

**DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR LAND AT THE NORTHERN GATEWAY
TO RAMSEY
(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The area to the north of Ramsey town, known as “Ramsey Northern Gateway” incorporates land bisected by High Lode River along St Mary’s Road, Horse Drove and Rivermill, Great Whyte. This has been identified as an area of opportunity following significant partnership working in the town.
- 1.2 A priority action within the new Huntingdonshire Community Strategy includes the development of interim planning guidance for the Ramsey Northern Gateway. Huntingdonshire District Council have, therefore, worked with planning consultants, The Development Planning Partnership, with support from landowners, developers and community partnerships to produce this draft Urban Design Framework (UDF).
- 1.3 Cabinet is asked to consider the document and approve it for consultation purposes. Once representations have been received and considered, the guidelines will be an important consideration when considering development proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site to which the UDF applies falls under the control of a relatively limited number of landowners who are keen to promote their sites for development. This has made the production of this document less complex and increases the prospects of implementing the objectives.
- 2.2 At present the area, where there are buildings, has a mixture of building types – some in use and others not. The appearance of the area as you enter the town is poor as are parts of the riverside area.
- 2.3 It is recognised that a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the potential future development of this area is required in order to achieve a positive and sustainable impact, in economic, social and environmental terms, for the benefit of not only the town but surrounding villages.

- 2.4 As Members will be aware, a “vision” project is in progress for Ramsey and the surrounding parishes of Bury, Conington, Holme, Upwood & the Raveleys, Warboys, Wistow and Woodwalton. This work is a result of a Civic Trust Visioning Event held in Ramsey in December 2002.
- 2.5 The project is being led by the Ramsey Area Partnership (RAP) which includes voluntary, community, private and public sector organisations, groups and individuals with an interest in the future of the Ramsey area. It already has a close working relationship with the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and will have a key role in promoting and delivering actions that tie in with the objectives and priorities in the Community Strategy for the Ramsey area, including this guidance.
- 2.6 Over the last five months, through extensive consultation with local communities, key issues and opportunities have been highlighted – one of these being the negative impact of the northern gateway as it currently stands and the potential for significant improvements through a co-ordinated, sustainable plan.
- 2.7 Key issues that have arisen during the RAP consultation work that tie in directly with the draft UDF for the Northern Gateway include:
- Need for attractive gateways to town
 - Better use of waterway and refurbishment of barge dock area
 - Capturing benefits arising from the Great Fen Project
 - Increased access to countryside required
 - More affordable housing required, particularly for single people and first time buyers
 - Improve availability of local jobs
 - Improve range and quality of shops available to consumer
 - Improve access to services and facilities including community resource
 - Increase availability of business support and advice locally
 - Develop tourism package, exploiting culture and heritage of area
 - Improve access to area, particularly through pedestrian and cycle links incorporating access to countryside
- 2.8 The RAP Action Plan is now being prepared and the potential of the Northern Gateway is likely to be a key objective within this plan.

3. **THE PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The draft UDF provides an opportunity to encapsulate and promote the potential of the Northern Gateway in order for it to improve the long-term sustainability of the town as a rural service centre. In addition to points noted in para 2.9, it could:
- Regenerate this important gateway to the town making best use of brownfield land
 - Provide high quality landscaping, a prerequisite for a rural market town
 - Encourage employment development to increase availability of local jobs
 - Provide for residential development that meets local needs

- Increase self sufficiency of the town as a service centre and reduce travel needs
- Connect areas of town by providing a vital link across waterway and incorporating 'art' to tie the areas together visually
- Building attractive frontages to St Mary's Road and the waterway
- Provide better and more attractive links to the countryside

3.2 An indicative masterplan for the Northern Gateway is illustrated in the UDF at Figure 4 and an indicative layout is shown at Figure 6. It envisages a high-quality gateway to the town incorporating a mixture of business, residential and community development to meet the needs of local residents, businesses and visitors to the area.

3.3 The following are potential uses within the framework:

- Employment buildings B1 and B2 class of high-quality design, location and appropriate scale
- Foodstore of no more than 3,500 sq m with appropriate design and landscaping to fit well with the surroundings
- Workplace homes and workshop spaces drawing upon designs of Rivermill area
- Residential development along the riverside frontage utilising design from Rivermill area and providing adoptable standard roadway
- Residential development on old North Station site of appropriate design and materials to reflect the character of the town
- Community facilities to link in with those existing in Rivermill area
- Children's pre-school nursery centre sited with community facilities

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Discussions will be held with local Members, the Town Council and surrounding Parishes and members of the Ramsey Area Partnership, which includes the Town Centre Partnership, on the future shape of this document and to share in its ownership. It is hoped that the Ramsey Area Partnership as part of its strategic work can assist in the wider consultation with local communities. In addition there will be a consultation process with the usual statutory bodies.

4.2 Further discussions will also be required with landowners and potential developers to ensure that the location of the proposed land uses and their relationship with the surrounding proposals are optimised. It may be, for example, that the position of the foodstore would be better located further to the south west and closer to the existing facilities at Stocking Fen Road and the town centre.

4.3 Any comments or changes will be brought back to the Cabinet before it is adopted as interim policy guidance for Ramsey Northern Gateway area.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That Cabinet approve the Guidelines as a basis for further discussion and consultation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ramsey Area Partnership File
Huntingdonshire Area Local Plan 1995
Huntingdonshire Community Strategy 2003

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