

Urban Design Framework
Ramsey Gateway



Operational Services - Planning

Huntingdonshire
district council

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Ramsey Gateway

Urban Design Framework

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For

Huntingdonshire
district council

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INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Scope of the Urban Design Framework (UDF)

- 1.1 This document provides a framework to guide development within the area to the north of Ramsey town centre and is intended to update the policies contained within the Development Plan. The aim is to secure a comprehensive and coordinated approach for the area, capable of harnessing development pressures and other opportunities to stimulate environmental improvements and a greater level of integration into the urban fabric of the town. At the same time, the framework needs to be sufficiently flexible to respond to changes as development proposals emerge.
- 1.2 The area covered by the framework is varied in character comprising areas of employment development, both planned and ad hoc, retail, residential and community uses as well as an unimplemented foodstore permission. A significant proportion of the area is presently undeveloped, despite being allocated for employment for a considerable period of time. However, proposals are now emerging for employment uses, improved access arrangements, a new foodstore development as an alternative to a scheme already granted planning permission and some residential development. The framework provides an important opportunity to draw together these emerging proposals and well-established land uses by taking an integrated view of the area's development and by building on its existing mixed-use character in the most advantageous manner.
- 1.3 Additional land to the south of St. Mary's Road has been included within the framework area. This had formed part of the residential allocation to the west of Ramsey, and whilst the allocation has been deleted following the recommendations of the Local Plan Inspector, this part of the site remains a prime redevelopment opportunity. It consists of previously developed and under-used land and would form part of a defensible urban boundary. Consequently, it is therefore appropriate for its potential redevelopment to be considered.
- 1.4 The extent of the area covered by the UDF can be seen on the attached plans.

Relationship of the Urban Design Framework to the Development Plan and other strategies

- 1.5 The Urban Design Framework is intended to provide interim planning guidance until the existing Huntingdonshire Local Plan is reviewed and replaced by a Local Development Framework. The UDF has not been produced as formal supplementary planning guidance, as it proposes some changes to the mix of uses proposed for this area in the currently adopted Local Plan. Nonetheless, the proposals in the

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INTRODUCTION

framework are broadly in accordance with a number of policies in the development plan and will be subject to public consultation by the Council. It will therefore carry weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

- 1.6 In order to address the potential that exists in the area to the north of Ramsey, it is important that guidance is put in place now to direct development opportunities in the short to medium term. Without such guidance there is a concern that the development of this area could occur in an uncoordinated manner.
- 1.7 This draft of the Urban Design Framework has been prepared in partnership between Huntingdonshire District Council and planning consultants The Development Planning Partnership, with further input from landowners and developers. It addresses one of the priority actions in the Huntingdonshire Community Strategy, under the theme of supporting continued economic success, to develop interim planning guidance for the Ramsey Gateway. This is part of a wider vision and action plan being developed by the community-led Ramsey Area Partnership, of which Huntingdonshire District Council is a key partner.

2.0 RAMSEY & THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AREA IN CONTEXT

General Character and Site Appraisal

- 2.1 Ramsey is located roughly equidistant from Huntingdon, March and Peterborough. It is identified in the Development Plan as a market town and serves the needs of the surrounding villages within a predominately flat, rural, fenland landscape. It also acts to some extent as a dormitory town with significant levels of out commuting for employment and leisure activities.
- 2.2 Ramsey is connected to the wider highway network by the B1040 and B1096, both of which run through the identified Urban Design Framework area. Whilst the access routes to the town are not main 'A' roads, they are typical of those that cover much of the Fens and offer reasonably direct access to a number of strategic transport routes. The High Lode River bisects the framework area into the two areas known as land at The Bill and land at Rivermill. The area covered by the Urban Design Framework is generally unkempt in appearance, with a mixture of vacant buildings, allocated but undeveloped employment land, retail development and underused land.
- 2.3 The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment published in July 2003 considers the High Lode Industrial Area, which has informed the preparation of the Urban Design Framework. It acknowledges that there is *"a generally poor quality environment at the northern gateway of the town"* and the fact that *"the area is capable of accommodating further development"*. The High Lode area does not present a positive image for Ramsey and as the Townscape Assessment puts it, *"areas of derelict and low quality land degrade the northern approaches to the town"*. Furthermore, it identifies that there are *"extensive views from the Fen Margin landscape to the north due to the flat topography and poor boundary treatment and that"* and that the area has a *"disjointed character with little sense of place"*, (Page 112).
- 2.4 Many of the current problems have to some extent been caused by the uncertainty that by developers faced following the review and deletion of the western Ramsey housing allocation. The Urban Design Framework seeks to address this problem by providing clear guidance to developers and a framework within which proposals can be brought forward to fruition.
- 2.5 An appraisal of the site has been undertaken to identify the key areas for inclusion within the Urban Design Framework and to assess the various opportunities and constraints. The extent of the framework area and its relationship with Ramsey town centre can be seen on the attached plan, **Figure 1**. The results of the site appraisal can be seen on plan **Figure 2**, which identifies the following:

- The quality of the landscape is generally poor, with areas of derelict land and buildings that degrade the appearance of the north of the town.
- The existing buildings and developments have grown on a sporadic ad-hoc basis and lack design cohesion.
- A mixture of building styles and uses exist in the area, ranging from metal clad industrial units to brick built houses.
- The landscape is typical of the Fens with open views across flat topography.
- A number of the boundaries have limited planting and screening, leaving the buildings exposed to views from the countryside beyond.
- The riverside area is degraded by the presence of the scrap yards, vacant land, and the back of industrial units.
- The river itself presents a significant barrier to movement across the site.
- Views across the High Lode River should be retained to create a visual link between Rivermill and The Bill.
- The existing trees along St. Mary's Road should be retained where possible.
- The junction of St. Mary's Road and Great Whyte creates a focal point.
- St. Mary's Road is one of the main routes leading to and from the Ramsey and cuts through the centre of the urban Framework Area.
- Foot Drove, running alongside the High Lode River is in poor condition, with a rough, broken tarmac surface that degrades the riverside setting.
- Public access to the surrounding countryside is currently fairly limited at present.

