

**Improving transport services in Ramsey
Research project for Ramsey Million Partnership**

August 2018

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1. Introduction

This report looks at public and transport provision in and around Ramsey and how it might be improved. It examines existing transport infrastructure and services and how it is funded, compares Ramsey's public transport offer with comparable settlements and uses strategies and plans affecting the area to identify planned future provision.

In making the case for improved public transport provision, the report then highlights good practice from elsewhere in the country, identifies policy processes which could lead to improved transport for Ramsey, and suggests how the Ramsey Million Partnership could interact with those processes.

The geographical area covered includes Ramsey Town and the villages of Ramsey St Mary's, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside and Ramsey Forty Foot.

It aims to support the work of the Ramsey Million Partnership, as set out in their Community Plan 2016-2019. The Plan is centred on a vision for Ramsey where:

- Young people are involved and have access to indoor and outdoor social spaces
- Families and children of all ages have affordable activities and events they can access locally
- There are accessible community transport links
- Sustainable training and employment opportunities are provided
- We make the most of our market town heritage

The vision is being met through four themes, one of which is 'Transport and Access'. This is supported by four subsequent areas of work

- Research who wants to go where and for what
- Promote existing community transport
- Support community transport should funding be removed
- Explore the potential of cycling routes in partnership with other agencies

The Plan identifies the yardstick against which this theme will be judged:

"Fewer people are limited in achieving what they want out of life by a lack of affordable transport", meaning

- Reduced isolation of those people without access to their own transport
- We will better understand what would work best for Ramsey
- Local people (those without transport) will have better access to services and opportunities

There is no simple way of calculating reliance on public transport. Across the country, however, reliance on public transport is higher among certain groups. In general, older people, young people, those on low incomes and those with disabilities are most likely to rely on buses to get around. This is for a variety of reasons including not be able to drive for health reasons, access to a concessionary bus pass, being too young to drive, or having no access to car.

The statistics below highlight those sections of the community in and around Ramsey most likely to be reliant on public transport:

- Ramsey Abbey College offers 11-18 education with six forms of entry. The current catchment size for Year 7 is just under 20 miles – the third highest in the county – with many students arriving via school transport from surrounding villages.
- Young adults - Around 13 per cent of Ramsey's population are aged 15 - 24 years, the group least likely to have access to a car
- Older people – Currently, approximately 18 per cent of Ramsey's population are over 65. The ONS predict this group will increase to 23 per cent by 2026 and 27 per cent by 2036. By the latter date, the number of people 85 and over living in Ramsey will be over 600 - having tripled in 25 years.
- Poor health - 18 per cent of the current Ramsey population say their day-to-day activities are limited by their health. Over 500 people described themselves as being in 'bad' or 'very bad' health.
- Education and skills – Both Ramsey Town wards rank poorly. The western part of the town is in 10 per cent poorest performing in the country, and the eastern part in the lowest 20 per cent (<http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>).
- Car ownership - Although Ramsey has car ownership rate above the UK and Huntingdonshire average (1.4 per household) (2011 census);
 - 15 per cent of households have no car in the household (548 total), and
 - 37 per cent had one van or car in the household (multi-person households are likely to be reliant on public transport or friends)<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1237326969>

2. Existing transport infrastructure

This section sets out transport provision in the Ramsey area across road, rail and active travel.

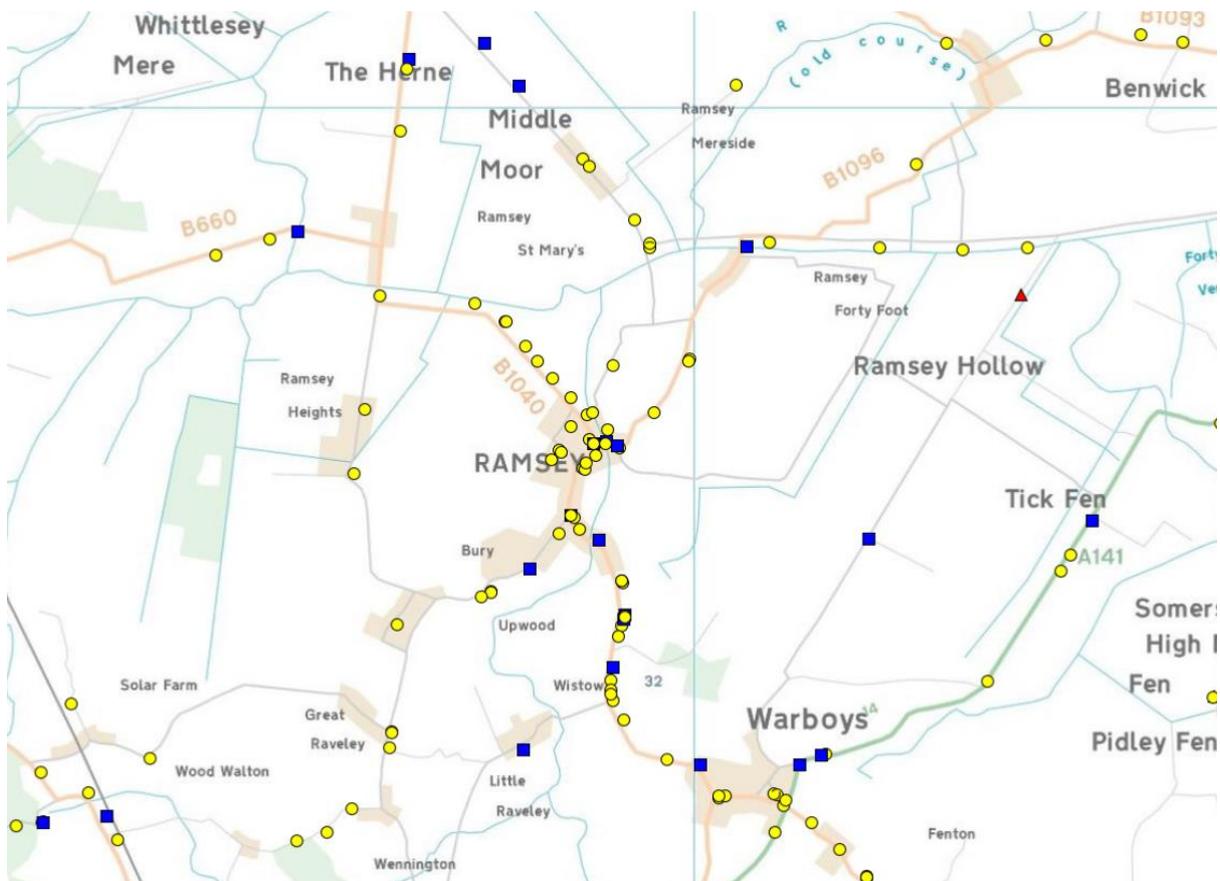
Roads

Ramsey has no direct connection to the trunk and Strategic Road Network. It relies on the B1040, B1096, B660 and numerous small fen roads.

There is little data on traffic flows around Ramsey, nor on how the nature of the roads affects journey times. The Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study baseline report [<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2641/huntingdonshire-strategic-transport-study-baseline-report.pdf>] (completed in May 2017) offers peak and off-peak comparisons for some journeys, which indicate the roads are not excessively affected by peak time congestion:

- B1040 south from Ramsey shows peak flows approximately 9 per cent slower than off-peak
- B1096 east from Ramsey shows peak flows approximately 10 per cent slower than off-peak

Road safety statistics suggest that Ramsey's local roads should not be regarded as particularly dangerous, with relatively few serious accidents and one fatality recorded between 2014 and 2017 (yellow = minor, blue = serious, red = fatality).



[map via <http://www.collisionmap.uk/>]

Buses

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study identifies Ramsey's bus services as some of the weakest in Cambridgeshire:

"Bus services to ... Ramsey have been identified to be in need of improvement. In particular, there are large service gaps in rural areas, with many services only running once or twice daily (although the whole District benefits from Community Transport coverage and at least one service per day between Monday and Friday)."

There are currently five different operators providing regular bus services in the Ramsey area. These are Stagecoach in the Fens, Stagecoach in Peterborough, Dews, Ramsey and District Community Bus Association and Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport (HACT). Currently, there is no formal attempt to coordinate these services.

Conventional services: Stagecoach and Dews offer regular bus services from Ramsey to the main settlements of Peterborough, