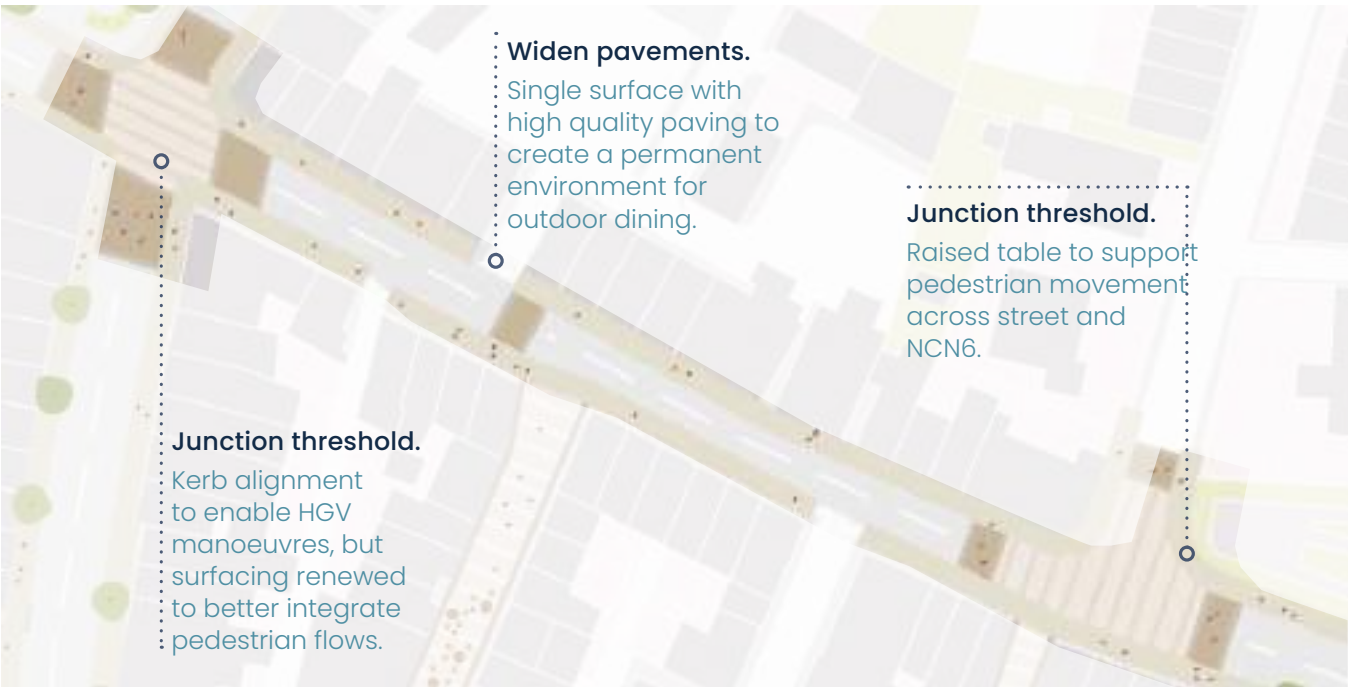
Longer Term Concept (LT1): Bridge Street

Description

Public realm interventions to improve the user experience.

Objectives achieved

- Improves pedestrian legibility, environment and experience for those on foot.
- Encourages greening through tree planting.
- Promotes independent retail, restaurants and cafes as a unique selling point.



Benefits to the town

- Creates a more welcoming environment for pedestrians.
- Selection of fit for purpose materials would make it safer underfoot and more inclusive.
- Traffic calming reduces vehicle speeds and may deter 'through traffic' motorists.
- Enhances first impressions for those visiting.
- Creates a more positive setting for businesses, strengthening the town's established asset of independent retail, food and drink.

Making it happen

- Detailed feasibility work and engagement would be required to ensure that proposals would not impact on HGV manoeuvres and logistics.
- Detailed design and stakeholder consultation.
- Materials palette must be robust enough to accommodate the demands of the traffic that will overrun it.
- Tracking required to understand critical dimensions across street and the manoeuvres of larger vehicles.
- Approval of development in heritage context of the Conservation Area.
- Traffic diversions during the construction phase.
- Utilities surveys to avoid conflict with existing infrastructure below ground.

Linked projects

- New Public Square
- Upper Link
- Bolton Street

Phasing opportunities

For continuity along the length of Bridge Street, this project should not be implemented in sections.

Deliverability

As the main retail frontage and vehicular through route, Bridge Street is a familiar and critical part of the town centre jigsaw. The strong presence of independent outlets has been identified as one of Ramsbottom's selling points, yet as already documented, the street currently suffers from high volumes of traffic which makes for a sub-standard pedestrian and shopping experience.

This project would seek to tip the balance so that pedestrians become the priority user ahead of motorists therefore enabling people to move more freely and safely up and down the street. To realise this concept the spatial arrangement of the street would need to change so that pavements are widened and the carriageway narrowed.

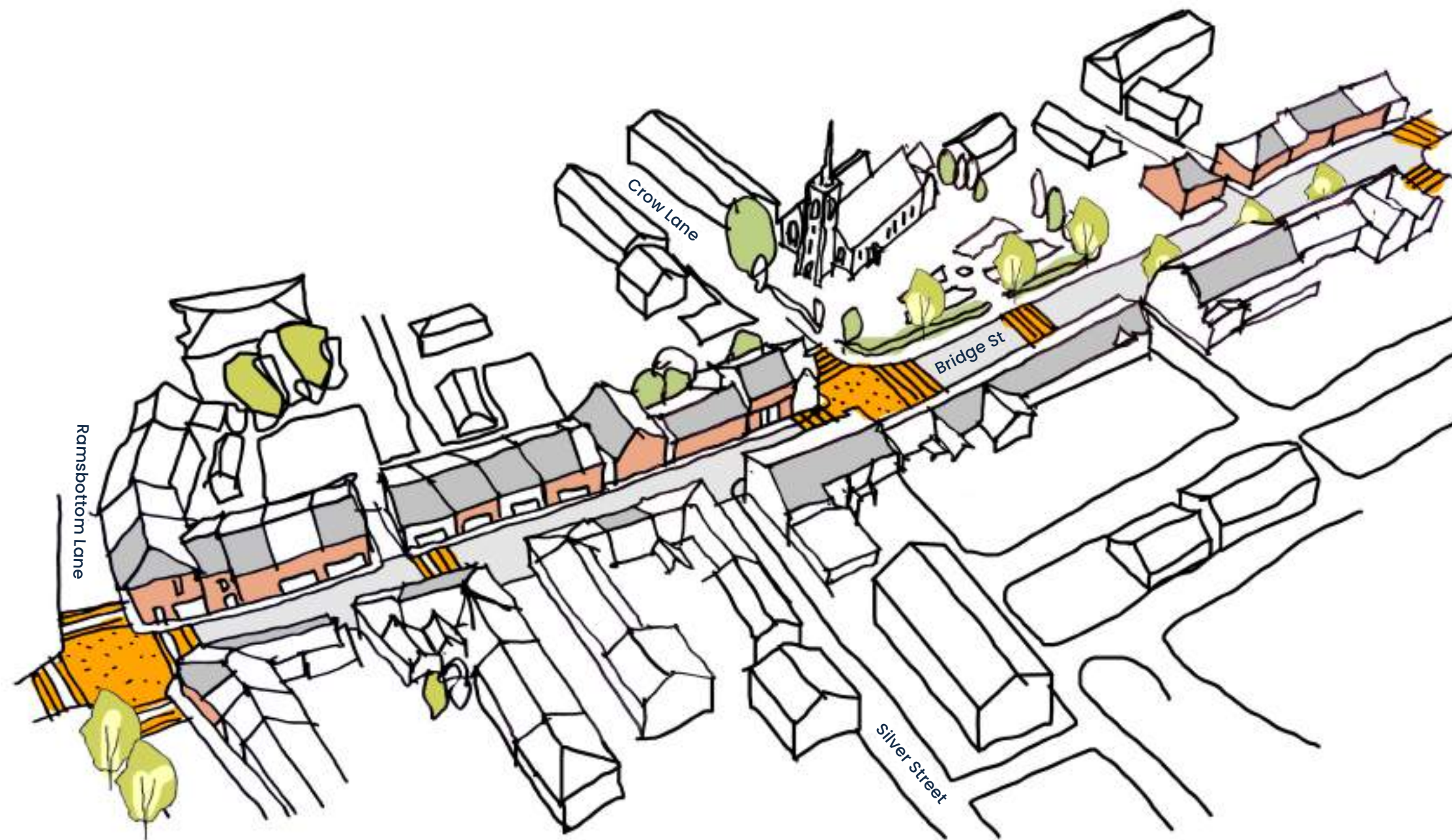
Detailed analysis would be required to determine the critical dimensions across the street and understand whether the space available can be sensibly adjusted to accommodate the demands of each user group.

Given the volume of traffic, it is however doubtful that this project could be implemented in the short term. This project requires alternative routes to be found to move traffic from the core town centre but without compromising the need for HGVs to service the local businesses or without negatively impacting the local businesses themselves. With a different dynamic to vehicle activity, there would be more scope to realign kerbs and free up space for pedestrians.

The proposal to increase active travel modes in and around the town centre could help to reduce traffic in the town

This approach would allow a more holistic approach to:

- Selection of surface materials
- Possible flexibility of kerb heights
- The introduction of traffic calming measures
- Making space available for street trees



Artist's Impression - Bridge Street

- 1 Narrowing carriageways
- 2 Widening pavements for pedestrians
- 3 Increased trees and seating space
- 4 Designated crossing points
- 5 Welcoming after dark



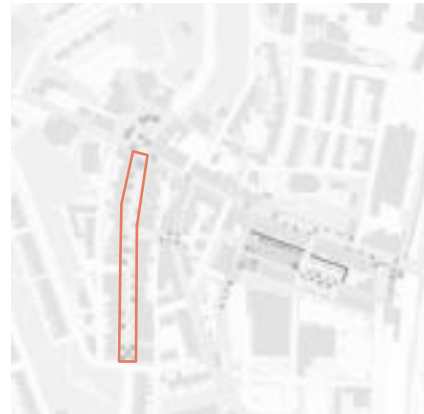
Longer Term Concept (LT2): Bolton Street

Description

Improved retail/business corridor and a key gateway into Ramsbottom. Newly planted trees will help to soften the appearance of the street creating a much more friendly and green environment.

Objectives achieved

- Better advertises points of arrival from south.
- Improves pedestrian legibility and environment for those on foot.



Benefits to the town

- A more attractive street scene.
- Improved pedestrian experience through the use of enhanced materials.
- Greener streets.
- Safer and more frequent crossing points.
- Less dominance from vehicles.

will remain a key route into and around the town, including providing access to service existing businesses.

Making it happen

- Detailed feasibility work and engagement would be required to ensure that proposals would not impact on HGV manoeuvres and logistics.
- Detailed design and stakeholder consultation.
- Materials palette must be robust enough to accommodate the demands of the traffic that will overrun it.
- Tracking required to understand critical dimensions across street and the manoeuvres of larger vehicles.
- Approval of development in heritage context of the Conservation Area.
- Traffic diversions during the construction phase.
- Utilities surveys to avoid conflict with existing infrastructure below ground.

Linked projects

- Square Street
- Bridge Street

Phasing opportunities

For continuity along the length of Bolton Street, this project should not be implemented in sections.

Deliverability

In a similar way to Bridge Street (LT1) the character of Bolton Street is currently heavily dominated by vehicles. It is an important route in and out of the town and there are opportunities to improve the street scene. Further detailed work is required to identify the opportunities to introduce more space for pedestrians and tree planting. However, given the lack of alternative infrastructure, Bolton Street



Artist's Impression - Bolton Street

- 1 Greening the streets
- 2 Clear and direct crossing points
- 3 Improved pedestrian surfacing
- 4 Enhanced pedestrian experience
- 5 Defined sense of arrival



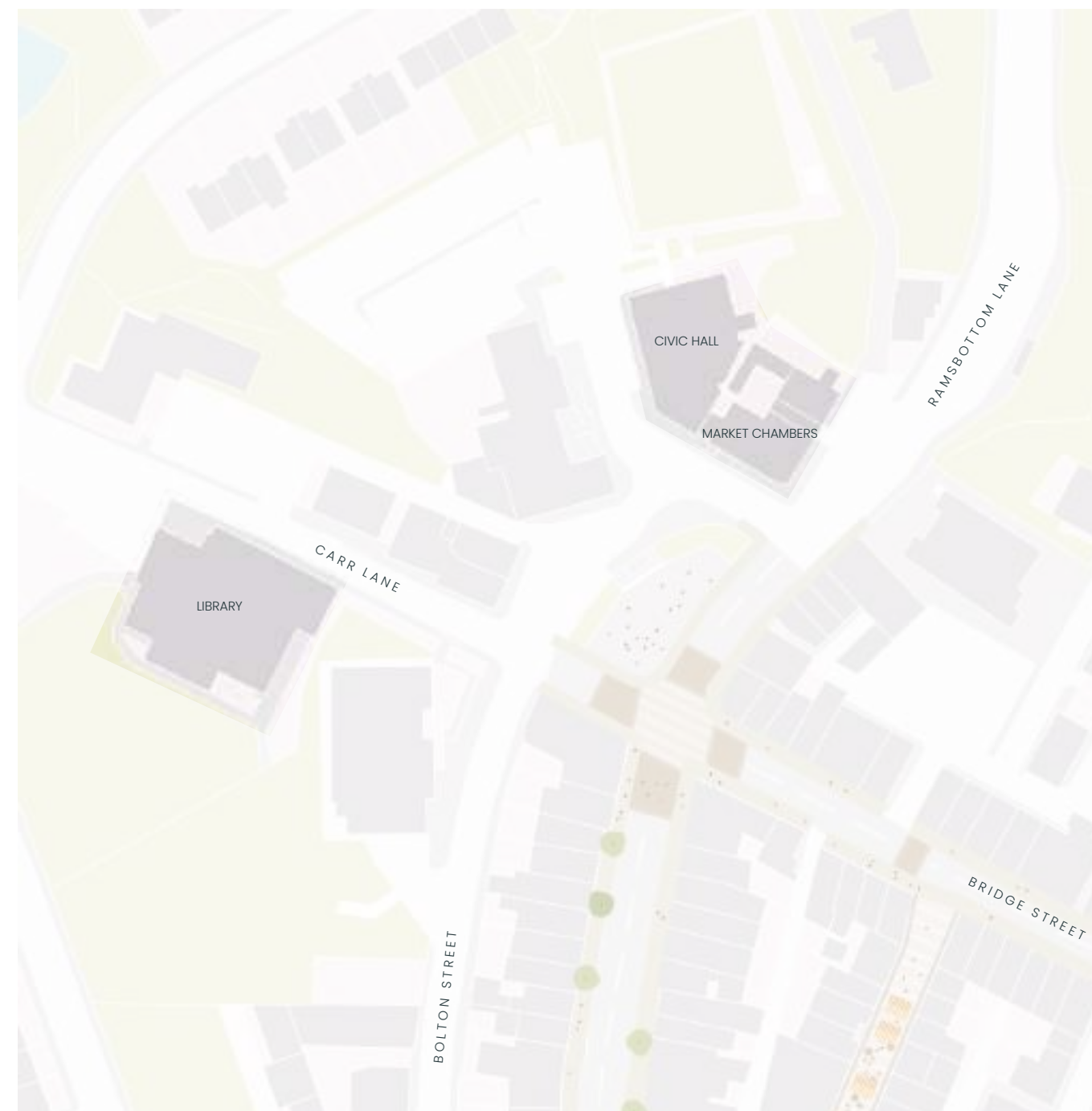
Business Project (B1): New Enterprise Centre

Description

A new Enterprise Centre for Market Chambers and the vacant upper floors of the Civic Hall.

Objectives achieved

Supports local business growth, in particularly creative industries and accommodate the level of self-employed freelancers and business start-ups based locally.



Benefits to the town

- Brings the vacant upper floor in Ramsbottom Civic Hall back into use.
- Refurbishment of the Market Chambers building will provide upgraded provision and fit for purpose business facilities.
- Explores the option of a flexi-space trial within Ramsbottom Library to enhance the services currently provided.
- Provides additional accommodation for a range of self-employed, freelance businesses and business start-ups, along with those residents seeking flexible and agile business space.

Making it happen

Bury Council have identified some funding (including Evergreen funds) to support project development and some initial surveying work is underway.

Phasing

Timescales will be determined by findings from the initial surveying work and access to funding



Next steps.

Delivery and Implementation

Governance

The draft Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan sets out a vision for the town and identifies a mix of shorter term and longer term physical improvements to enhance the town centre for local residents, businesses and visitors.

In order to deliver these, there will need to be good governance and leadership to ensure a successful transition from strategy through to implementation. The community and local businesses will need to form part of this governance.

It is the intention to utilise the existing Ramsbottom Town Centre Board to help drive the plan forward.

A Programme Management Office (PMO), which will provide the day to day resource that will oversee the programme of projects. The PMO will work across the range of public and private sectors to help provide a co-ordinated approach to the project implementation.

The PMO will feed into the Council's Regeneration Board.

Funding

The PMO will also seek to identify internal and external funding opportunities. This will include both public and private sector funding to ensure delivery of the proposals.

Some funding opportunities have already been identified. Greater Manchester has secured £1.07 billion of funding from the City Region Sustainable Transport Fund for public transport and active travel proposals. Work is on-going to determine where this money will be targeted and the Council will ensure that some of this funding is spent within Ramsbottom. This will help to deliver some of the projects, particularly the proposed active travel and connectivity elements outlined within this document.

The council has also identified additional Active Travel Funding to review walking and cycling routes between Bury and Ramsbottom. If successful, proposals will be developed for schemes that will make it easier to walk and cycle between the two towns. A decision from the Department for Transport on the Greater Manchester bid is expected in the near future.

In addition, the Council has successfully secured £50,000 Evergreen monies, which will be used to help bring forward the proposed Enterprise Centre in the town.

Once formally approved, the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan will provide a clear vision and identify a series of proposals on which future funding bids can be developed. This will include future transport monies and emerging funding programmes such as the Shared Prosperity Fund.

By delivering these key interventions around public realm improvements, better connectivity in and around the core of the town, and enhanced public space the Ramsbottom plan will help not only to attract increased footfall but will act catalyst to lever in increased private investment into the town centre.

Once formally approved, the next step will be to provide more detailed design of the short term priority projects, which will also form the basis of future funding applications. Each of these priority projects will be developed through a mini 'business planning' process which in turn will form the core of the single implementation programme. The business plan process will establish:

- Project Costs;
- Sources of finances;
- Key outcomes; and
- Programme for delivery.

As the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan develops, the delivery and implementation plan can be expanded to include other projects as opportunities and circumstances arise.

Public Consultation

Consultation on the draft Plan

The draft Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan was subject to public consultation between 4 January and 15 February 2022. The closing date was extended to 18 February 2022 to allow for some late submissions following clarification on aspects of the draft plan.

The draft plan was available to view on the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan consultation webpages and copies the draft plan could also be viewed at Bury Town Hall and Ramsbottom Library. Responses were received through the online survey, via email and by post.

The consultation was promoted via:

- Press releases and social media
- Promotional stands at Bury Town Hall, Ramsbottom Library and Morrisons
- Posters in the Ramsbottom Town Centre notice boards
- Postcards displayed at key locations including Ramsbottom Library, Nuttall Park Base,

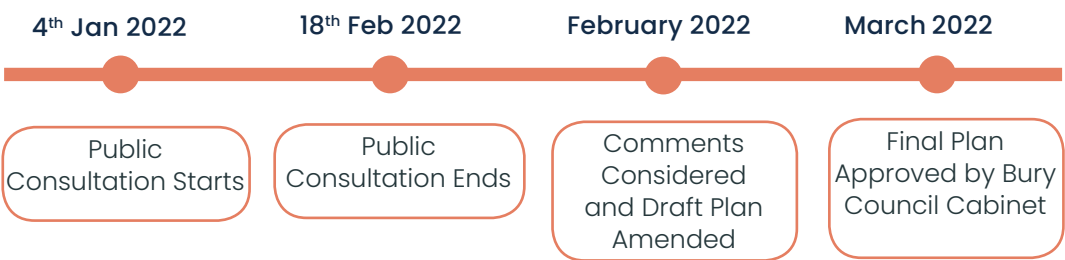
Ramsbottom Football Club and in businesses

- Council staff out and about in the town centre engaging directly with residents and businesses
- Direct emails to stakeholders including via the Community Hub to 80 groups and organisations and via the Bury One community website
- Meetings with stakeholders

The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan has been revised to reflect the feedback received through the consultation process.

The projects set out in the plan are high level proposals and concepts. As such, all the proposals will require further detailed work, and surveys where necessary, which would be subject to further engagement and consultation before being progressed.

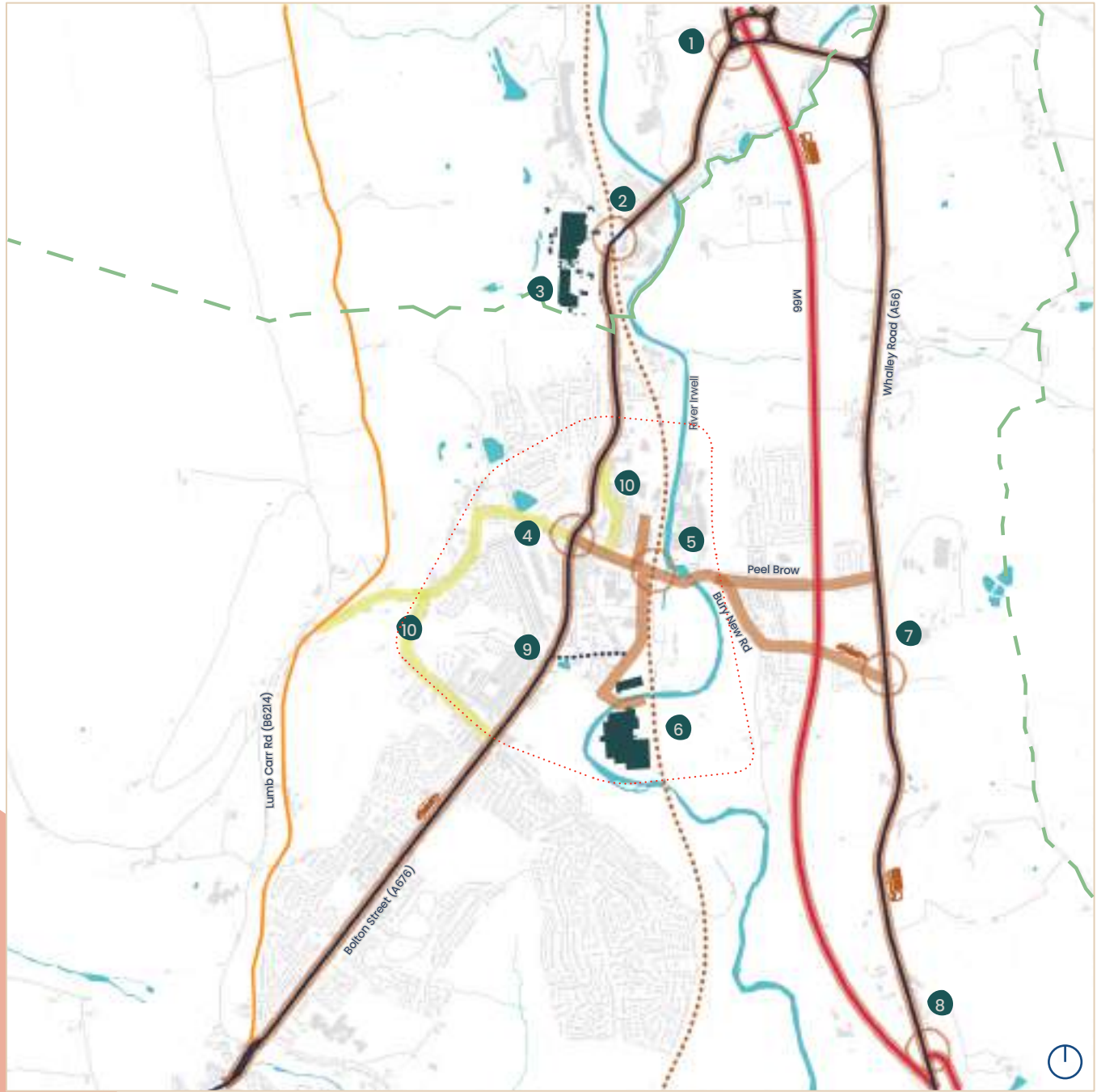
Timeline of Public Engagement





Appendix 1: Baseline Figures.

Vehicle & HGV Movement



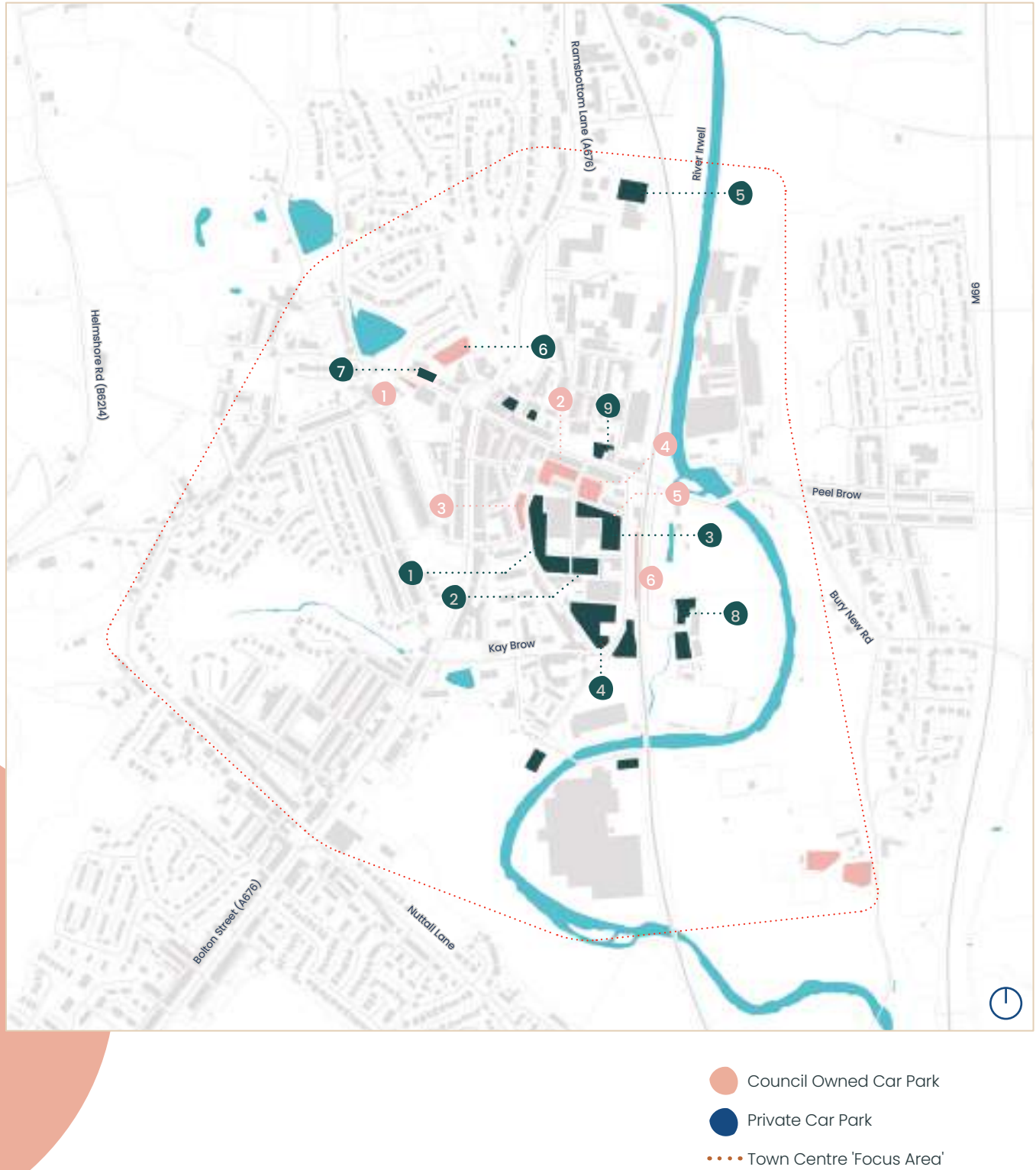
- Motorway (M66)
- A Roads
- B Roads
- East Lancashire Railway
- Bury Borough Boundary
- Town Centre 'Focus Area'
- Town Centre HGV 'Generator'
- Impassable HGV Link
- 'Heavy' HGV Usage
- Dundee Lane, Tanners Street, Carr Street cut through

Analysis Narrative

1. The M66 Edenfield junction and roundabout allows for both north and southbound traffic.
2. Stubbins bridge located under the East Lancashire Railway has a 14ft height restriction which prevents HGV access to and from the M66 Edenfield junction. In turn causing HGVs to pass through Ramsbottom town centre.
3. A number of business on the north of the town require HGV's for essential business purposes that pass through the town centre.
4. HGV and other large vehicle movements at Bridge Street cross road junction in the centre of Ramsbottom sometimes results in delayed pedestrian and traffic movement and a large amount of noise.
5. Bury New Road / Bridge Street is the only east to west link suitable for HGVs to access the M66 motorway from the town centre. HGVs cause disruption at this junction.
6. Several vital businesses located at the southern eastern fringe of the town centre contribute to the heavy flow of HGV traffic.
7. Road layout means the junction on Whalley Road is only suitable for HGVs to turn one way round the corner.
8. M66 junction 1 is a northbound exit and southbound entrance only.
9. Kay Brow is an impassable link for HGVs due to steep gradient and narrow width.
10. Dundee Lane, Tanners Street, Carr Street used as a cut through to avoid the traffic that builds up on Bolton Street (A676).



Car Parking



Analysis Narrative

This diagram documents the location of car parking available in the town centre, highlighting ownership, fee and associated time restriction. The council owned Railway Street car park is used for the Sunday car boot sale.

Council Owned

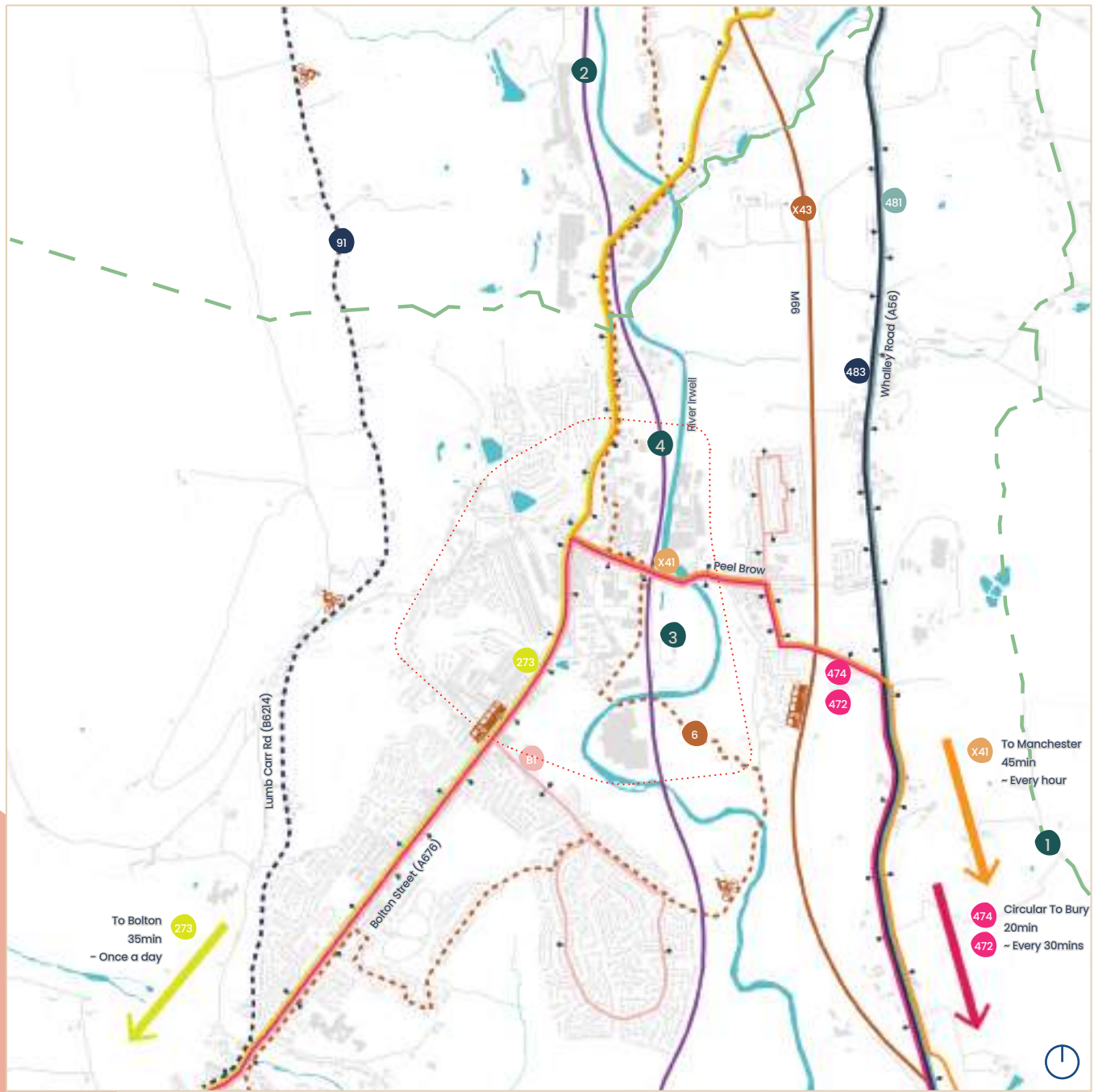
- 1 Library
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 2 Market West
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 3 Prince Street
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 4 Market East
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 5 Tesco Site
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 6 Railway Street
£ Free L Unrestricted

Privately Owned

- 1 Morrisons
£ Free L 1.5hrs
- 2 Morrisons - Staff
£ Free L Staff only
- 3 Tesco
£ Free L 2hrs
- 4 Aldi
£ Free L 1hr
- 5 Leisure Centre
£ Free L 2hr
- 6 Civic Hall
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 7 Community Church
£ Free L Restricted
- 8 Cricket Club
£ Free L Restricted
- 9 Bridge Street
£ Free L Privately rented



Sustainable Transport



- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 481 Bus route | 91 NCN Cycleway |
| 483 Bus route | 6 NCN Cycleway |
| X43 Bus route | Cycle parking |
| X41 Bus route | East Lancashire Railway |
| 474/472 Circular Bus route | Bury Borough Boundary |
| 273 Bus route | Town Centre 'Focus Area' |
| B1 Bus route | Bus Stop |

Analysis Narrative

1. Bus routes connect Ramsbottom to Manchester, Bury and Bolton but frequency of service is not at optimum.
2. Ramsbottom lacks a strategic train connection to the wider district.
3. NCN Route 6 runs through the town centre and Nuttall Park but is not formally signed or demarcated.
4. Cycle parking is limited to two stands outside the station and a single stand at the Leisure Centre.



Town Centre Pedestrian Movement



- Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- Crossing Points
- Temporary Pedestrianised Street
- ... Town Centre Focus Area
- Pedestrian Flow
- Pedestrian Pinch Points
- Arrival Gateway

Analysis Narrative

1. Public realm dominated by vehicles with narrow pedestrian footways less than 1-2m on a range of streets in the town including Ramsbottom Lane and Bridge Street.
2. Crossing points don't align with pedestrian desire lines. Stop lines for vehicles are set back to accommodate for HGV manoeuvres.
3. The temporary closure of Square Street to traffic makes for a more welcoming pedestrian environment.
4. Prince Street cut through is a key pedestrian route however the public realm and environment are poor.
5. Strategic arrival gateways are poorly announced to pedestrians.
6. East Lancashire Railway Station is a key arrival point for the town, moving into the town centre across Railway Street is difficult as there are no pedestrian crossing points.
7. No pedestrian crossings at the junction of Railway Street / Square Street / Kay Brow. No footway on eastern side of the carriageway.
8. Connection to Nuttall Park fails to prioritise pedestrians.
9. Low headroom and no lighting for pedestrians and cyclists under the railway bridge.
10. Pedestrian footfall up Peel Brow to the Eagle & Child pub, with one of the few outdoor beer gardens in Ramsbottom.



Townscape Character Areas



- Retail
- Supermarket / Car park
- Railways Heritage Corridor
- Industry
- Sports
- Nuttall Park
- Residential
- Riverside
- Peripheral Retail
- Town Centre 'Focus Area'

Analysis Narrative

1. Strong presence of retail use along historic street frontages.
2. Large tract of car parking centrally within the town centre.
3. Significant industry in proximity to retail and residential areas.
4. River brings character to town but crossing points are limited.
5. The railway is a heritage asset for the town but restricts lateral movement east-west, for both pedestrians and motorists.
6. Nuttall Park is a valuable recreational asset but poorly connected to town centre.



Allocated Green Infrastructure



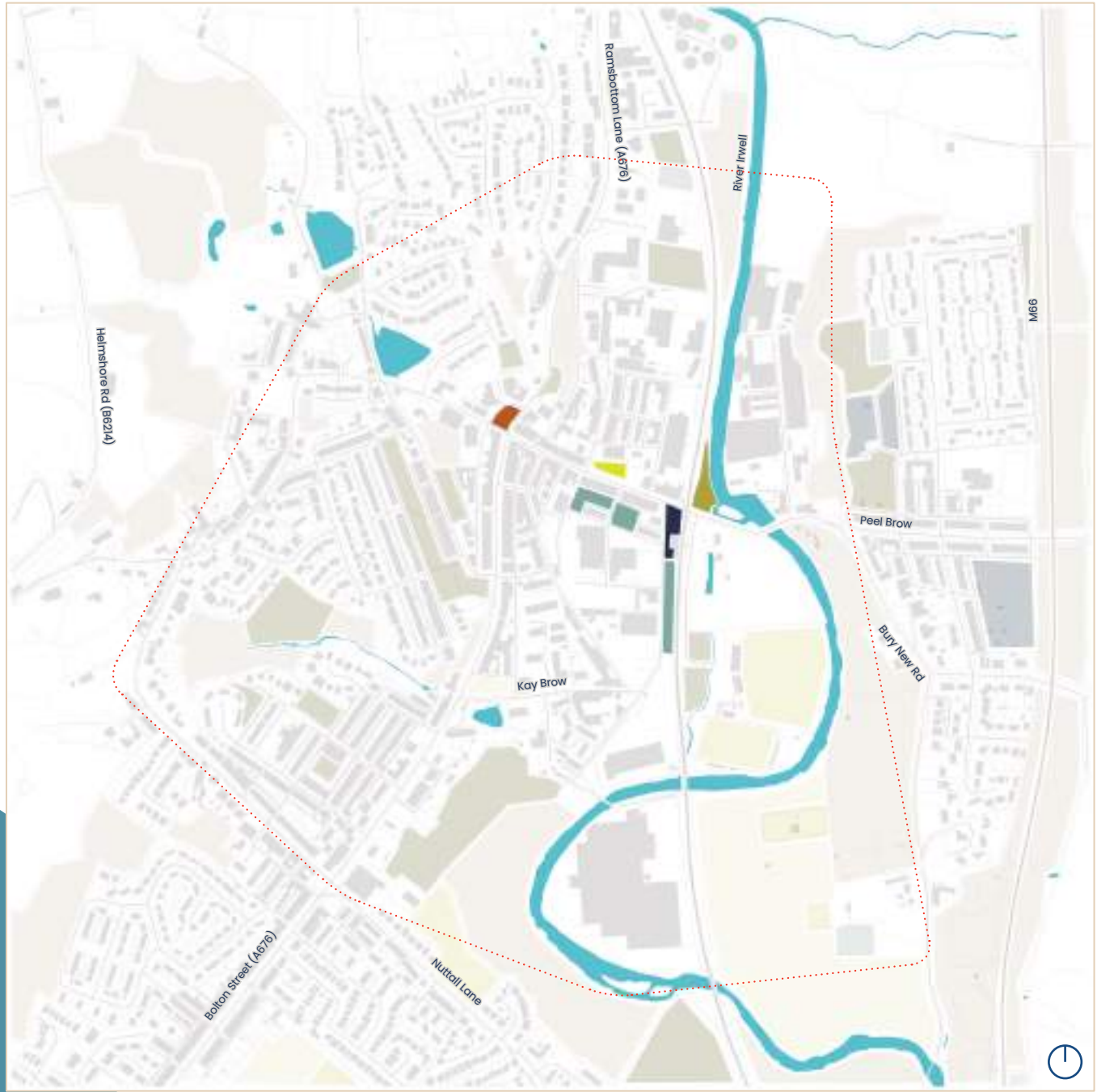
- Town Centre 'Focus Area'
- Parks & Gardens
- Natural/Semi Natural Green Space
- Sports Field
- Amenity Green Space
- Allotments
- Hard Public Space Play Areas
- Play Areas

Analysis Narrative

The basis of categorising Ramsbottom's public green space information is based on guidance from the 'Bury Greenspace Audit and Strategy' (2015) document.

1. Nuttall Park is Ramsbottom's primary green space boasting a range of features such as quality sports pitches, hard surface tennis courts, bowling green, children's play area and running track.
2. There are limited spaces close to the retail core of the town centre to stop, rest or eat lunch.

Town Centre Key Spaces



Baseline

•••• Town Centre 'Focus Area'

Analysis

- Market Place
- St. Paul's Church Yard
- Saturday Market
- Railway Entrance Space
- Bridge Street Gardens

Analysis Narrative

This drawing highlights spaces at the heart of the town centre which serve as functional public realm that perhaps, does not yet meet its full potential. They are places that present/adjoin heritage and environmental assets and/or host the market. This type of space where people can take the time to stop and sit are important to an enriched visitor experience.



Heritage & Cultural Assets



Baseline

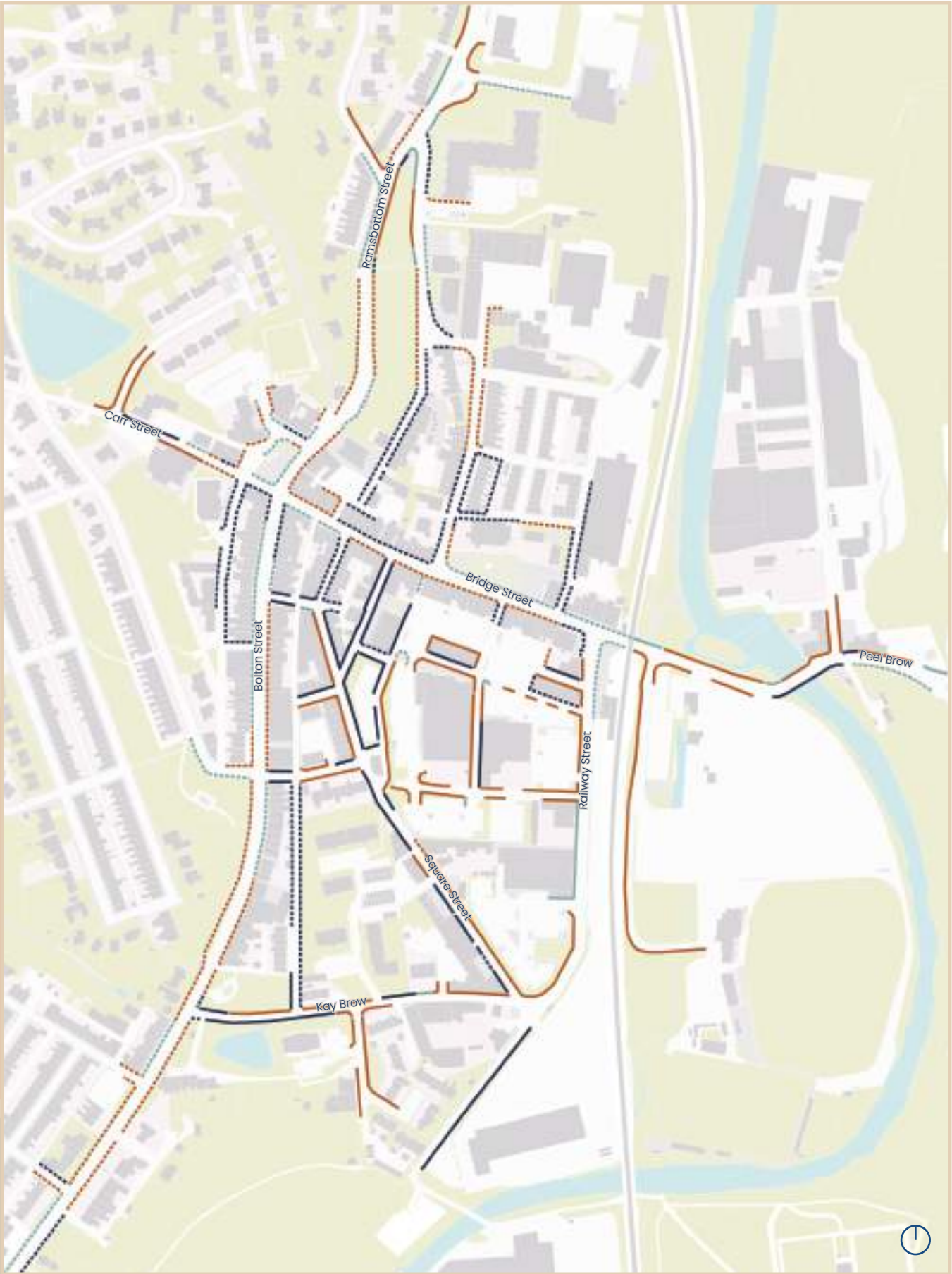
- Town Centre 'Focus Area'
- Independent Outlet
- Listed Building
- Listed Independent Outlet
- Market Space
- Large Scale Event Space
- East Lancashire Railway
- Ramsbottom Train Station
- Irwell Sculpture Trail
- Tilted Vase
- Theatre Royal
- Ramsbottom Library
- Conservation Area
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

Analysis Narrative

As demonstrated by this drawing, Ramsbottom benefits from a range of architectural and cultural assets that add character and attract visitors. These features should be promoted and readily accessible to the local community as well as those travelling from further afield.

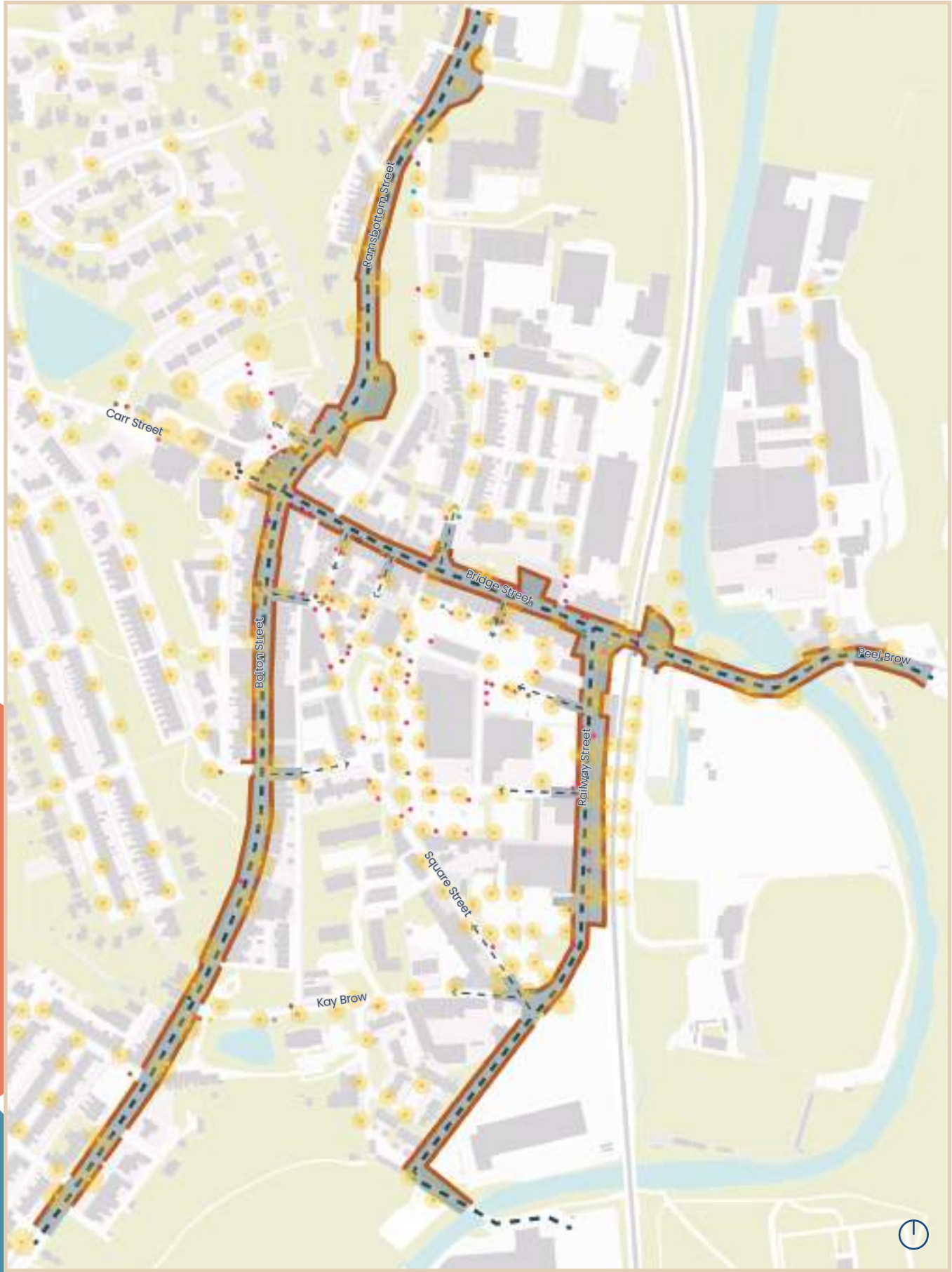


Footpaths



- Smooth Footway <1.5m
- Uneven Footway <1.5m
- Smooth Footway >1.5m - 2.5m
- Uneven Footway >1.5m - 2.5m
- Smooth Footway >2.5m
- Uneven Footway >2.5m

Sensory Experience



Lighting

- Street Light
- Wall Mounted Light

Noise

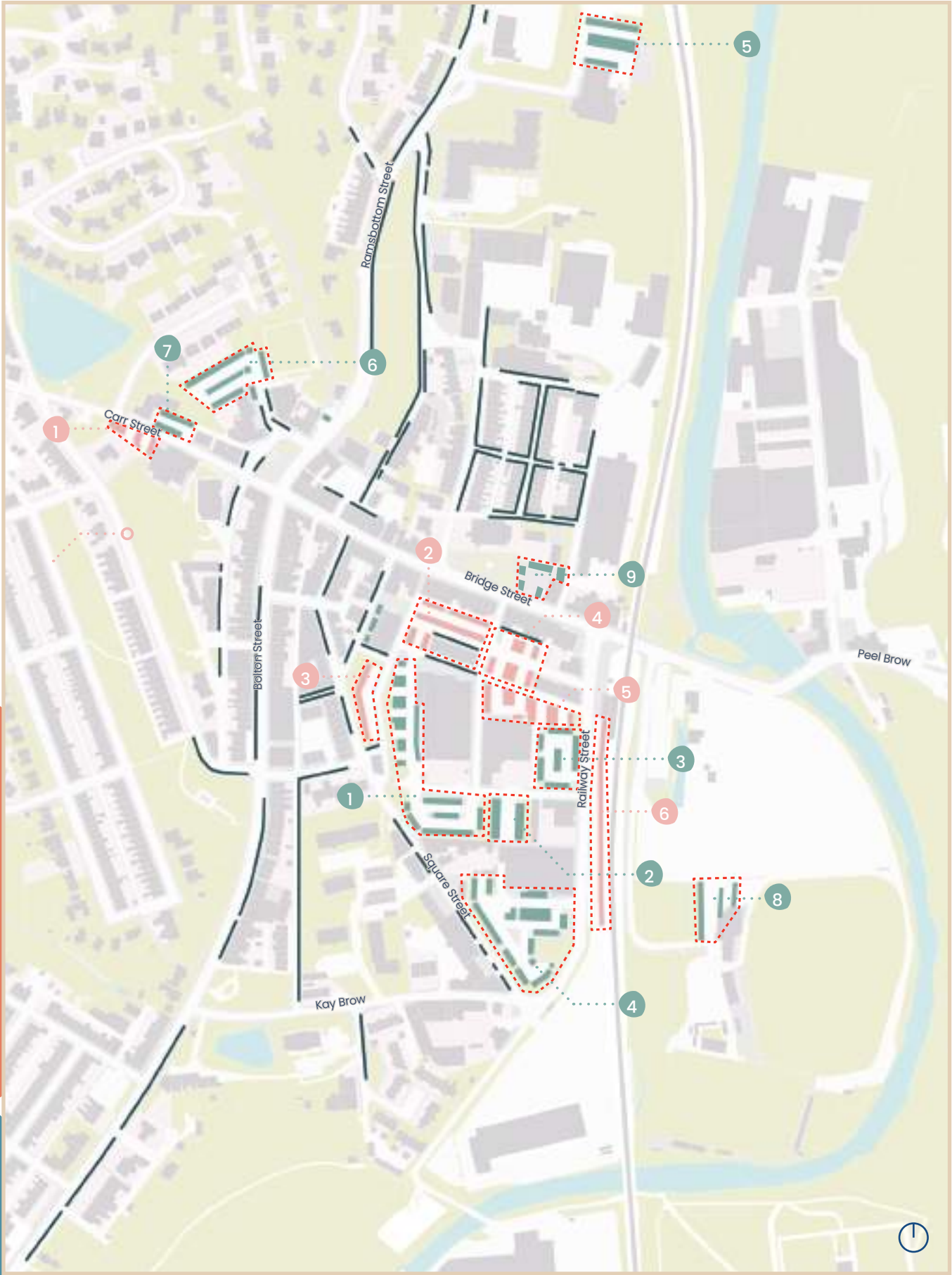
- Sound Buffer Edge
- Major Traffic Flow
- Area of Noise