2.6 The results of the appraisal and the opportunities created are discussed in more detail in Section 4.

Planning History

2.7 The framework area is subject to a number of outstanding planning permissions. These include permission for a local centre consisting of a foodstore, shop units and community facilities on land at Rivermill. Whilst some of the development was implemented, the foodstore and shop units were not completed, although it is recognised that permission remains extant. More recently planning permission was granted for a single foodstore on the same site measuring some 2,044 m² gross that combined the unimplemented floorspace into a single unit. A further application has been made and is presently under consideration by the Council to relocate this permitted floorspace, but increased in size to 3,397 m² gross onto land at The Bill, north of St. Mary's Road.

- 2.8 The Bill is also the subject of an extant planning permission for employment development and workplace homes, including an access roundabout onto St. Mary's Road. A further revised application for employment development on this site is currently under consideration.
- 2.9 The land to the south of St. Mary's Road is subject to an outline planning application for residential development, which is still under consideration by the Council. The general extent of the various planning permissions and current applications can be seen on plan, **Figure 3**.

Development Plan Allocations

- 2.10 The adoption of the 2002 Local Plan Alteration reduced the scale of residential development proposed at Ramsey considerably, including the deletion of the major housing scheme to the west of Ramsey. The land to the south of St Mary's Road identified here, was formerly allocated for residential development as part of the Ramsey West proposals.
- 2.11 The majority of the Urban Design Framework area has either already been allocated in the Local Plan; has an outstanding planning consent, or is previously developed brown-field land. The framework does not seek to fundamentally move away from previous development aspirations for this area, but to update and channel them to reflect the current circumstances of Ramsey, local needs and the economy. The extent of the Local Plan allocations can be seen on plan, **Figure 1**.
- 2.12 A significant proportion of the Town Centre is designated as a Conservation Area, which places certain limitations on the type of development that would be acceptable. In any event, the size and range of sites that could accommodate development of a meaningful scale are simply not available. Consequently, development has evolved to the north of the town, including the community type uses, employment and retailing. These uses are complimentary to the town centre rather than a rival to it, and development would serve to enhance the future viability and vitality of Ramsey securing its continued prosperity.
- 2.13 The employment proposals remaining within the framework area are indicated on plan **Figure 1**. These include land at the employment allocations at St. Mary's Road, which designate a wider area than that subject to the planning applications referred to above. Additionally, the High Lode Industrial Estate is designated as a *"recent major employment completion or outstanding major commitment"*, which also covers the land at Rivermill subject to extant permission for a foodstore.

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POLICY CONTEXT

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The statutory development plan consists of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan adopted in October 2003 and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan adopted December 1995. Alterations to the housing and settlement strategy policies of the Local Plan were adopted in December 2002. The Alteration to the Local Plan was not comprehensive and focused upon updating the settlement strategy and housing land provision policies and ensuring that the provision of services and facilities related to the needs of new development.

Cambridgeshire Structure Plan

- 3.2 In general terms, the Structure Plan identifies where the majority of new development should be located, and seeks to focus it upon the cities of Peterborough and Cambridge, the market towns (identified as Chatteris, Ely, Huntingdon, March, St Ives, St Neots and Wisbech) and on a lesser scale the market towns of Ramsey and Whittlesey. Key aims are to encourage the use of previously developed land, provide sustainable transport choices and minimise the distances that have to be travelled by car.
- 3.3 Ramsey is identified as one of the market towns in the County where encouragement should be given to small and medium scale employment opportunities and estate-scale new housing developments appropriate to the role of the town as a focus for the rural hinterland.
- 3.4 The general strategy is to move towards achieving a better balance of housing and work opportunities within the market towns, principally by stimulating local economies through the promotion of new employment opportunities and locating housing to ensure an overall sustainable pattern of development is achieved that reduces the number of car journeys that have to be made.
- 3.5 In terms of retail policy, the Structure Plan seeks to locate proposals in accordance with the sequential test, namely within town centres or on edge of centre sites. If no such sites are available, then out of centre locations can be considered where the development would address an identified need, be of a scale appropriate to the catchment area and be accessible to a range of transport modes.

Huntingdonshire Local Plan

- 3.6 One of the key changes in policies affecting Ramsey has been the deletion of the major housing allocation to the west of Ramsey, as originally identified in the 1995 Adopted Local Plan. Nevertheless, some further growth to the town is envisaged, with Policy HL4 of the 2002 Alterations to the Local Plan allowing for some estate-scale residential development in Ramsey, but only if there would be no adverse impact on the transport network.

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POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.7 In keeping with national planning guidance the Local Plan expects housing developments to make the best use of previously developed, i.e. brownfield land, and to be designed to a high quality.
- 3.8 Chapter 4 of the 1995 Local Plan relates to Shopping. In general terms the plan seeks to protect the overall vitality and viability of established centres, by focusing new shopping development within town centres. However, if no suitable sites are available in such locations or on edge of centre sites, then out of town sites can be considered. This has obviously been supplemented by national planning policies and Ministerial Statements referring to the demonstration of need.
- 3.9 Turning to consider employment development, Policy E3 allocates a total of 16.6 hectares to the north of St. Mary's Road for employment uses, within B1, B2 and B8 uses classes with Policy E9 encouraging any such development to come forward within Ramsey. This reflects the general strategy identified by the Structure Plan to provide opportunities to work close to home, thereby creating more sustainable forms of development by reducing the need to travel.

