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| Agenda Item No: | 9 |  |
| Committee: | Cabinet | |
| Date: | 22 March 2021 | |
| Report Title: | March - Future High Street Fund | |

1 Purpose / Summary

- The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bid to MHCLG. This paper details the final expected grant award value from both MHCLG and match funding agreed by CPCA.
- Further detail is provided regarding the expected spending profile for each workstream within the programme and delivery dates.

2 Key issues

- The government is committed to helping local high streets evolve and adapt to the changing high street experience. They have created a Future High Street Fund with over £1 billion of funding available.
- March was successful in its Expression of Interest (EoI) for the Future High Streets Fund, being one of 50 town centres nationally to be initially shortlisted. Councils were only permitted to submit one application per district/county and March was considered to have the best chance of success in this particular process.
- External expertise was required to produce the full business case required by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Using £150k received from central government as part of the Future High Street Fund process, a consortium of consultants was appointed, led by Hatch Regeneris.
- The details found in **Appendix A** are the culmination of a considerable amount of work from several consultants working together with the Council and other partners. Any drawings or images within the document are draft and not finalised. Designs will be subject to change as the project moves into the delivery phase. Further community consultation regarding the public realm areas will be sought.
- During the development of the submission, FDC Members, March Town Council Members, CPCA and CCC have been involved and consulted. As the project progresses Middle Level Commissioners and Anglian Water will also support the project. This work has run in parallel with the emerging **March Area Transport Study**, with the FHSF bid and the study complimenting and strengthening each other's work. The CCC funded MATS work in Broad Street will deliver the roundabout at the northern end of the street, necessary road alterations and associated pedestrian crossing points. FHSF grant will deliver public realm changes in Broad Street.
- On 26 December 2020 MHCLG announced that March had in-principle been offered a grant of £6,447,129 against our bid of £9,326,949. This reduction of £2,879,820 meant that MHCLG required revised information about FDC's approach to matching the project expenditure with the total funding available of £8,447,129 (£6,447,129 MHCLG + £2,000,000 CPCA).

- Following discussions with Members and supporting consultants, a revised submission to MHCLG maintained 4 of the 5 main workstreams as originally presented, with the Acre Road workstream being downsized to match the revised funding envelope available. This option was the only realistic alteration to the overall project that delivered the necessary savings whilst not impacting on key FHSF / MATS projects.
- In order to realise the funding from both CPCA and MHCLG it is necessary to agree to and/or enter into the standard terms and conditions of the granting authority. Appropriate advice will be sought on the content of those agreements, however they are not expected to be contentious. The proposals have been initially assessed for subsidy control compliance. There will be no subsidy to the Council. Most of the works will be public realm infrastructure and therefore their funding will not amount to a subsidy. The provision of funding in relation to shop units will most likely be dealt with as de minimis funding and thus there will not be unlawful subsidies to the owners. Any disposal of Council land in relation to the Acre Road project is likely to be at market value and thus there would be no subsidy involved. To the extent required, further subsidy control assessment will be undertaken to ensure compliance. Furthermore, all works required will be subject to a compliant procurement process.

3 Recommendations

1. That Cabinet agrees to accept the grant funding detailed below and authorises the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage to work with officers to enter into agreements with both CPCA and MHCLG for those grants.
2. That Cabinet instructs officers to put in place appropriate governance arrangements to facilitate the draw down and appropriate management of grant expenditure, including the management of the project delivery with appropriate contractor and consultant procurement.

Funding Details:

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| £900,000 | CPCA Market Town Fund for March |
| £1,100,000 | CPCA additional support grant |
| £6,447,129 | MHCLG Future High Streets Fund grant |
| £8,447,129 | Total project value |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Wards Affected | March Wards |
| Forward Plan Reference | |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Cllr Chris Boden - Leader of the Council Cllr Chris Seaton - Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage Cllr Jan French - Deputy Leader of the Council |
| Report Originator(s) | Phil Hughes - Head of Leisure Services |
| Contact Officer(s) | Paul Medd - Chief Executive Simon Machen - Interim Corporate Director Phil Hughes - Head of Leisure Services Jo Blackmore - Executive Officer |

Background Papers

Appendix A

March Future High Street Fund bid submission produced by Hatch Regeneris and We Made That, adjusted to reflect January 2021 adjustments to Acre Workstream deliverables.

Appendix B

Overall Cost plan split by funder and workstream

Future High Street Fund MHCLG submission - edited to reflect January 2021 changes to Acre workstream.



XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
WE MADE THAT
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



180 MARCH FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND
APPENDIX B | OPPORTUNITY OPTIONS 30-04-2020

1.0 SHORT-LISTING PROCESS

Short-listing process update

From long list to a preferred option

The design team has considered a long list of opportunities for March Town Centre, including March Station area and High street South to develop the Future High Street Fund bid.

Each of the long list items/projects have been scored and valued in relation to the Future High Street Fund requirements, summarised in the categories listed below:

- Time-scales for delivery
- Key partners needed for delivery
- How critical to improving March Town Centre
- Wider Value, area based uplift
- Expected overall impact on footfall

A number of meetings and workshops have taken place to assist with the process summarised below:

- October 17th - Options Development Workshop - Officers meeting
- October 17th - Options Development Workshop - Members presentation
- December 5th - Short listing workshop - Members meeting
- December 5th - Short listing workshop - Officers meeting

Finally, this short listing process has led the team to choose four different options that have informed the business case for the Future High Street Fund bid.

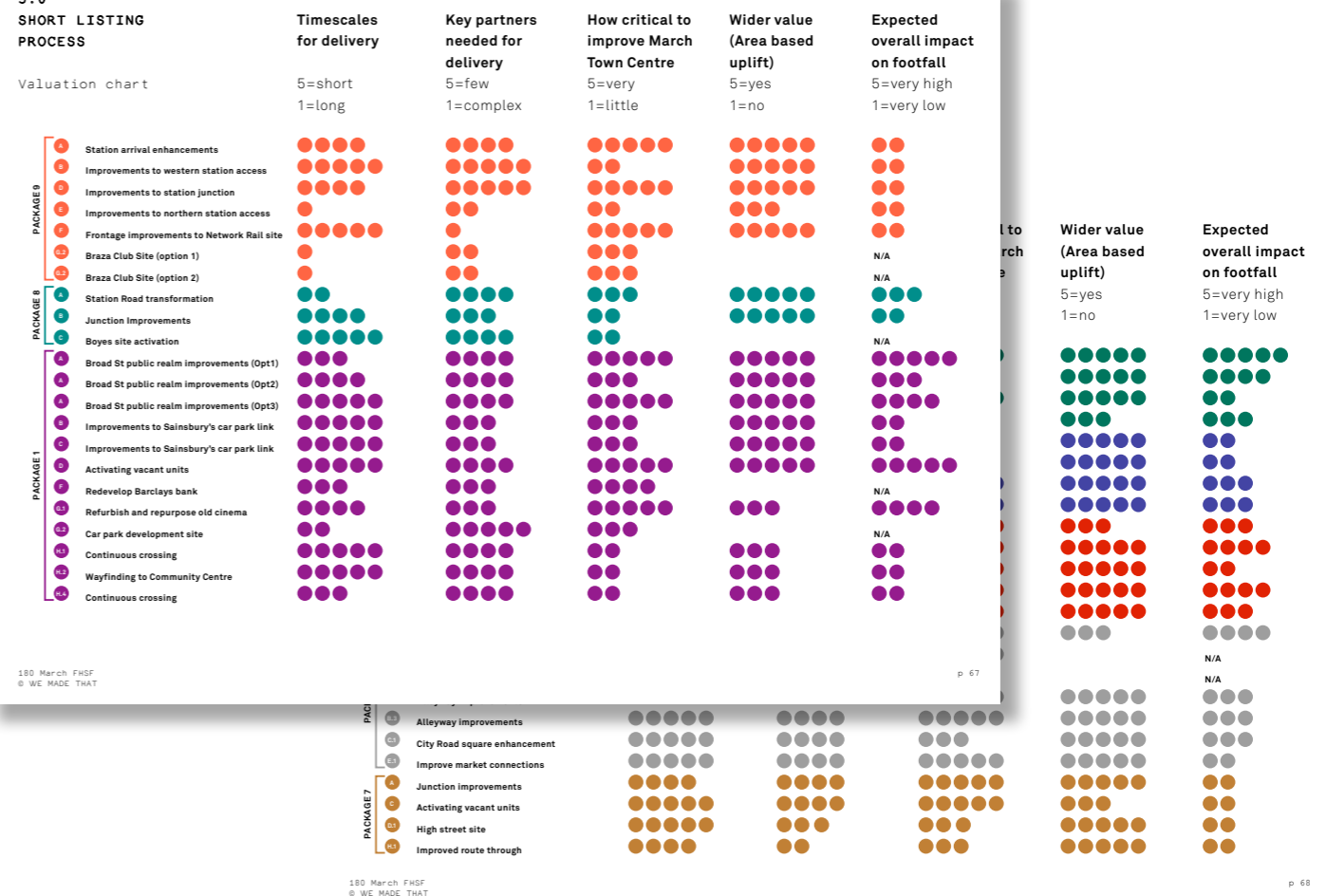
2.0 OPPORTUNITY OPTIONS

The following pages include the background, existing photos and illustrative proposal outlines for the long list of option packages.



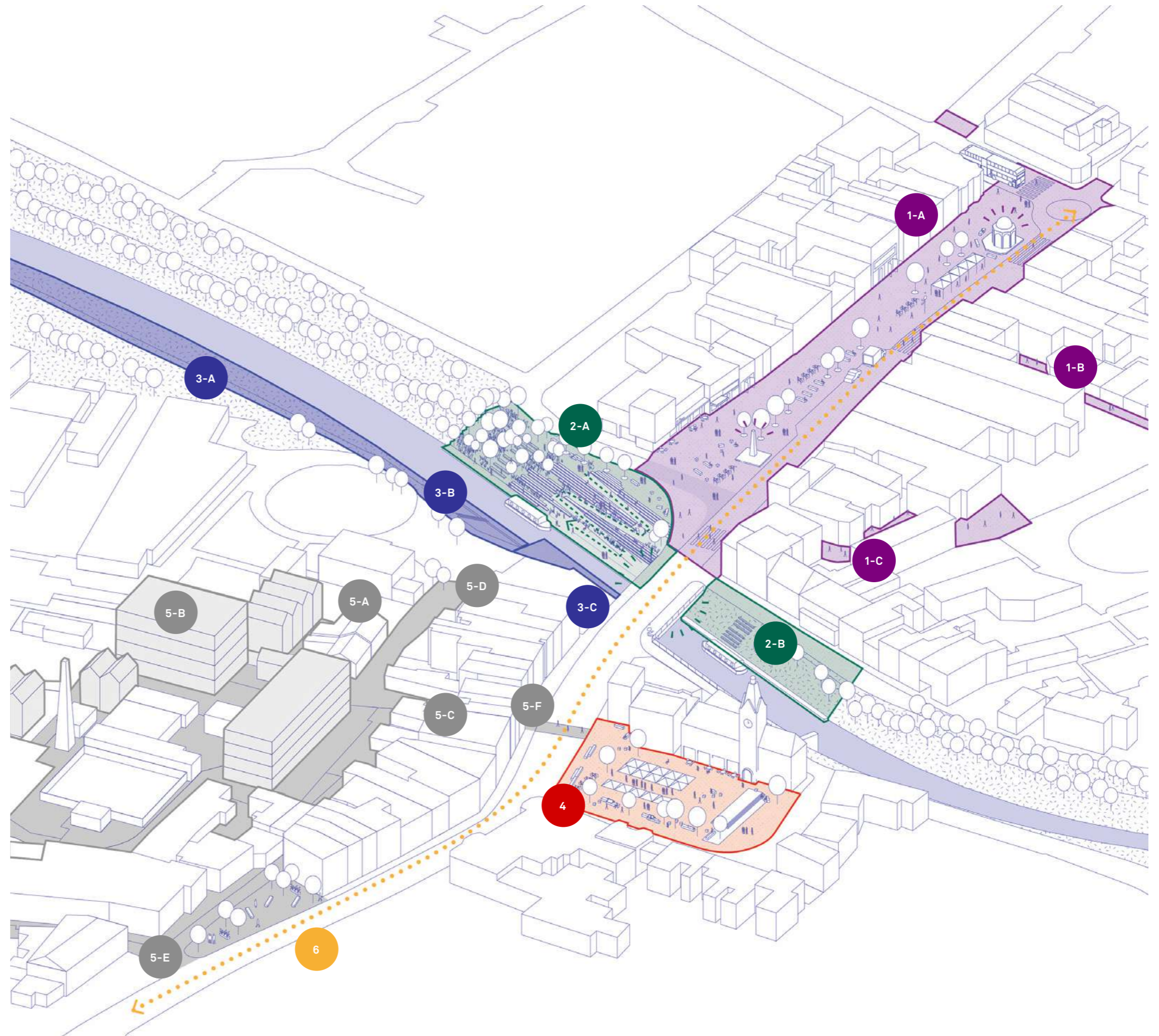
3.0 SHORT LISTING PROCESS

Valuation chart

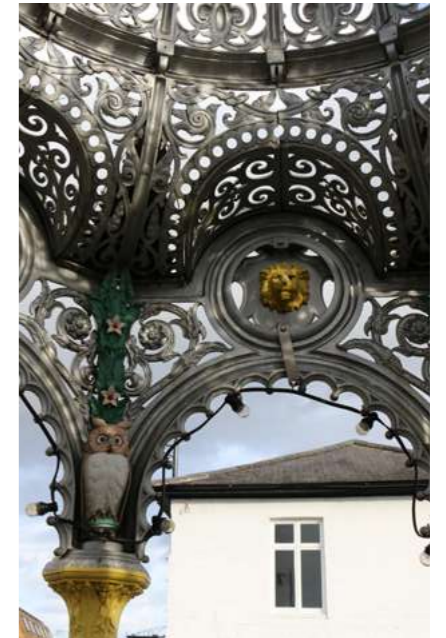
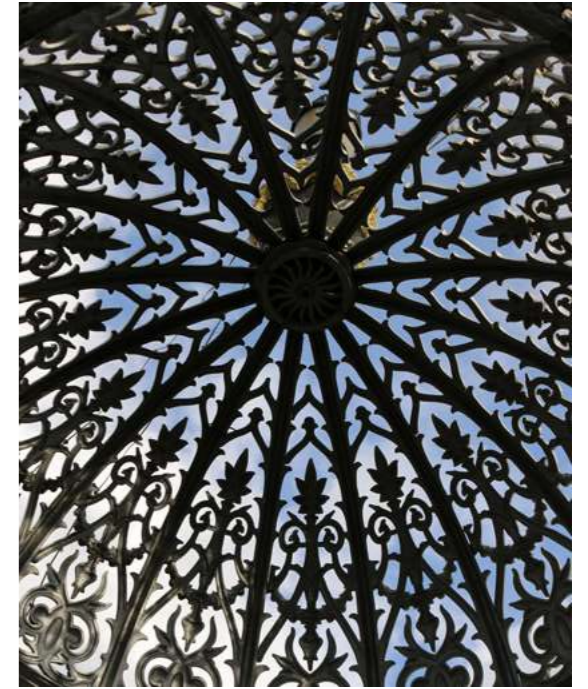


Preferred option

- 1-A Broad Street public realm transformation
- 1-B Improvements to Sainsbury's car park link
- 1-C Improvements to Sainsbury's car park link
- 2-A Riverside transformation
- 2-B River edge at Nene Parade
- 3-A Improved connection to the river and West End Park
- 3-B Improve mooring platform
- 3-C Improved connection from bridge to the Library
- 4 Market Place/Square
- 5-A Refurbishment of vacant units
- 5-B Mixed use development site
- 5-C Alleyway improvements
- 5-D Alleyway improvements
- 5-E City Road square enhancement
- 5-F Improve market connections
- 6 Reactivating vacant units programme



2.0
PREFERRED OPTION
DETAIL DESIGN



BROAD STREET PACKAGE 1

Existing photos

Background

Broad Street is the core of March's Town Centre. Efforts to address the current dominance of cars, create better infrastructure for pedestrians and provide sustainable modes of transport will help to improve experience and dwell time in the Town Centre. Key heritage landmarks should be celebrated as an important part of March's identity. Vacant units offer an opportunity to boost social and civic functions, as alternatives to retail, that are so necessary for the success of future high streets.

Key Partners/Land Owners

Private owners, FDC, CCC adopted highways

Critical Success Factors



Precedents

Precedent image description:

1. An active public realm for leisure and shopping with space for pedestrians and cycles
2. A public space where existing heritage assets are enhanced and part of the main civic space
3. Seating pockets with some greening and lighting
4. An active space for local people to enjoy on the evenings



1



3



2



4

Future High Street Fund proposal - Preferred option approach

1-A

Broad Street public realm transformation

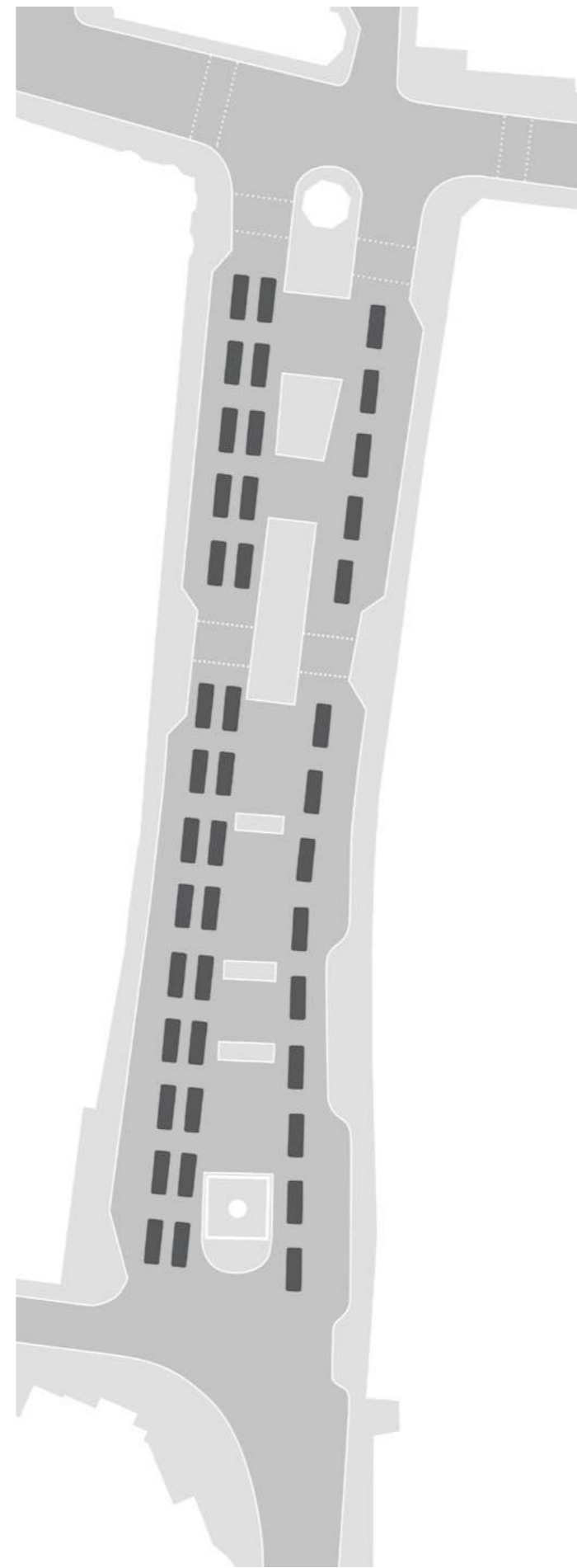
Options to improve pedestrian and cycle experience, celebrate landmarks and reduce dominance of road.

The proposed scheme reduces vehicle dominance in the town centre by increasing public space and addressing issues of severance. This will encourage visitors to spend time and money in the high street. The introduction of a new roundabout will also reduce traffic congestion according to traffic modelling undertaken.

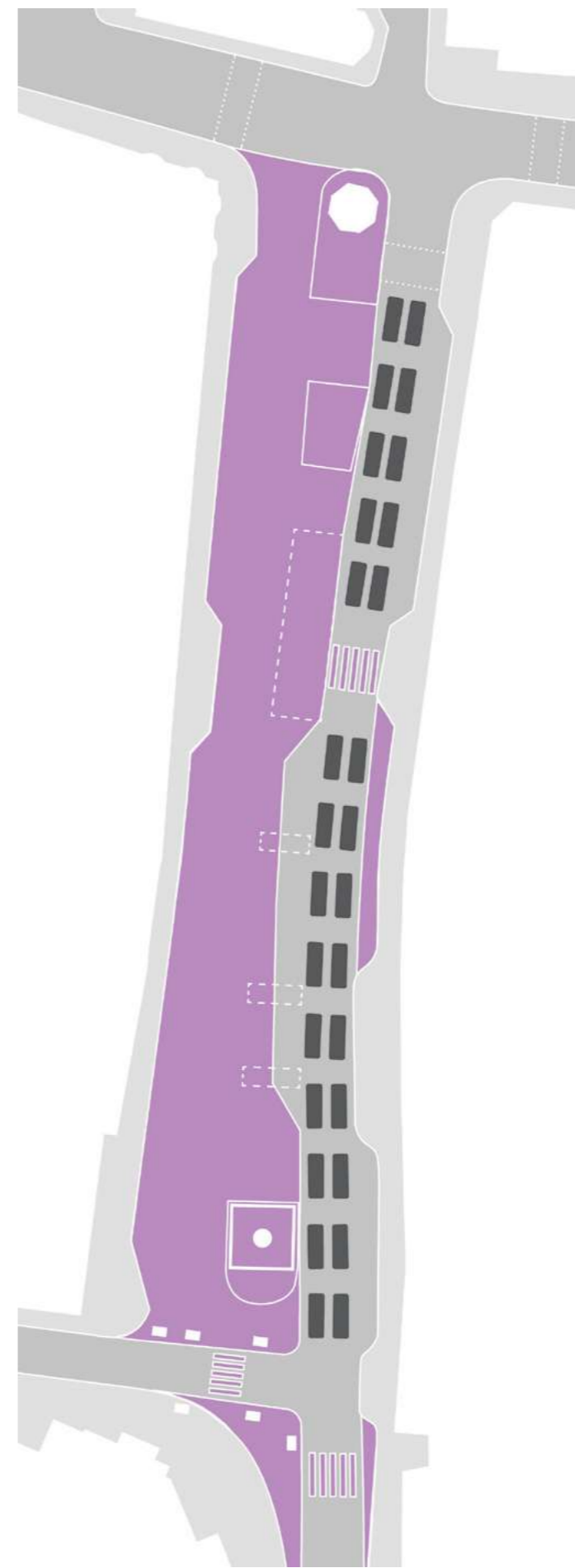
Timescales: 3/5 (medium)

Key partners: CCC adopted highways

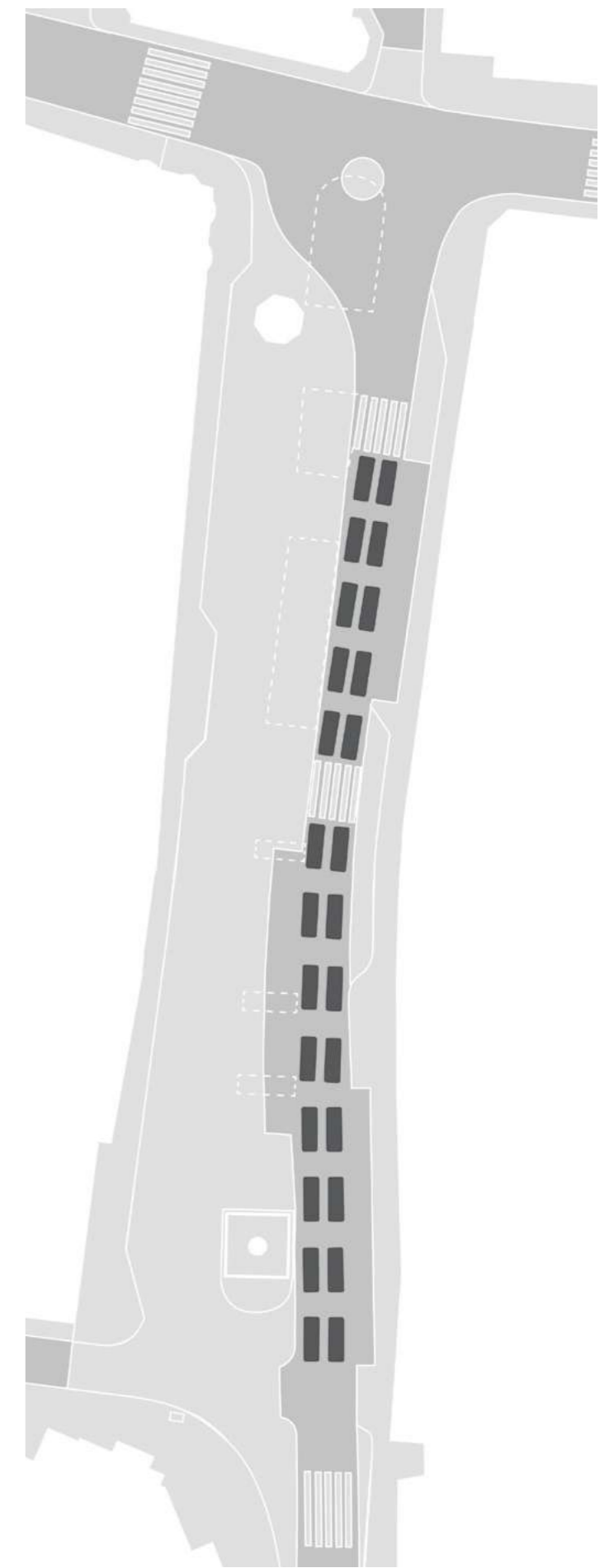
Criticality: 5/5 (high)