Signage

- Alcohol Awareness
- Parking / Loading
- Tourism / Visitor
- Vehicle Guidance / Info
- HGV Guidance / Info
- Town Entrance

- Pedestrian / Wayfinding
- Cycle
- Bus Stop
- Traffic Lights

Parking



Council Owned

- 1 Library - 15
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 2 Market West - 46
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 3 Prince Street - 21 + 2 electric
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 4 Market East - 24 + 6 accessible
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 5 Tesco Site - 38 + 5 accessible
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 6 Railway Street 28 + 4 accessible
£ Free L Unrestricted

Private Owned

- 1 Morrison's - 89 + 6 accessible
£ Free L 1.5hrs
- 2 Morrison's Staff ~ Unmarked 20
£ Free L Staff only
- 3 Tesco - 35 + 2 accessible
£ Free L 2hrs
- 4 Aldi - 92 + 6 accessible
£ Free L 1hr
- 5 Leisure Centre - 49 + 8 accessible
£ Free L 2hrs
- 6 Civic Hall - 50
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 7 Community Church - 20
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 8 Cricket Club ~ Unmarked 75
£ Free L Unrestricted
- 9 Bridge Street Private - 16
£ Free L Privately rented

Visual Experience



Views

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Albert Street to Moorland | 7 Bolton Street to Moorland |
| 2 Bridge Street to Moorland | 8 King Street to Chimney Stack |
| 3 Prince Street to St. Paul's | 9 Irwell Street to Chimney Stack |
| 4 Bridge Street Gardens downstream | 10 Young Street to Moorland |
| 5 Albert Street to Moorland | 11 Nuttall Park to Moorland |
| 6 Square Street to Moorland | 12 Nuttall Park to Peel Tower |

- Sun Path
- Area of Sun
- Area of Shade

Appendix 2: Baseline Analysis.

Policy context

Any strategic vision for Ramsbottom must align with the aims and aspirations of other relevant local, sub-regional and national policy, plans and strategies. Place-making consultancy, Fourth Street reviewed a number of extant plans and policies to understand local objectives around tourism, economy, health and wellbeing, community and planning, infrastructure, and the environment, including the Bury 2030 'Lets do It' Strategy which sets out the overarching aims and objectives for Bury going forward.

Key policy themes and priorities

A number of important themes and priorities can be distilled from a longitudinal reading and comparison of these plans and policies. These include the following:

- Create thriving communities by delivering social infrastructure, promoting inclusivity and community cohesion, and regenerating town centres. Provide more public spaces, both indoor and outdoor, especially for events that improve the town's leisure offer, and build the strength and cohesion of the community. Support the town's heritage and cultural offer, including but not limited to the East Lancashire Railway. There is likely need to strengthen the town's cultural offer to support local artists and grassroots cultural activity (e.g. music venue, artist studio, theatre of modest, community scale).
- Enable inclusive economic growth that creates diverse employment and opportunities to upskill. With more and better employment space, Ramsbottom can be positioned as a location for inward investment to boost local and regional economic growth. Ramsbottom's great strength is its appeal as a place to live, but this is an increasingly important factor in the location decisions of businesses that are now more accustomed at offering flexible, hybrid working conditions.
- Improve transport networks to create a more pleasant, pedestrian-friendly town centre experience.
- Reduce local traffic and promote active transport. This will require some physical intervention, but can also be encourage by creating more pleasant and pedestrian/ cycle-friendly routes between key parts of the town – especially along the river. Reducing

the number of local trips will not only ease congestion and demand for parking, but will also have a tangible impact on health and wellbeing, reduced carbon emissions, and the town's overall sense of place.

- Contribute to Greater Manchester's overall target of achieving net zero emissions by 2038.
- Improve health and wellbeing by encouraging and enabling active and healthy lifestyles. Sensitive improvements to the public realm can make a significant contribution to this, notably by encouraging more active travel and by reducing congestion and emissions in the town centre.

Market Context

In this section Fourth Street analyse the local market in Ramsbottom.

Catchment Areas

The demographic data is taken from a 1.5km radius around the centre of Ramsbottom. We have also looked at the demographics of the surrounding area, including a 15 and 45-minute drive-time catchment. Maps of the different catchment areas are shown by the red lines in Figures 1 – 3 opposite.

The immediate local area is home to just over 11,000 people, while a 15-minute drive time extends to Bury, Rossendale and Rochdale and has a population of circa 175,000.

The 45-minute catchment takes in all of Greater Manchester, as well as Blackburn and Preston, with a very large market of 4.4 million people.

Taken together, this is indicative of a key characteristic of Ramsbottom: a relatively small town, with many appealing 'small town' quality of life characteristics, that is nonetheless within easy reach of some very large conurbations. It is thus ideally situated for skilled workers who want access to quality housing and have the flexibility to work from home, but the need for frequent (if not daily) visits to other destinations.

The analyses that follows compares this demographic data to the national average through indices, where 0 represents the national average.



Fig 1: 1.5km radius catchment



Fig 2: 15 min drive catchment



Fig 3: 45 min drive catchment

Age Profile

Age groups between 35–64 are most over-represented, indicating a significant family presence, while the age groups between 15–34 and 65+ are under-represented. The age group 20–34 is significantly under-represented, suggesting that students and young professionals at the start of their careers are leaving Ramsbottom to pursue opportunities elsewhere.

Given the town’s particular strengths and assets, there is likely an opportunity to promote start-up and lifestyle businesses where younger employees have more flexibility around working practices and attach as much importance to quality of life as they do to wages and career progression.

A significant impediment to this, however, is a lack of good quality workspace and touchdown ‘hubs’, which forces people to work from home offices. While this was welcomed during the height of the pandemic, there are already signs that people are tiring of the ‘isolation’ and are keen to have at least some interaction with peers and colleagues.

Socio-economic analysis

Ramsbottom is a relatively affluent town, with a disproportionately large share of residents within the A and B socioeconomic categories (higher and intermediate management and professionals), and a disproportionately smaller share of semi-skilled or unskilled workers (Figure 5).

The data suggests that a large proportion of the semi-skilled workforce employed by some of the larger industrial and logistics businesses in the town centre, as well as its multiple supermarkets, are not resident in Ramsbottom and must commute into the town every day. This further reinforces the value of ultimately – in due course – incentivising the relocation of one or more of these businesses. It would release a brownfield site that could be transformational for the town, without necessarily having a major adverse impact on local employment.

The socioeconomic profile is reflected in the pattern of economic activity (Figure 6). Ramsbottom is notable for having a very low level of unemployment, as well as a very low concentration of full-time students. The former reflects a local economy in rude economic health, while the latter is likely a function of poor public transport connectivity to larger conurbations with educational opportunities.