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

4.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- 4.1 The policies of the development plan, as well as national planning guidance have informed the preparation of this Urban Design Framework. The majority of land covered by the framework is already allocated for development in the Local Plan; subject to planning consents; or previously developed land, indicating the support that the District Council has given to the development of this area over the years.
- 4.2 The Urban Design Framework provides an opportunity to take the individual sites, respective planning consents and existing developments, refine the arrangement of the various uses and adopt a holistic approach to planning, design and co-ordination of the whole area.
- 4.3 The site appraisal referred to in Section 2 and as shown on plan **Figure 2**, identified a number of opportunities and constraints in relation to the framework area. These are discussed in more detail below.

Land Uses

- 4.4 The Urban Design Framework seeks to encourage a well-planned, high quality gateway to Ramsey. It will allow the existing development pressures to be shaped and directed to provide a mixed-use development that meets the needs of the town in the future. The opportunity should be taken now to direct the existing development commitments and allocations that have evolved over time. In taking a strategic view of the development area, the framework seeks to group the various land uses together in a more cohesive manner and make the best use of existing features such as the riverside area. The general arrangement of land uses can be seen on the Indicative Masterplan, **Figure 4**.
- 4.5 The majority of the framework area has been identified in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan for employment development. Some of this land has already been developed and some has the benefit of planning permission, but it is clear that there has not been a particularly high take up of employment land in Ramsey in the past. Hence it is appropriate to review the amount of land allocated for employment and consider alternative and more appropriate uses such as business support facilities, limited housing or retail development, ensuring that the land is used as efficiently as possible and creating a sustainable balance between the provision of homes and employment opportunities as advocated by national planning guidance and the Structure Plan.
- 4.6 As an example, the land at Rivermill, which has longstanding implemented and outstanding consent for a foodstore, is also identified in the Local Plan for employment development. The Urban Design Framework presents the opportunity to consider whether the permitted uses and allocations make the best use of the land available, taking account of its characteristics and surroundings. The riverside setting around

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Rivermill is already degraded by the presence of industrial buildings, poor quality roadways and derelict land. Further large-scale commercial uses in this location, either retailing or industry, are unlikely to create the domestic scale environment and vibrancy outside of business hours warranted by the riverside setting. Consideration should therefore be given to utilising the Rivermill site for further community facilities and residential development, and transferring the permitted retail floorspace (2,044 m² gross) to elsewhere within the Framework area.

- 4.7 In respect of employment development, the existing proposals and commitments fall mainly within the scope of the sites identified in the Local Plan. The Urban Design Framework allows for the employment land requirement to be reviewed and ensure that the best use is made of the available land. As per the Local Plan Policy E3, encouragement will be given to employment uses within B1, B2 and B8 use classes. The framework also presents an opportunity to encourage the relocation of the scrap yard adjacent to High Lode to a more appropriate location for that type of use.

The Urban Boundary and Landscaping

- 4.8 The framework area forms the northern edge of Ramsey, but is clearly tied within the urban fabric by past expansions of the town along Stocking Fen Road and the southern side of St. Mary's Road. There are also of course the Local Plan proposals that cover the majority of the remainder of the identified area.
- 4.9 The site appraisal found that the urban edge to be poorly defined by sporadic development or recent planning permissions. A number of the uses in the area are industrial units that have been constructed using low cost materials such as metal profile cladding in bright colours. Some of these buildings are visually intrusive and could be softened into the landscape through appropriate planting measures and repainting.
- 4.10 The framework seeks to create a more defensible boundary around the Gateway to Ramsey; one that allows for future growth in the town whilst also providing the opportunity to design an appropriate transition from the urban area to the open countryside. The screening of the new development will be an important factor, through the provision of additional planting along the boundaries of sites or structural planting within individual areas. If possible the structural landscaping and planting should be undertaken in advance of development occurring to allow the site to soften and mature. This is also an opportunity to encourage the enhancement of the landscaping provided around existing premises.
- 4.11 Opportunities must be taken to improve the landscaping along the key routes within the framework area, namely St Mary's Road, Stockingfen Road and the High Lode River.

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Access

- 4.12 It is a key consideration that the type of development suggested by the Urban Design Framework should not have an adverse effect on the transport network in accordance with Local Plan Policy HL4. It is important to recognise that the provision of development within Ramsey presents the opportunity to reduce the need to make longer distance journeys to access facilities and employment elsewhere. Nevertheless, developers should in conjunction with the Highways Authority consider the effects of new development on travel patterns and traffic generation on the local highway network, to gauge the effect their scheme would have on Ramsey.
- 4.13 The development area lies to the north of Ramsey town centre and has good, level footpath linkages with the existing shops in the town. However, within the framework area itself, there is limited provision at present for footpath and cycleway links. This is an opportunity therefore to improve this situation and developers should investigate the opportunities to improve the linkages between the Framework area and the Town Centre.
- 4.14 The High Lode River represents a significant obstacle to movement within the Framework area, effectively dividing it into two distinct areas. This is a key opportunity to realise a long standing aspiration to provide a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over High Lode linking Rivermill and The Bill and providing cyclists and pedestrians an alternative route to the town centre than the St. Mary's Road and Great Whyte junction.
- 4.15 In order to minimise the number of new accesses created onto St. Mary's Road, the Urban Design Framework seeks to provide a co-ordinated approach to development, allowing the proposed retail, employment and residential uses to be accessed via a single roundabout. A key opportunity exists to improve the quality of Foot Drove and bring the roadway up to adoptable standards as well as improving the quality of the environment alongside the river. This would be achieved through further discussion between the Highways Authority and landowners.

Drainage Issues

- 4.16 The framework area is very low lying and is divided by the High Lode River. The impact of development on land drainage and surface water run off would be key considerations.

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Land Contamination Issues

- 4.17 Elements of the framework area consists of previously developed land, in particular the scrap yard and former industrial land adjacent to St. Mary's Road. Investigation into the level of potential land contamination will be required to ensure that appropriate remediation measures are in place to resolve any contamination issues. This may place a constraint either physically or financially upon the types of uses that can be accommodated on certain parts of the framework area.

Riverside Development, Tourism and Ecology

- 4.18 The riverside area is presently dominated by underused land on the eastern bank, with planning consent for a foodstore, and on the western bank a scrap yard. The setting of the river has not been capitalised upon and the opportunity exists to improve the urban design qualities of this area as well as the facilities for both formal and informal recreation and tourism to the benefit of both residents and visitors to Ramsey.
- 4.19 Consideration should be given to the ecology of the area, including the opportunities for providing public access to the fenland alongside the High Lode River towards Ramsey Marina.

Land Ownership

- 4.20 Much of the Urban Design Framework area falls under the control of a relatively limited number of landowners. This reduces the complexity of bringing forward development proposals, and increases the prospects of implementing the objectives of the Urban Design Framework in the short term.

Traffic and Transport Implications

- 4.21 The forthcoming proposals will need to take into account the traffic and transport implications to ensure that there is not an adverse impact on the highway network.

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OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES OF THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

5.0 OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES OF THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

5.1 The overall vision for the Ramsey Gateway area is to create a comprehensive mixed-use development, which adopts a cohesive and coordinated approach to the various development sites and industrial proposals that have emerged to date. The objectives of the Urban Design Framework are to:

- Create a high quality development or 'gateway' on an important approach to Ramsey.
- Regenerate derelict land, vacant buildings and industrial uses to enhance the approaches to the town and make the best use of brown field land.
- Encourage unneighbourly employment uses to be relocated to more appropriate sites.
- Ensure a suitable transition between the urban area and open countryside and maintain and enhance views.
- To provide high quality landscaping and screening around the boundaries of the site and dividing the development area to ensure adequate screening and improve the setting of the development and promote greater biodiversity.
- To achieve a comprehensive high quality mixed use development.
- Encourage employment development to come forward on land allocated in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan, bringing new jobs and prosperity to Ramsey.
- Secure a new foodstore to meet the identified need for larger, higher quality, main food shopping facilities in Ramsey and reduce outflow of expenditure to other centres.
- Provide for residential development on small-scale estates to meet ongoing local needs for additional housing, which meets the requirements of national planning guidance and reflects the character of the area.
- Include a series of beneficial community facilities such as a library, children's pre-school nursery, and a new community hall.
- Enhance the recreational and tourism potential of the area by capitalising on the setting of the river and fenland beyond.
- Encourage sustainable forms of development and transport choices and reduce the net outflow of traffic from the town for work and shopping trips.
- Improve the accessibility of the area to pedestrians and cyclists to and from the town and Rivermill area, including a new footbridge across High Lode, and to open countryside beyond.
- Integrate public transport facilities with the town centre.
- Encourage single points of access from a new roundabout on St. Mary's Road and investigate further access points from Foot Drove. The Rivermill site could be accessed using the existing arrangements from Stocking Fen Road.

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OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES OF THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

- 5.2 The objectives of this brief have been developed in the context of the District Council’s planning policies, national planning guidance, advice from consultants and the aspirations of local needs and community groups.



High Lode – Indicative View

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DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

6.0 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**Introduction**

- 6.1 The Brief seeks to encourage the comprehensive development of the area and address the various development pressures that have arisen. Furthermore, the deletion of the major housing land allocation to the west of Ramsey means that it is now appropriate to reassess the level of employment land required to support the town, particularly as the existing allocations have been relatively slow to come forward. It remains important for Ramsey to be the focus for employment growth, but the opportunity is there to reallocate some of the remaining land for other uses, a view supported by national planning policy such as PPG 3 (*para. 42*). This Urban Design Framework seeks to create a planned development that would improve services and facilities within Ramsey by bringing forward new employment, small estate scale housing development and improved retail, recreation and community facilities.

Design Principles

- 6.2 Residential development should be at an estate scale to reflect Local Plan Policy HL4. The Development Plan policies relating to density and affordable housing should be considered, as will the content of Government guidance such as PPG3.
- 6.3 Careful consideration should be given to the design of the residential areas to respect the character of Ramsey, adopting local design features as advocated by the Huntingdonshire Design Guide.
- 6.4 The Guide also puts particular emphasis on the design of industrial and storage buildings. To improve the quality of the 'gateway' to Ramsey it will be necessary to adhere to these principles especially in view of the location of the employment areas.

Sustainable Access

- 6.5 Future development should carefully consider the access arrangements to provide improved linkages to the town centre and also between the two elements of the site. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided throughout the development and linking to the town centre. In keeping with many towns in rural areas, Ramsey presently has relatively limited public transport services. In order to achieve a sustainable form of development, consideration should be given to improving public transport services particularly between the Urban Design Framework area, the town centre and the adjoining residential areas.

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DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Riverside Environment

- 6.6 The Urban Design Framework seeks to improve the environment of the riverside area, creating opportunities for recreational facilities and a more attractive access to Ramsey when approached by water. The built form and landscape around the High Lode and Rivermill basin should be of a high quality.

Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

- 6.7 Careful consideration should be given to the treatment of the boundaries of the Framework area to ensure that the development is appropriately sited within the landscape. Given the flat topography of the area, it is envisaged that this landscape treatment would involve landscape buffer zones around the external boundaries to screen the development and provide an appropriate setting to the new buildings, but also allowing views into the site to be achieved. Landscaping within the sites, particularly the industrial areas, will be needed to reinforce the linear field boundaries and allow for screening as the development progresses. Hard and soft landscaping should form a key part of that design approach, creating consistency across the development area and ensuring that setting of Ramsey is respectfully treated and improved upon. These aspects must include the treatment of the landscaping connected to development proposals, buffer zones to define the edges of the brief area, and nature of the hard landscaping and along specific edges such as High Lode, St. Mary's Road and other adoptable areas. The environment along St. Mary's Road should be improved where possible through good quality urban design including the planting of additional trees to create an avenue defining the gateway to Ramsey.
- 6.8 The general arrangement of the various anticipated land uses at Ramsey Gateway can be seen on the Indicative Masterplan, (**Figure 4**), attached to the Urban Design Framework. Reference will need to be made to the Huntingdonshire District Council's 'Landscape and Townscape Assessment' as well as the 'Design Guide' to assist in producing the initial analysis and concept work for each area. The various uses are described in more detail as follows:

Employment Land, North of St. Mary's Road - A

- 6.9 An outline planning application is under consideration by the Council for the development of office and industrial units on the land adjoining St. Mary's Road, which would provide local employment for Ramsey and reduce the need to travel to other centres further afield. The buildings should be appropriately designed to reflect the gateway status of this element of the framework area, but also to integrate with their wider setting. Access should be gained from a roundabout on St. Mary's Road that is designed to a high quality and includes appropriate landscaping, that is shared between the

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DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

employment development, adjacent foodstore and residential development to the South in order to minimise the impact of access and highway interventions.

- 6.10 The employment buildings should be designed and sited with care to reduce the apparent scale and massing and to enliven on street frontages. A high quality of design will be expected, including the palette of materials for walls and roofing as well as design features to break up the expanse of façades. Proposals will also be expected to provide significant boundary landscaping and screening to soften the outline of the industrial units into the Fenland landscape. The treatment of the boundaries of the site will need to be carefully considered, as will landscaping within the site to reduce the overall apparent massing of development and soften the impact of the hard surfaces and buildings. An avenue of trees should be considered for the St. Mary's Road frontage, to reflect that seen along the southern side of the road.
- 6.11 Consideration will be given to proposals for development on the remainder of the allocated employment land to the north, if the Council can be convinced that satisfactory access arrangements can be achieved and that there would not be an adverse impact on the highway network.

Employment Land, South of St. Mary's Road - B

- 6.12 The Urban Design Framework area includes the land to the south of St. Mary's Road, as it is equally important in terms of creating a high quality gateway to Ramsey as that on the northern side. Encouragement will be given to proposals that improve the appearance of this area and create a co-ordinated approach with the development on the northern side of the road, which may involve environmental improvements and or the redevelopment of existing sites. In particular, the improvement of the boundary treatments and landscaping, including the planting of trees along St. Mary's Road is be a key requirement of the Brief.

Proposed Foodstore and Petrol Filling Station, St. Mary's Road - C

- 6.13 As identified in Section 4, it is envisaged that the consented foodstore from the Rivermill site would be transferred to land at The Bill, in order to release the Rivermill site for more appropriate types of development and also allow a larger foodstore to be constructed that more adequately addresses the identified needs of the town. An outline application has been submitted for foodstore of 3,397 m² gross on the Bill and assessed by the Council's retail consultants CB Hillier Parker.
- 6.14 They concluded that there is an identified need for a larger, better quality foodstore in Ramsey and have found no alternative more centrally located opportunity sites that could accommodate this need. They also state that the proposed store would not seriously undermine the existing

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DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

convenience sector within Ramsey town centre, but recognise that it may well lead to the closure of the poorly performing out of centre Co-op Rainbow store. However, due to the out of centre location of this store it is not afforded policy protection. CB Hillier Parker also indicate the high levels of expenditure leakage from Ramsey to other foodstores further afield as a result of the qualitative deficiencies of the existing food shopping provision within the town.

- 6.15 The Council will expect a foodstore to be a high quality development and create a building of high quality design, which integrates well with it's setting. It should have good connections with the other proposals coming forward in the area and improve the linkages for pedestrians and cyclists into the town centre via the bridge across High Lode and along the main road, and visually connect the new developments with the town centre by the use of public art. Vehicular access should be taken from a roundabout on St. Mary's Road and be shared with some of the other identified land uses. The design of the roundabout should be agreed with the highways authority.

Mixed Use Development, St. Mary's Road - D

- 6.16 It is envisaged that mixed-use development would be developed to the north of St. Mary's Road, with residential development on the vacant land located to the south. The mixed-use area should include employment in B1 use classes and possibly other commercial activities. Consideration would also be given to the development of workplace homes and workshop spaces to encourage home working and sustainable forms of development. This would be in accordance with the earlier planning permission granted on the site. The design of the buildings should be of a high quality and reflect the character of other parts of Ramsey, potentially drawing upon the design of the Rivermill Apartments and Ramsey Mill.
- 6.17 It is envisaged that residential uses would be more appropriate along the riverside frontage to create a vibrant atmosphere and make the best use of the waterside location. The design of these buildings should be carefully considered to ensure that they achieve a high quality, possibly reflecting the design of the other buildings around the High Lode Basin such as the Rivermill apartments. The view across this part of the site should be maintained to ensure a visual link between the foodstore and the Rivermill area, thus encouraging movement between the areas.
- 6.18 Efforts should be made to provide an access to the site from Foot Drove in order to maintain activity alongside the river frontage. The roadway should be upgraded to adoptable standards as part of wider riverside environmental improvements. A new pedestrian / cycleway bridge across High Lode will be required to connect the development to the Rivermill area, improving the linkages through the site. Indicative layout proposals are shown on Figures 5 and 6.

6

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Ramsey North Station Site – E

- 6.19 The main point of access for the land to the south should be taken from the proposed roundabout on St. Mary's Road. The design of the properties and the materials used should reflect the general character of Ramsey. The existing warehouse building should be retained and connected to act as a local landmark. It is important to create a continuous frontage along St. Mary's Road, to ensure an appropriate street scene and provide a sense of place. Higher density development should be alongside the road and river frontages, possibly in the form of a mixture of apartments and terraced houses, with lower density development behind.











Mixed-Use Development, Rivermill - F

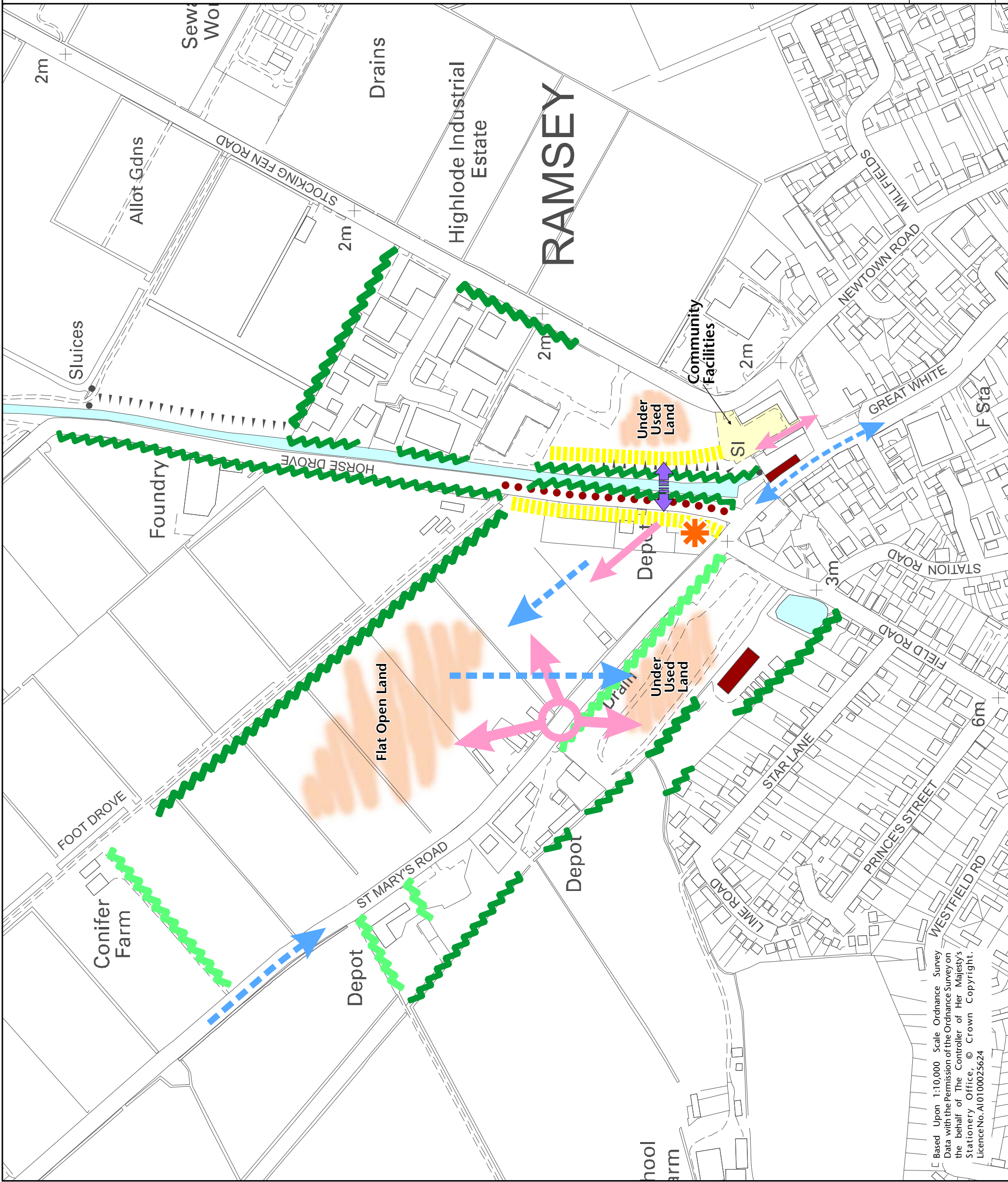
- 6.20 Residential development should be developed alongside the river to create a uniform approach to both sides of High Lode. Higher density development is envisaged to make the best use of the land available and create a sense of enclosure to the Rivermill 'basin'. A high quality approach to design would be required that complements the existing buildings in the area. A new pedestrian and cycleway bridge would be required to ensure linkages between Rivermill and The Bill are improved. Vehicular access to the site would be gained from Stocking Fen Road into a shared car parking area, rather than separate car parks, to make the most efficient use of the land available and provide a cohesive approach to the design of shared spaces and landscaping.
- 6.21 Additional community facilities should be located in this area to create a nucleus of provision with the existing doctors surgery, pharmacy, call-in centre and childcare facilities. It is envisaged that the new facilities would include a library supported by Local Plan Policy CS6, and a community resource facility. It is important that the linkages into the site are maintained and improved upon to ensure that the connectivity with the other parts of the framework area is maximised.
- 6.22 Interest has also been expressed for a new children's pre-school nursery centre, which could also be located within the grouping of community facilities. This would provide day child care facilities for those working in the area and complements the aim of achieving a sustainable form of development with facilities in close proximity to each other.

Potential Further Redevelopment Areas

- 6.23 Additional areas have been identified that may, in the future, require further consideration. In some cases their continued existence may affect the successful implementation of the proposals. In other cases they may be adversely affected by the new proposals.

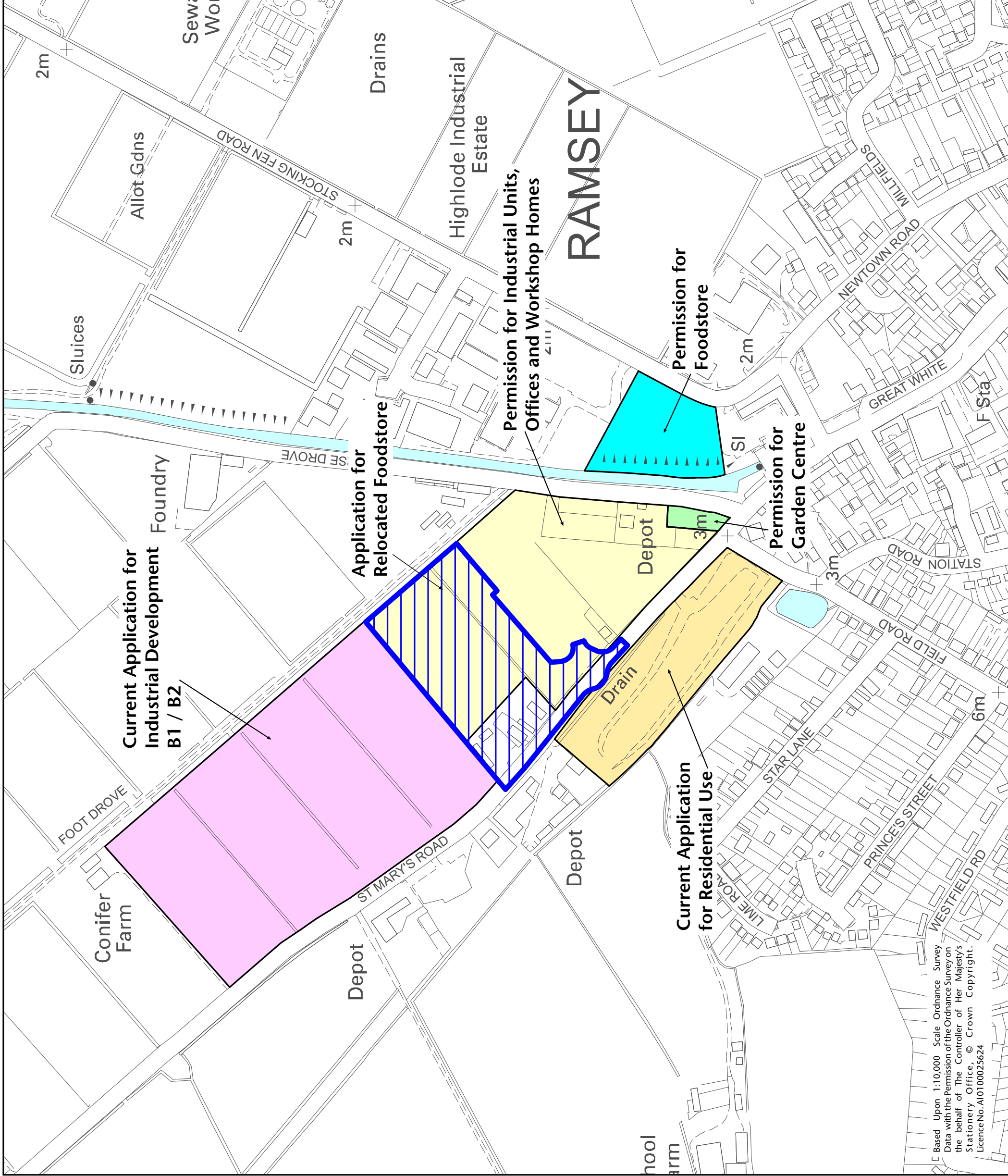
Figure 2

-  Linkage Required
-  Focal Point
-  Sensitive Boundaries
-  Existing Landscaping
-  Poor Quality Road Surface
-  Access Points
-  Significant Views
-  Key Improvement Corridor
-  Significant Buildings
-  Water Body



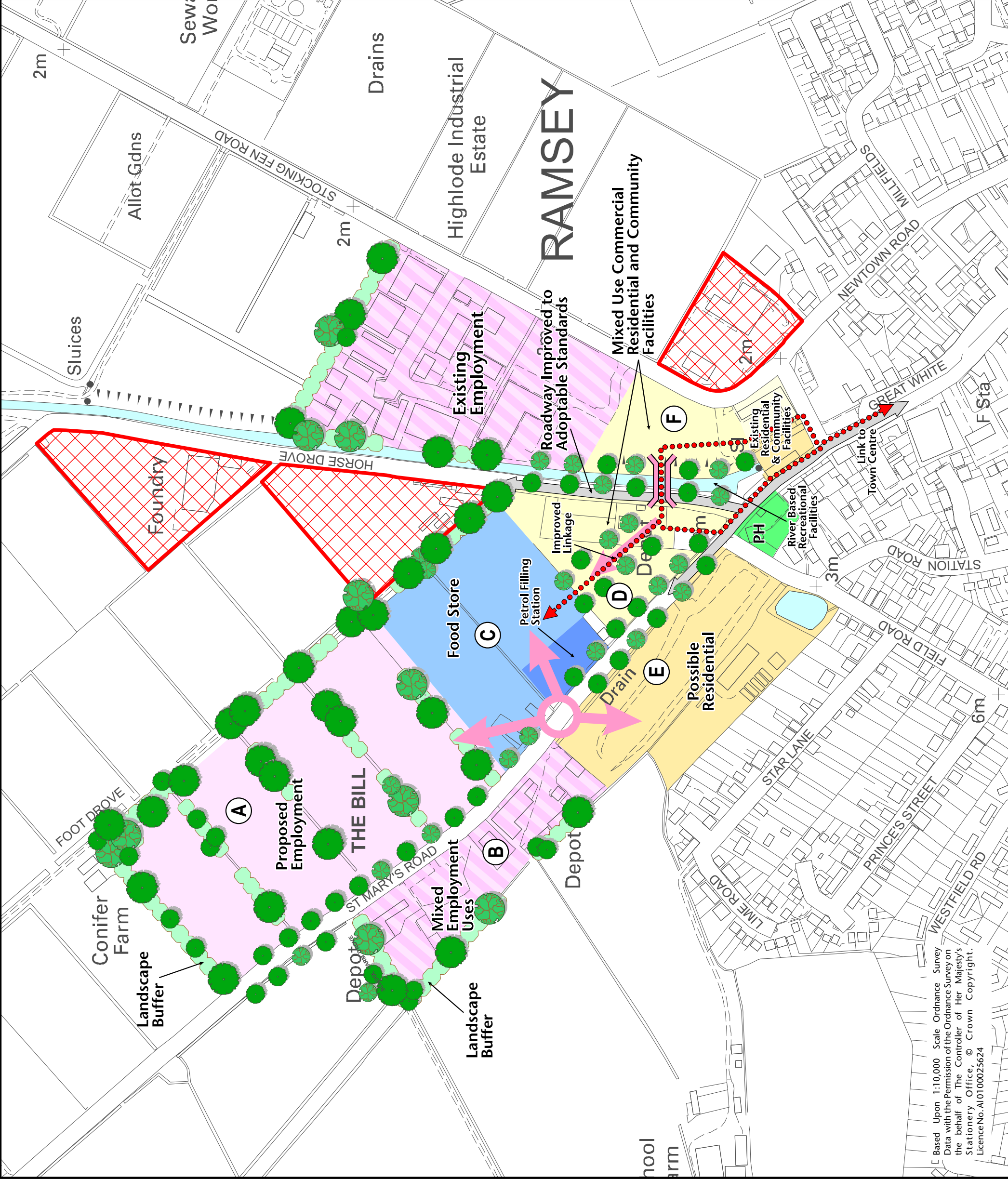
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Figure 3