EXISTING



FHSF DRAFT OPTION



FHSF PREFERRED OPTION

BROAD STREET PACKAGE 1-A

Public Realm Design Proposal

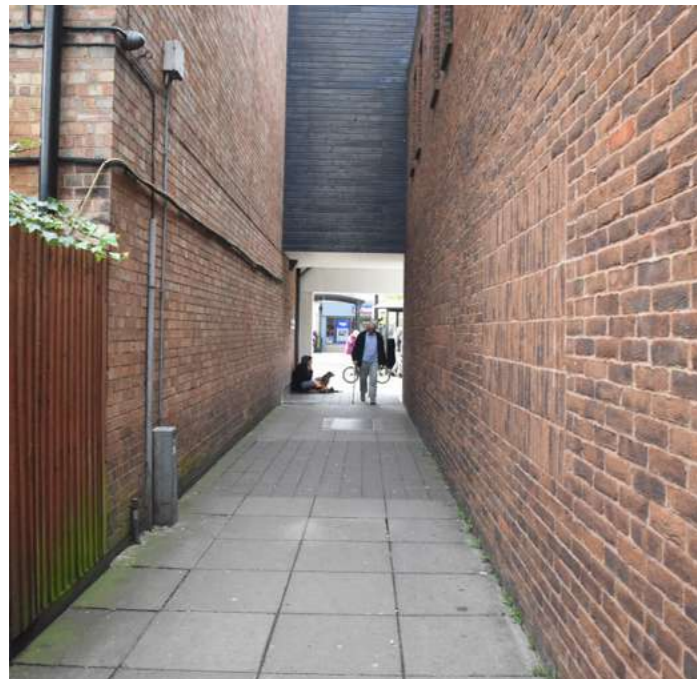




An illustration of the completed scheme for Broad St

BROAD STREET PACKAGE 1-B&C

Improvements to Sainsbury's car park links



Existing photo

1-B

Improvements to Sainsbury's car park links: Fenland Walk

Repaving and new lighting to improve experience and accessibility

The large Sainsbury's super market is highly frequented and has a large car park, but links to the high street are poor quality and do not currently encourage people to combine visits to both locations. Improved public realm will make these links attractive and safe, improving footfall to the town centre.

Timescales: 5/5 (short)

Key partners: CCC adopted highways, private owner
Criticality: 3/5 (medium)



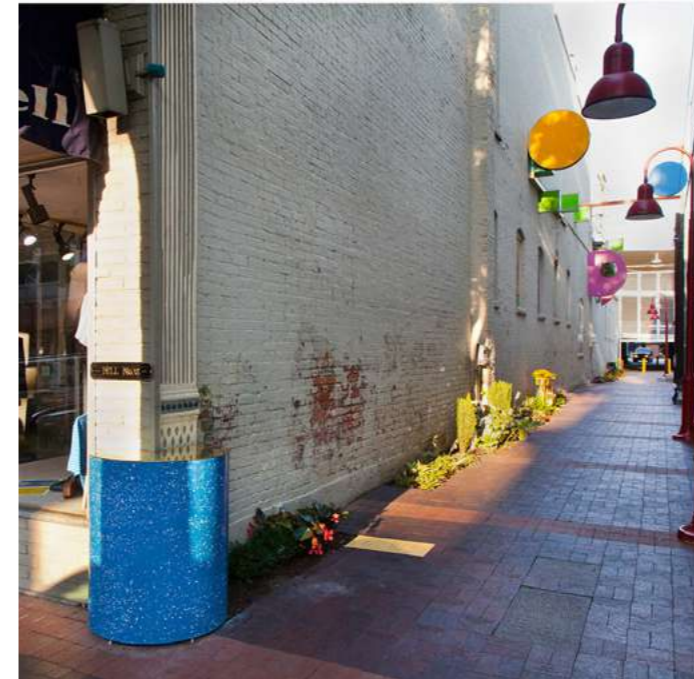
Existing photo

1-C

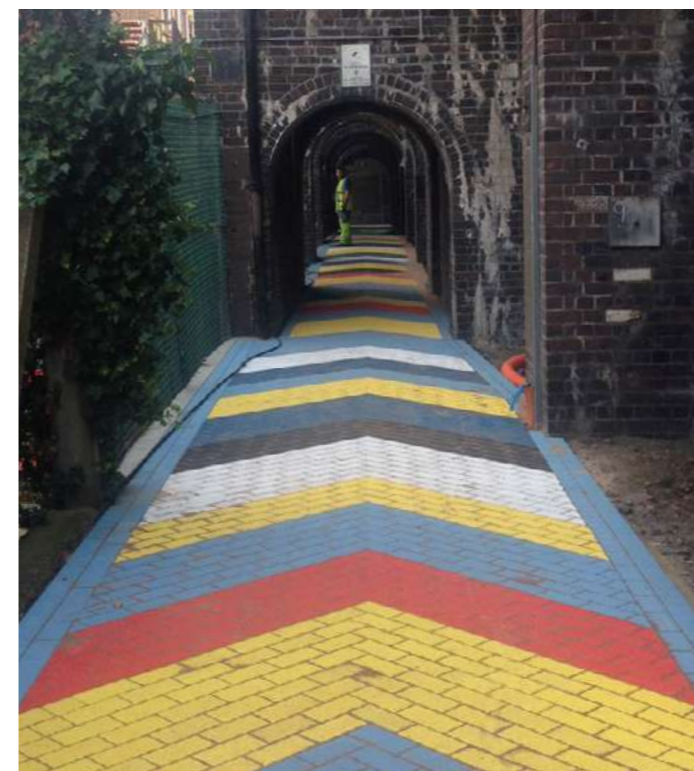
Improvements to Sainsbury's car park links: Mill View

Example image description:

1. Bespoke lighting to increase safety on an alleyway
2. New directional paving to improve accessibility
3. Local art commission to make routes more attractive and promote local businesses
4. New paving for better accessibility and increase character



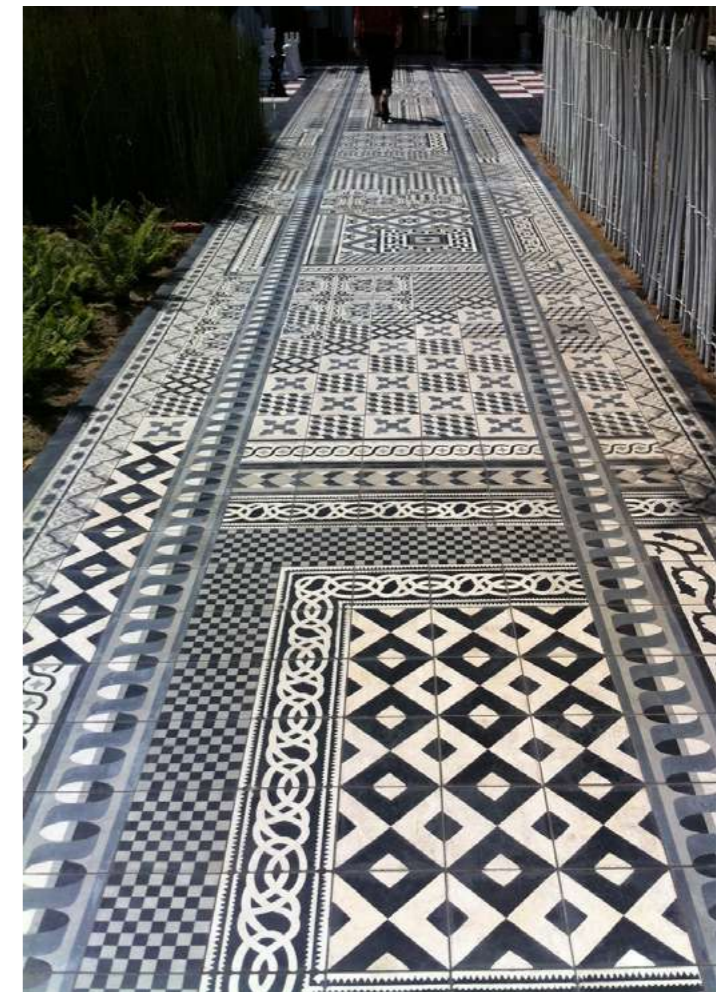
1



2



3



4

RIVERSIDE NORTH PACKAGE 2

Existing photos

Background

Improving access to the River Nene and its surroundings will encourage leisure activities that connect to the surrounding wider network.

Key Partners/Land Owners

FDC, Inland Waterways, Middle Level Commission, private owner, CCC adopted highways

Critical Success Factors

01

Increase the role and prominence of the River Nene as a key feature within the Town Centre

07

Improve March's unique identity as a retail, leisure and cultural destination

08

Promote a work/life balance in town centre (e.g. night time economy)



Precedents

Precedent image description:

1. Stepped area in connection to the river that celebrates the unique asset
2. Stepped area with integrated trees and planting where people can seat informally
3. Permeable and soft materials for integration with the river edge
4. Sloped access to the river for accessibility for all