Fig 4: Age variation above/below the national average in a 1.5km radius

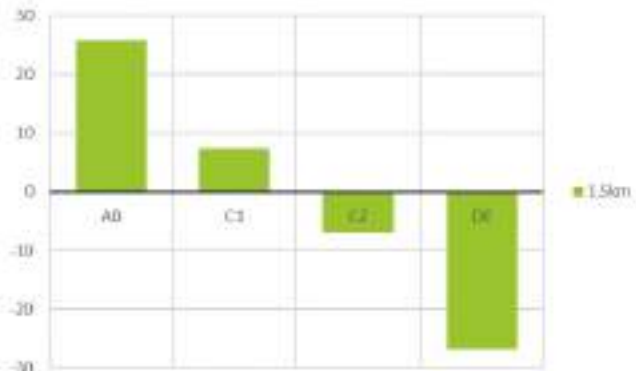


Fig 5: Socioeconomic Profile (index)

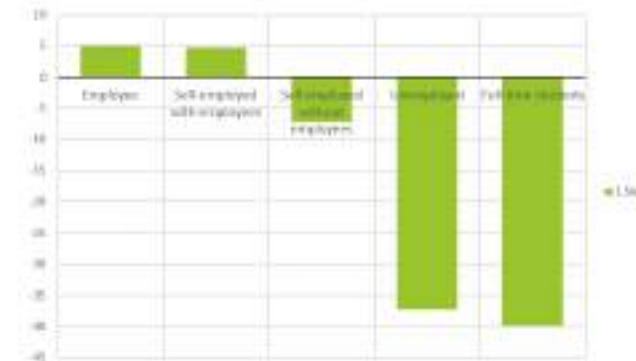


Fig 6: Economic activity (index)

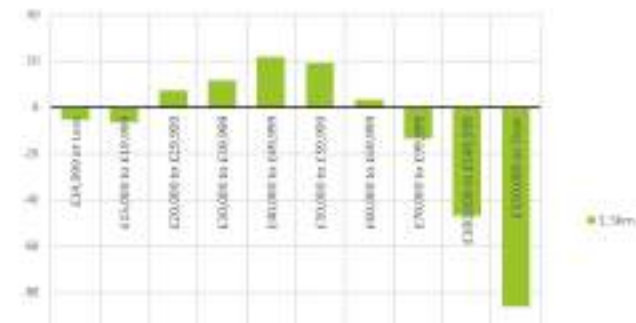


Fig 7: household income variation above/below the national average

While Greater Manchester as a whole tends to under-index in self-employment, it is modestly above average in Ramsbottom. This points to a measure of entrepreneurship among residents, and the likelihood of people choosing Ramsbottom as a place to live and then working predominantly from home.

While the town is relatively affluent, with a well-educated and skilled workforce, it could not be described as a ‘rich enclave’. Indeed, its income distribution is close to the national average, with modest over-representation of households earning between £40,000 and £60,000 per annum. By contrast, it is markedly under-represented in households earning more than £100,000 per annum. It could broadly be described as a place that is ‘well off’, but not ‘rich’.

The three most prevalent market segments (Mosaic) are ‘Domestic Success’, ‘Aspiring Homemakers’ and ‘Transient Renters’. Domestic Success are the largest single group indicating that Ramsbottom is a relatively well-off area, consisting of families with upmarket suburban homes with mortgages (Figure 8).

Creative Industries

Ramsbottom has a notably creative population. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Ramsbottom was a beneficiary of the BBC’s move to Salford Quays and the creation of MediaCity:UK. This is confirmed by the latest census which shows that some 15% of the population works in “associate professional and technical occupations” (which includes, but is not limited to, culture and media occupations). More granular data by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) points to a notable concentration of creative businesses, as shown in the map at Figure 9.

Creative industry clusters thrive in collaborative, joined-up environments and there is reason to believe that one or two high quality, well-managed shared workspace facilities in Ramsbottom would help to reinforce its appeal to small businesses and freelancers in the creative sectors.

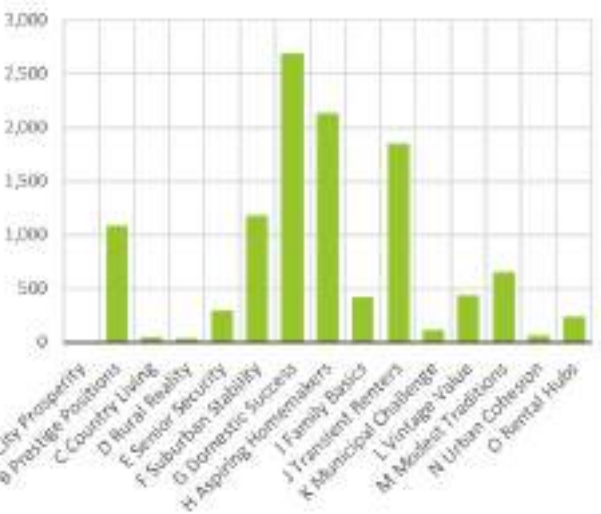


Fig 8: Mosaic group distribution in a 1.5 km radius

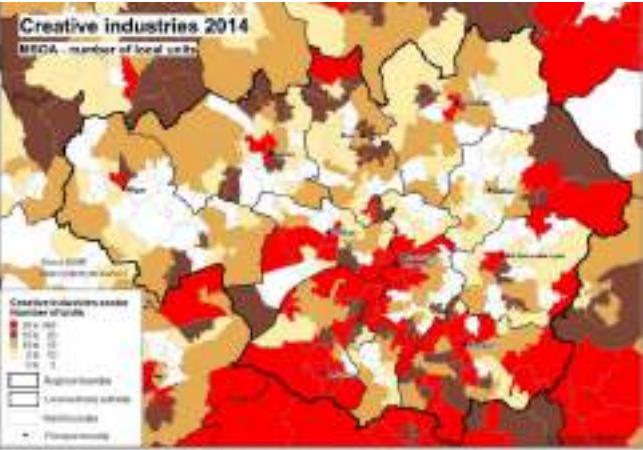


Fig 9: Creative industries in Greater Manchester, 2014

Category	Description	% of Population
Domestic Success	Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Upmarket suburban homesOwned with a mortgage3 or 4 bedroomsHigh internet useOwn new technology	24%
Aspiring Homemakers	Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means <ul style="list-style-type: none">Younger householdsFull-time employmentPrivate suburbsAffordable housing costsStarter salariesBuy and sell on eBay	19.1%
Transient Renters	Single people renting low cost homes for the short term <ul style="list-style-type: none">Private rentersLow length of residenceLow cost housingSingles and sharersOlder terracesFew land line telephones	16.5%

Fig 10: Key mosaic group characteristics

Retail

The independent retail, food and beverage scene is a clear strength of the town that distinguishes it from places in and around Manchester. Consultees have uniformly pointed to this independent scene as the great strength of Ramsbottom – whether discussing the reasons to live there, work there or visit.

An analysis of all retail units in Ramsbottom indicates that bookshops, bike shops, DIY/electricals, music shop, menswear, gardens & equipment, office supplies, and small food retailers (e.g. butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers, among others), are under-indexed compared to the UK average. This is likely down to the presence of three large supermarkets – who supply much of this product – within the town centre.

The high street and its environs are attractive, rich in independent businesses, with relatively few vacancies and even fewer ‘persistent vacancies’. The town is rightly known for its independent shops and especially its cafés, pubs and restaurants, several of which are of standout quality.

The River Irwell

Like most 18th/19th century industrial towns, Ramsbottom relied on its river. Industrial activity was located at the river’s edge, with residential communities radiating away from that centre, and a high street becoming the focal point of social activity and interaction.

With changes in markets, technology, lifestyles and working habits these rivers ceased to be industrial assets and are now much more valued as natural and cultural amenities. In Ramsbottom town centre, this is largely unfulfilled potential as it had already evolved to essentially ‘turn its back’ to the river. This disconnect between town and river was compounded in Ramsbottom by the severance created by the railway line.

There are obvious opportunities to access the river and catch glimpses of it, notably around Nuttall Park and Bridge Street Gardens, but there is no contiguous riverfront walk or promenade.

We see this as a significant opportunity for the town, with multiple benefits. It would encourage active travel, with its obvious benefits to health and well-being, as well as reduction in local traffic. It would significantly improve the connection between the town centre and Nuttall Park. It would add an

important new natural and leisure amenity.

It would also be consistent with ‘good practice’ seen elsewhere.

Good examples of using rivers as the focal point for place making and urban regeneration include major projects in the Medlock Valley and River Irk, in Greater Manchester, as well as the River Alt project in Liverpool and the de-culverting of the Sheaf in Sheffield.

In this case, it should be relatively straightforward and inexpensive to connect a pedestrian and (possibly) cycle-friendly ‘ribbon’ on the western edge of the River Irwell, to reconnect the town with its waterfront.

All information, analysis and recommendations made for clients by Fourth Street are made in good faith and represent Fourth Street’s professional judgement on the basis of information obtained from the client and elsewhere during the course of the assignment. However, since the achievement of recommendations, forecasts and valuations depends on factors outside Fourth Street’s control, no statement made by Fourth Street may be deemed in any circumstances to be a representation, undertaking or warranty, and Fourth Street cannot accept any liability should such statements prove to be inaccurate or based on incorrect premises. In particular, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, any projections, financial and otherwise, in this report are intended only to illustrate particular points of argument and do not constitute forecasts of actual performance.