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Figure 4



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Figure 5

- Waterfront edge
- Urban Street edge
- Street edge
- Supermarket 'active' front

St Mary's Road - D
Indicative block
structure
Ramsey Northern
Gateway

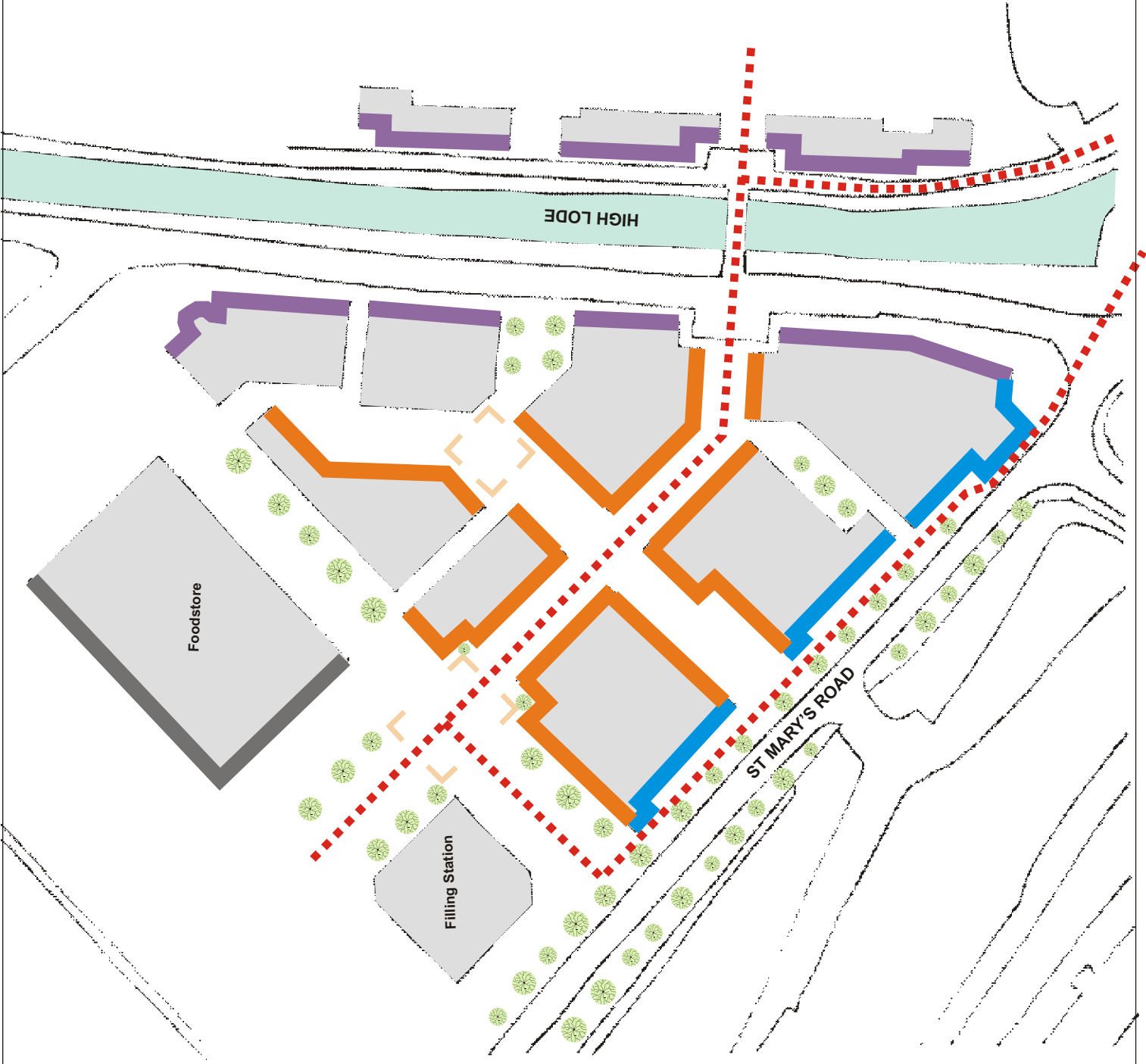


Figure 6

**St Mary's Road - D
Indicative layout
Ramsey Northern
Gateway**