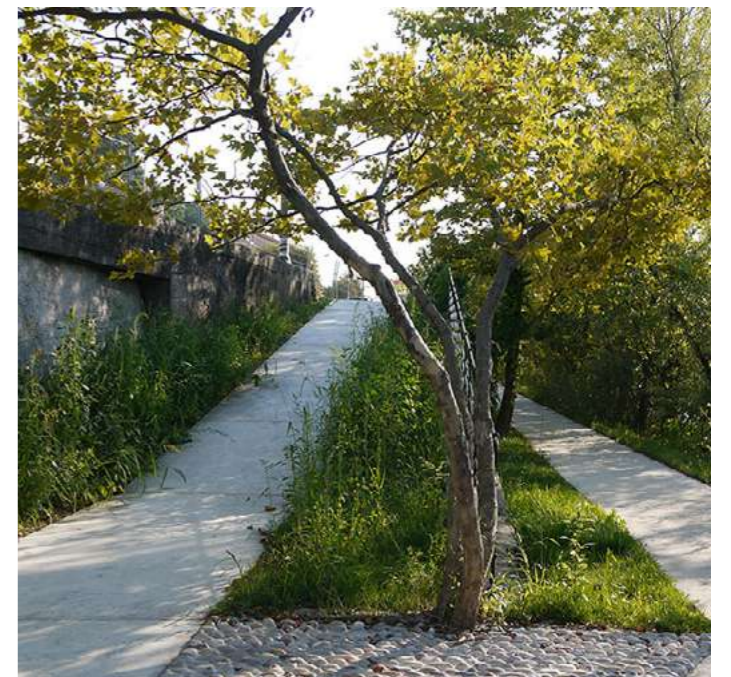
1



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4

RIVERSIDE NORTH PACKAGE 2-A

Design proposal

2-A

Riverside celebration intervention

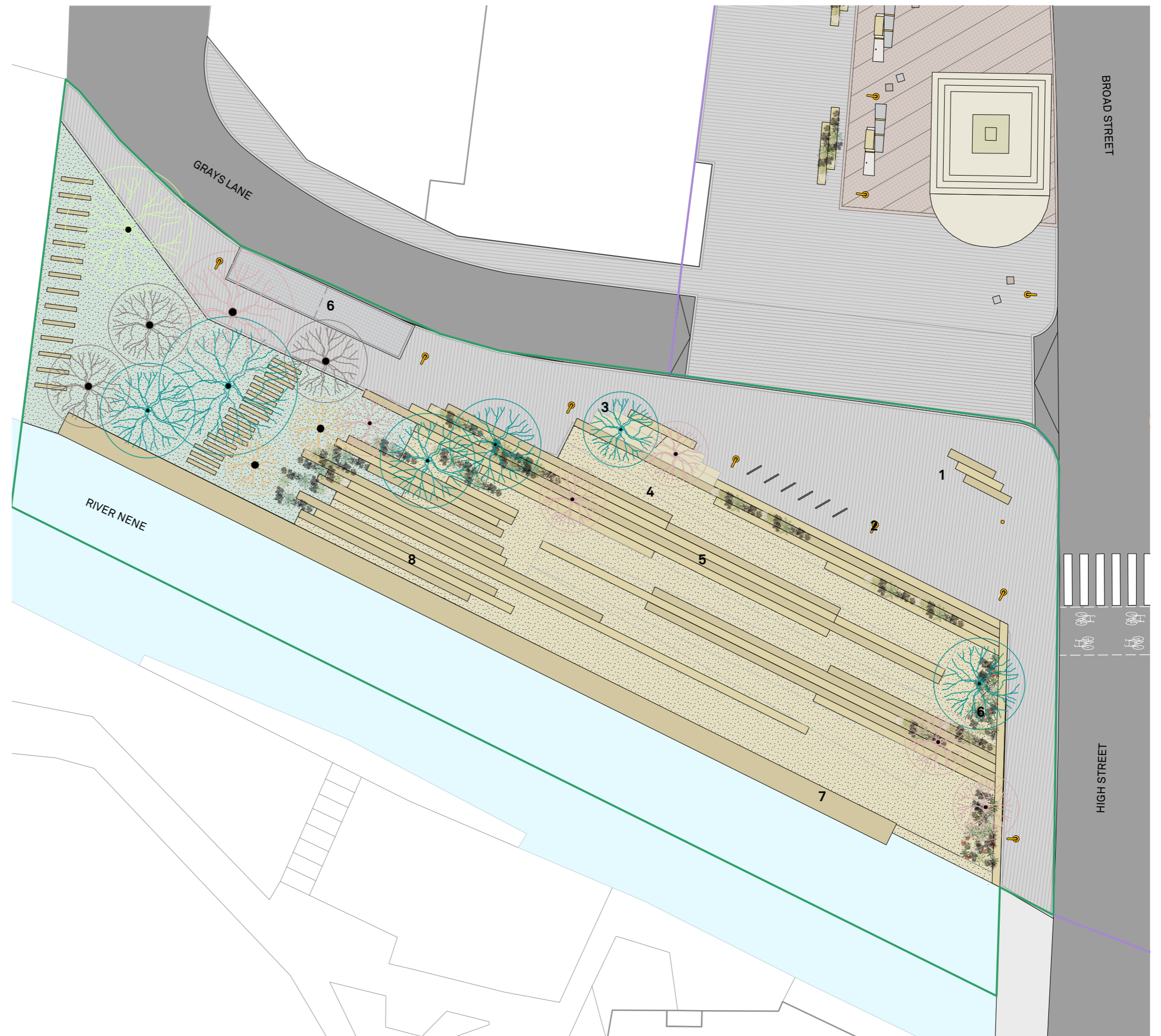
Improve public access and enjoyment of river bank. Shrubs to be cleared for new paved and stepped access to river, with new pavilion (to replace removal of existing toilets) and feature lighting.

The River Nene is an important asset to the town centre, but is currently inaccessible and hardly visible. Opening up the river will support a wider range of visitors to come to March's town centre for leisure and recreation.

Timescales: 4/5 (short)

Key partners: FDC

Criticality: 5/5 (high)



KEY

1. Benches
2. Bike stands
3. Tree and tree pit
4. Accessible access to the river
5. Timber steps
6. Disable bays
7. Level access to river platform
8. Timber steps through tree planted area

Proposed Section

KEY

1. Timber steps down to river
2. Lamp post
3. Bike stand
4. Level access to river platform
5. Memorial at Broad St





An illustration of the completed scheme for the riverside

RIVERSIDE NORTH
PACKAGE 2-B



Existing photo

2-B

River edge at Nene Parade

Improve access to the river by clearing planting and opening up stepped access. Additional steps to river

Timescales: 5/5 (short)

Key partners: Inland Waterways, Middle Level Commission

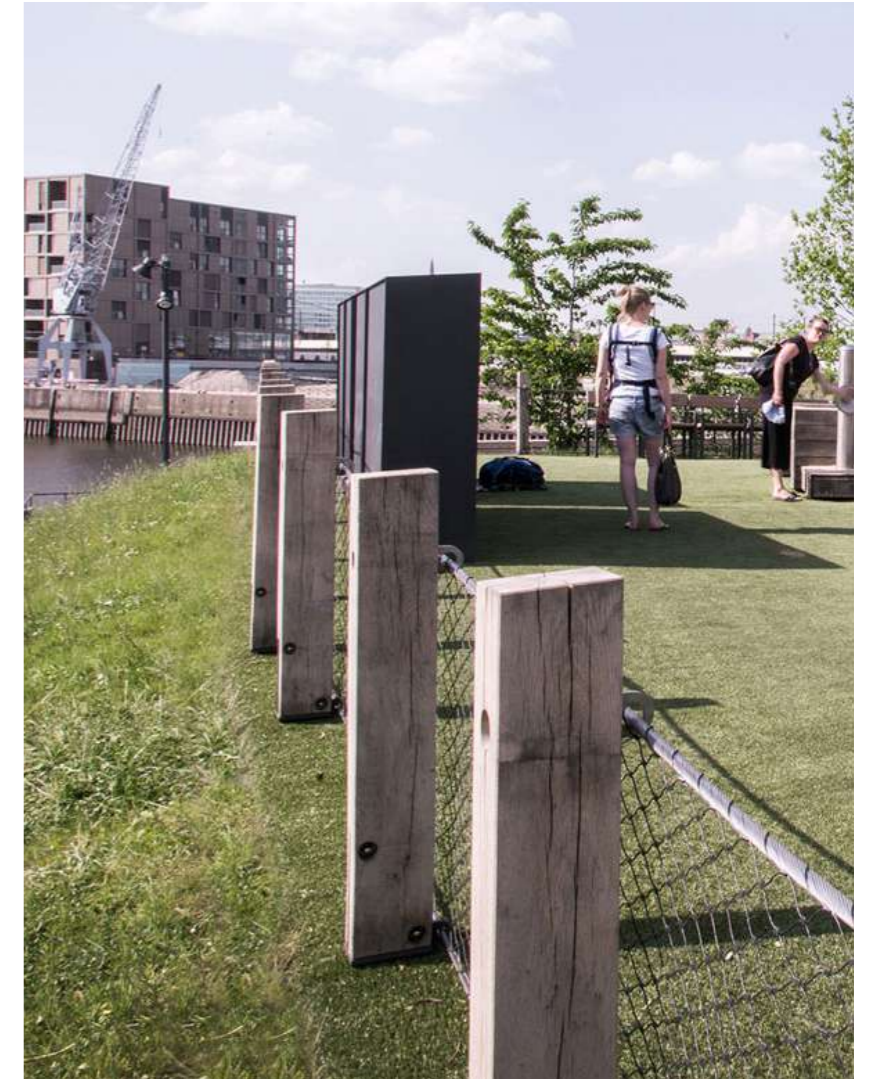
Criticality: 4/5 (high)



1



2



3

Example image description:

1. New timber steps and wide steps combination to provide better access to the river Nene
2. New timber mooring platform for local and visitors boats
3. New fence and edges to the riverbank to the stepped area

RIVERSIDE SOUTH PACKAGE 3

Existing photos

Background

Improving access to the River Nene and connections through from the high street will support enjoyment of leisure activities that connect the Town Centre to the surrounding wider leisure network.

Key Partners/Land Owners

FDC and CCC

Critical Success Factors

01

Increase the role and prominence of the River Nene as a key feature within the Town Centre

07

Improve March's unique identity as a retail, leisure and cultural destination



Selected projects rationale

3-A

Improved connection to the river and West End Park and improve mooring platform

3-B

Improve mooring platform

Encourage route through by clearing shrubbery, widening path and improving lighting. Mooring platform to be improved to offer leisure activities and enjoyment of river.

Timescales: 3/5 (medium)

Key partners: FDC

Criticality: 3/5 (medium)

3-C

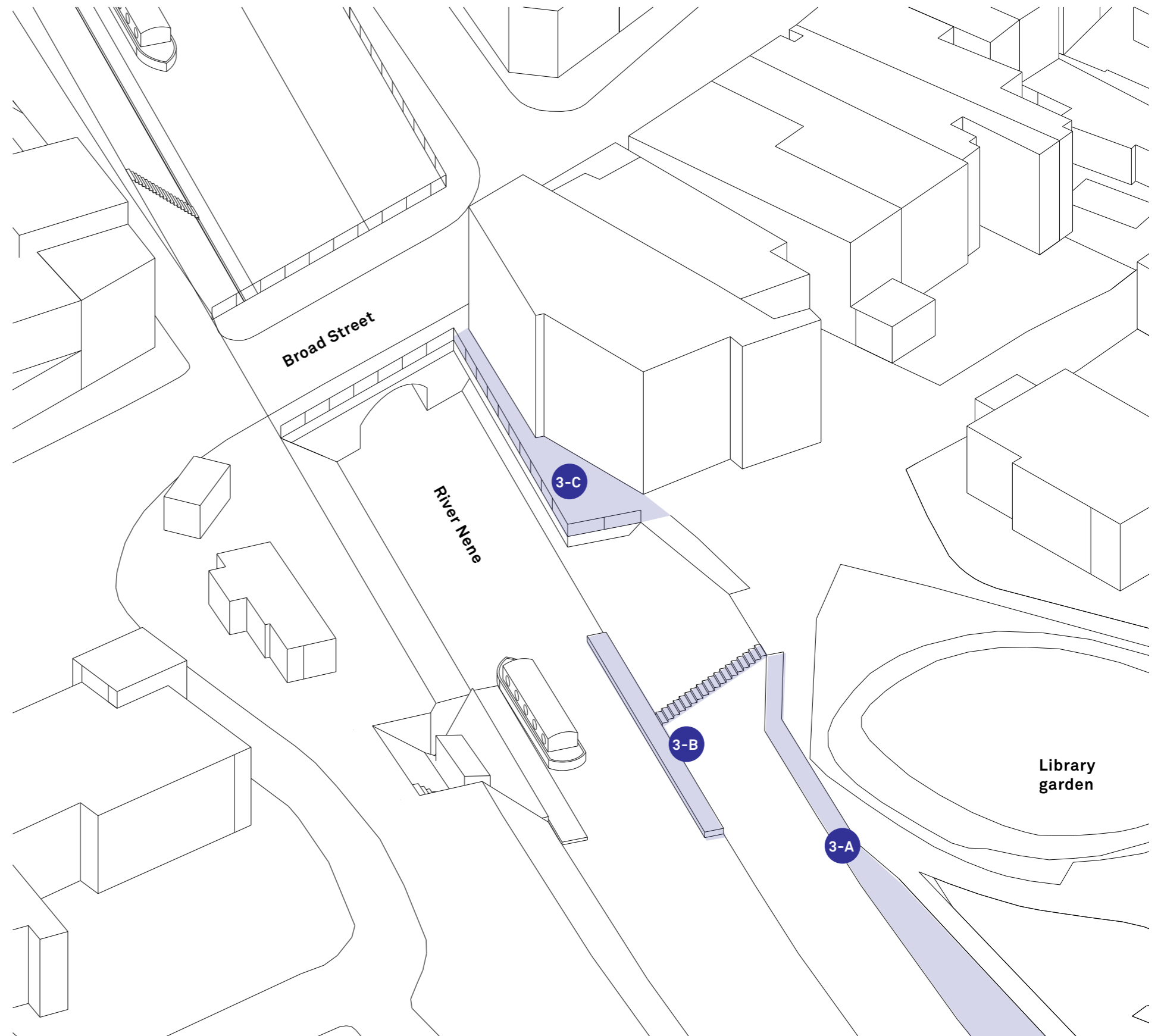
Improve connection from bridge to library

Improve access from high street to the library and leisure centre by building a cantilever extension to the existing narrow alleyway.

Timescales: 5/5 (short)

Key partners: assumed CCC

Criticality: 5/5 (high)



RIVERSIDE SOUTH PACKAGE 3-A&B

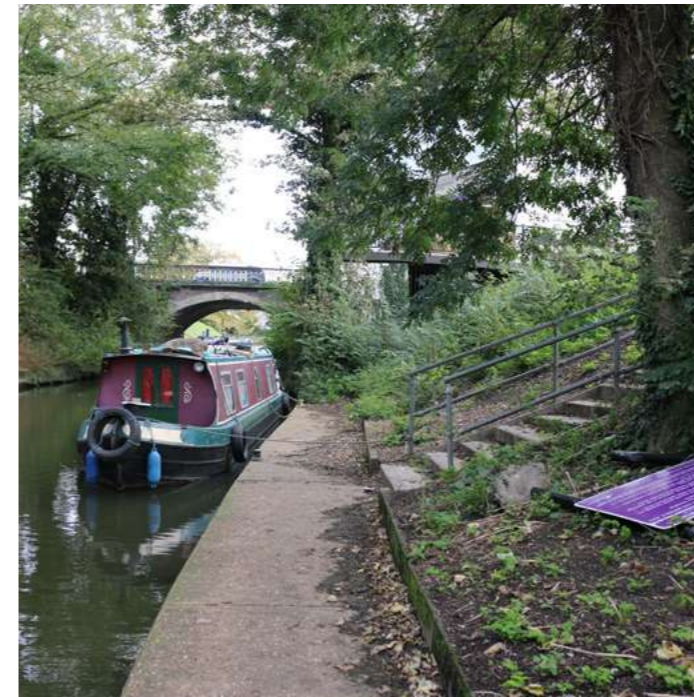
Opportunity



Existing photo



1



Existing photo



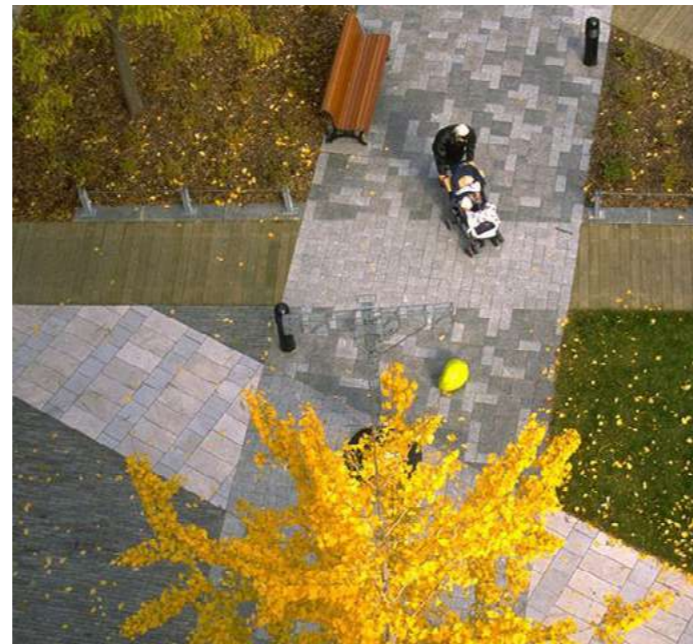
3

3-A

Improved connection to the river and West End Park

Example image description:

1. Improved surfaces to park paths and river edge for pedestrians and cyclists
2. (same as above)
3. New timber steps and wide steps combination to provide better access to the river Nene
4. New timber mooring platform for local and visitors boats



2

3-B

Improve mooring platform



4

RIVERSIDE SOUTH
PACKAGE 3-C

Opportunity



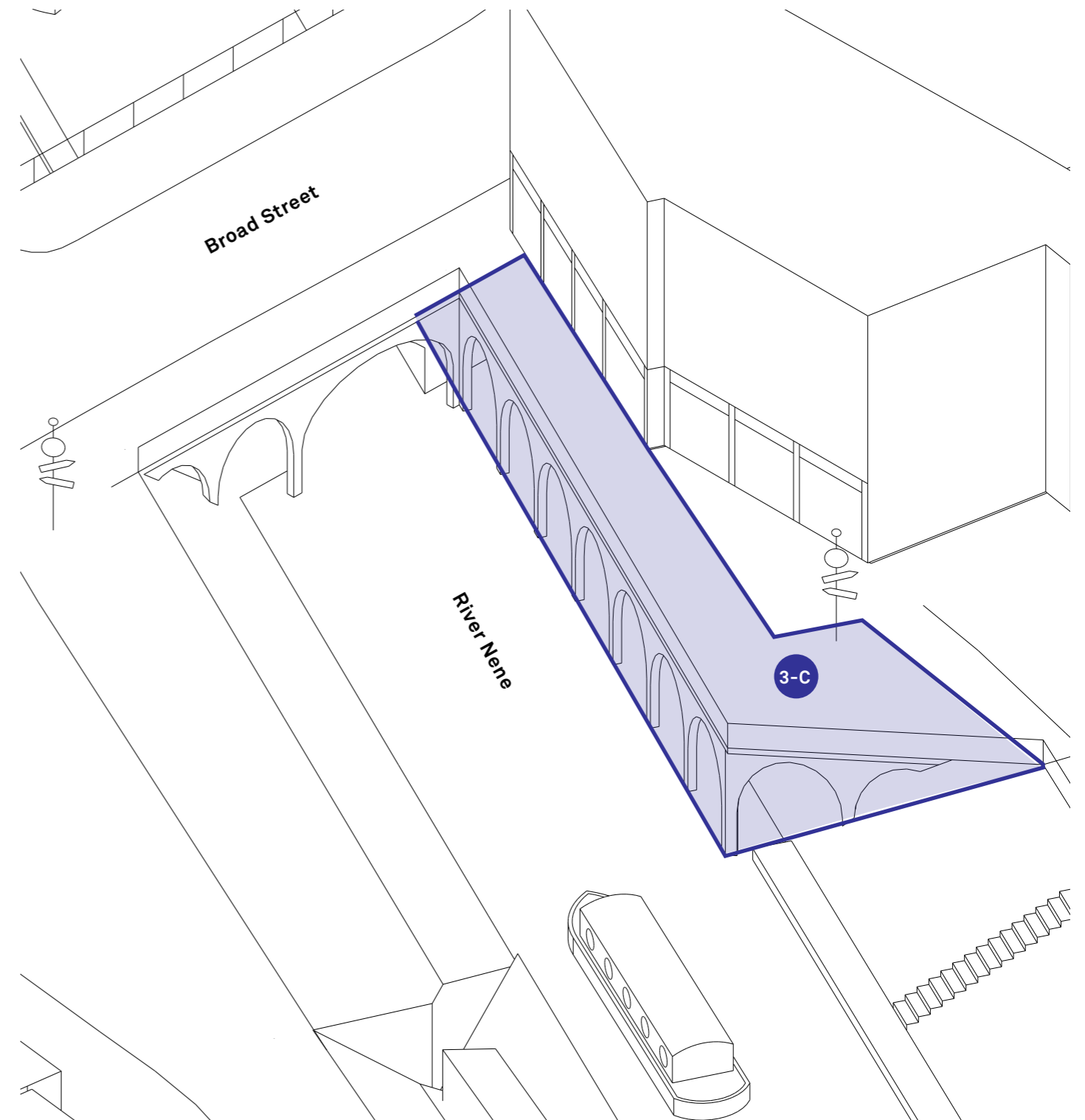
Existing photo



Example image: new guard and balustrade for a minor path extension to improve accessibility

3-C

Improve connection from bridge to library



MARKET SQUARE PACKAGE 4

Existing photos

Background

The once bustling market place and Town Hall are a key landmarks and an important part of March's history. The site is currently a car park. There is an opportunity to boost the current market offer to celebrate March's heritage and support the surrounding high street. The Town Hall currently offers important youth programmes which can be expanded upon in order to thrive and support the 24 hour economy.

Key Partners/Land Owners

March Civic Trust, FDC and CCC adopted highways

Critical Success Factors

03

Make the high street more resilient to external factors

07

Improve March's unique identity as a retail, leisure and cultural destination

08

Promote a work/life balance in town centre (e.g. night time economy)



Precedents

Precedent image description:

1. New stone cobble surface combining different sizes and including drainage systems to provide
2. (same as above)
3. New arrangement of street furniture to enhance heritage building around a square
4. Timber stage for performances and seating
5. Tree pits integrated within stone paving including permeable area
6. Movable play equipment to activate local square
7. Cafe spill, seating and cycle parking combination on a local square



1



2



3



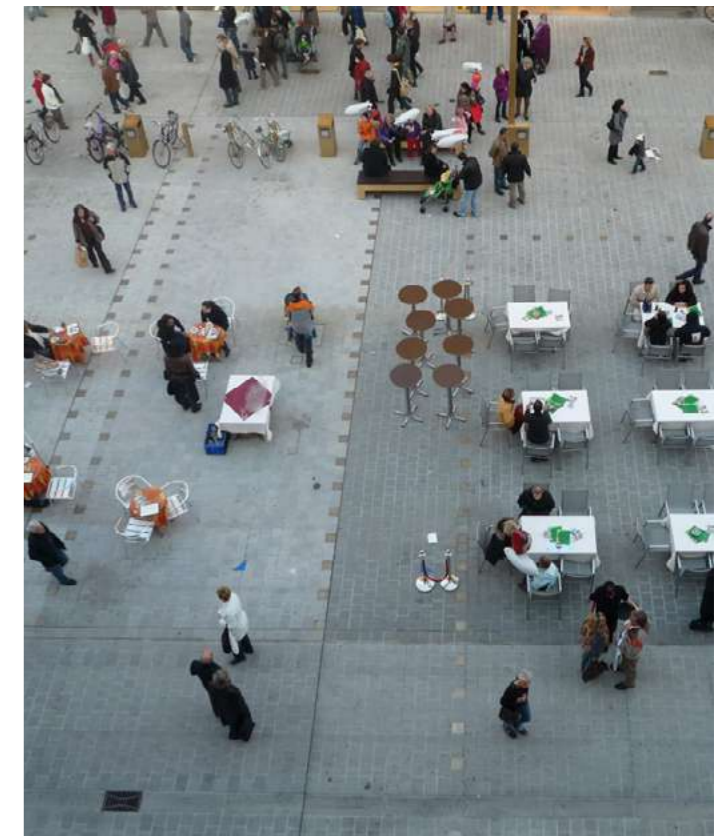
4



5



6



7

MARKET SQUARE PACKAGE 4

Design Proposal



Market Place/Square

Pedestrianise the car park to create new public square with street furniture. A new platform for events to link with current activities in Town Hall. Improved infrastructure to help boost market offer

Timescales: 4/5 (short)

Key partners: FDC

Criticality: 5/5 (high)

KEY

1. Lamp post
2. Signage element
3. Breakout seating
4. Bike stand
5. Bench
6. Tree and tree pit
7. Potential for market stalls
8. Platform
9. Loading area
10. Accent paving for events space
11. Disable bay



An illustration of the completed scheme for the Market Square



ACRE ROAD & BACKLANDS PACKAGE 5

Existing photos

Background

The area around Acre Road provides an important opportunity as a 'backlands' site that supports the high street and market. Current vacant land and buildings with important industrial heritage can be activated as part of a wider development site to boost activity and business opportunities in the Town Centre.

Key Partners/Land Owners

Private owners, FDC and some CCC adopted highways

Critical Success Factors

03

Make the high street more resilient to external factors

05

Bring derelict & underused buildings & spaces back into productive use

06

Improve investment climate for new businesses

08

Promote a work/life balance in town centre (e.g. night time economy)



Existing plan

ACRE ROAD SITE

SITE 1.1

PROPRIETOR: GROUP HOLDINGS (SOUTH) LIMITED

AREA: 1251 sq m
— 4 vacant units 50 sq m each

SITE 1.2

PROPRIETOR: OWEN KIRK




AREA: 1253 sq m
— 2 vacant units 50 sq m each

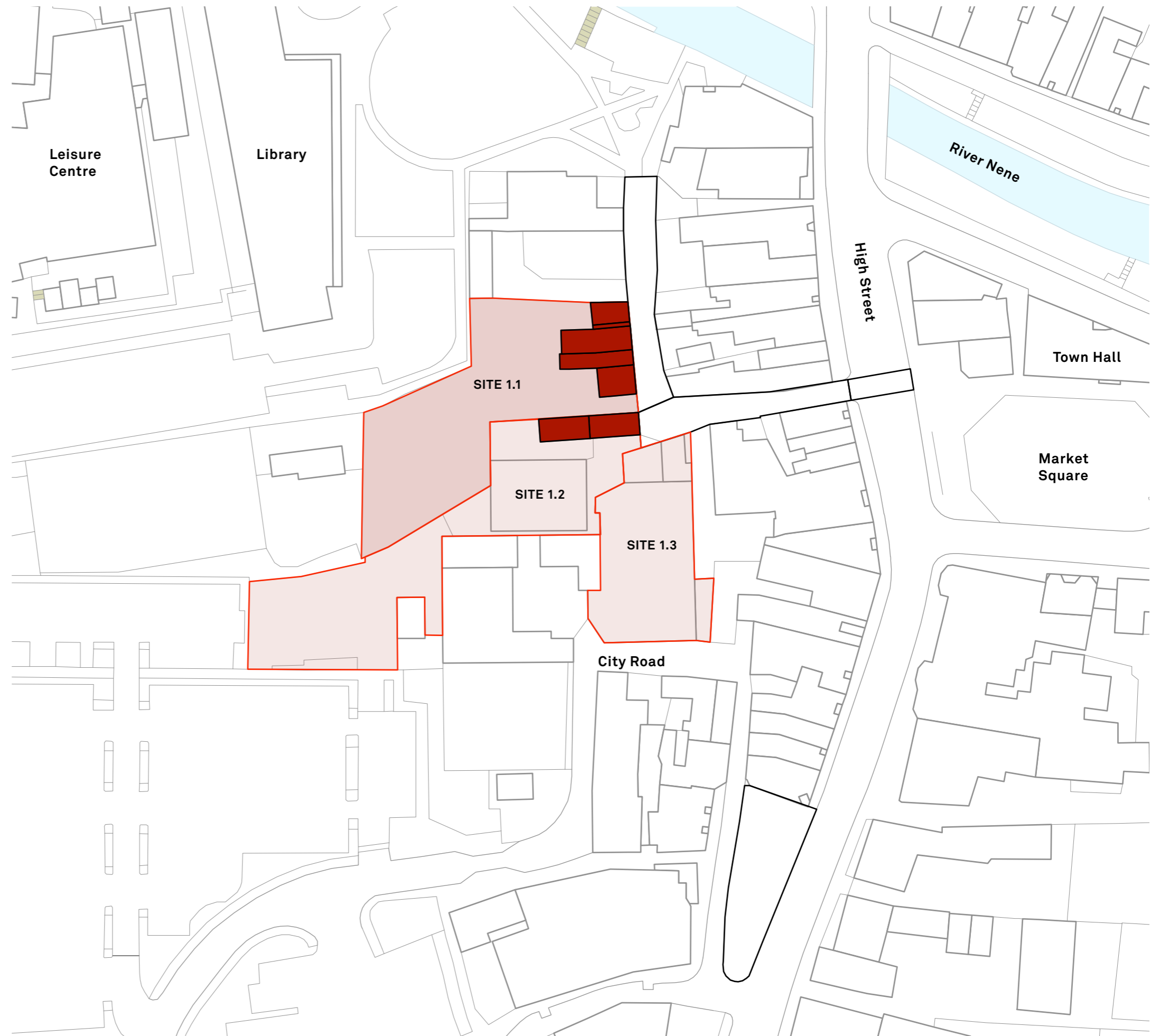
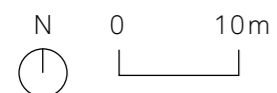
SITE 1.3

PROPRIETOR: OWEN KIRK

AREA: 672 sq m
— Former market building recently demolished

KEY

-  Existing vacant units
-  Public realm site boundary
-  Development site boundary



Precedents



1

Precedent image description:

1. Heritage building refurbishing for workshops/ work space to keep local character
2. Heritage building refurbishing and extension to create workshops/work space
3. New terraced houses and public realm to create new links from the high street
4. Alleyway activation through spill out of businesses/workshops
5. New residential flats and duplexes including accessible routes through the town centre



2



4



3



5

ACRE ROAD & BACKLANDS PACKAGE 5-C,E,F

Connections to
the town centre



Existing photo

5-C

Alleyway improvements

Improve links to riverside and through backlands.
New shared surface and lighting opportunity

Timescales: 5/5 (short)

Key partners: CCC adopted highways (partially)

Criticality: 5/5 (high)



Existing photo

5-D

Alleyway improvements



Existing photo

5-E

City Road square improvements

Shared surface upgrade, new streets furniture and
planting to improve pedestrian/cycle experience

Timescales: 1/5 (short)

Key partners: tbc

Criticality: 3/5 (medium)



Existing photo

5-F

Improve market connections

New crossing to encourage route through from
market square to backlands. Alleyway surface
improvements, lighting and accessibility

Timescales: 5/5 (short)

Key partners: CCC adopted highways

Criticality: 3/5 (high)

REACTIVATING VACANT UNITS PROGRAMME PACKAGE 6

Town centre wide project

Background

Current and future vacant units along the town centre high street provide an opportunity to diversify uses and make the high street more resilient. Underused and vacant upper floors have the potential for a change of use to residential use.

Key Partners/Land Owners

Private owners and FDC

6-A

Upgrades and re-purposing of ground floor

6-B

Upgrades and re-purposing of upper floor for change of use to residential

03

Make the high street more resilient to external factors

05

Bring derelict & underused buildings & spaces back into productive use

06

Improve investment climate for new businesses

08

Promote a work/ life balance in town centre (e.g. night time economy)



Example image for a refurbished vacant interior



Example image for upper floor and ground floor activation



Current vacant units directory

The following units in March town centre have been identified as currently being vacant, and provide a selection of premises available to participate in the reactivation programme.

| Package No. for reference | Vacan Unit number | Address | Floor level | Conservation status |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Package 1 | vu-1 | 1 Darthill Road, PE15 8HP | Ground floor (former cinema) | |
| Package 1 | vu-2 | 7 Dartford Road, PE15 8LA | Ground floor (former cinema) | |
| Package 1 | vu-3 | 1A Darthill Road, PE15 8HP | Upper floor (former cinema) | |
| Package 1 | vu-4 | 26 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Upper floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-5 | 22-24 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Ground floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-6 | 14 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Upper floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-7 | 10 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Ground floor | Local Interest |
| Package 1 | vu-8 | 8 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Ground floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-9 | 39 Broad Street PE15 8TP | Ground floor | Local Interest |
| Package 1 | vu-10 | Marwick House PE15 8LB | Ground floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-11 | 2 Old Bank Chambers 4 Dartford Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8AQ | Ground floor | |
| Package 4 | vu-1 | 13 High Street March Cambridgeshire PE15 9JA | Upper floors | |
| Package 4 | vu-2 | 27-29 High Street March Cambridgeshire PE15 9JA | Upper floors | |
| Package 4 | vu-3 | 35 High Street March Cambridgeshire PE15 9JJ | Ground floor (period property) | |
| Package 4 | vu-4 | 43 High Street March Cambridgeshire PE15 9JJ | Upper floors | |
| Package 4 | vu-5 | 28 Marktet Place PE15 9JF | Ground floor | |
| Package 4 | vu-6 | 26 Marktet Place PE15 9JF | Entire property | Listed |
| Package 7 | vu-1 | Former Pub 'The George', 61 High Street, PE15 9JJ | Entire property | Listed |
| Package 7 | vu-2 | 75 High Street, PE15 9 LB | Ground floor and ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-3 | 81 High Street, PE15 9 LB | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-4 | 72 High Street, PE15 9 LD | Upper floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-5 | 74 High Street, PE15 9 LD | Upper floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-6 | 96-100 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-7 | 112 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-8 | 120 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-9 | 122 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |

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| Package 1 | vu-5 | 22-24 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Ground floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-6 | 14 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Upper floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-7 | 10 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Ground floor | Local Interest |
| Package 1 | vu-8 | 8 Broad Street PE15 8TG | Ground floor | |
| Package 1 | vu-9 | 39 Broad Street PE15 8TP | Ground floor | Local Interest |
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| Package 1 | vu-11 | 2 Old Bank Chambers 4 Dartford Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8AQ | Ground floor | |
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| Package 4 | vu-2 | 27-29 High Street March Cambridgeshire PE15 9JA | Upper floors | |
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| Package 7 | vu-1 | Former Pub 'The George', 61 High Street, PE15 9JJ | Entire property | Listed |
| Package 7 | vu-2 | 75 High Street, PE15 9 LB | Ground floor and ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-3 | 81 High Street, PE15 9 LB | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-4 | 72 High Street, PE15 9 LD | Upper floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-5 | 74 High Street, PE15 9 LD | Upper floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-6 | 96-100 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-7 | 112 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-8 | 120 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |
| Package 7 | vu-9 | 122 High Street, PE15 9LP | Ground floor | |

Overall Cost plan split by funder and workstream

| | January 2021 final spend profile proposal to MHCLG | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| | MHCLG grant | CPCA grant | Total |
| Package 1: Broad Street | £ 2,326,577 | £ 561,660 | £ 2,888,237 |
| Package 2: Riverside North | £ 942,500 | £ 561,670 | £ 1,504,170 |
| Package 3: Riverside South | £ 313,215 | £ 161,670 | £ 474,885 |
| Package 4: Market Square | £ 440,000 | £ 715,000 | £ 1,155,000 |
| Package 5: Acre Road & Backlands | £ 1,740,019 | £ - | £ 1,740,019 |
| Town Centre Wide: Vacant Units Activation Programme | £ 684,818 | £ - | £ 684,818 |
| TOTAL | £ 6,447,129 | £ 2,000,000 | £ 8,447,129 |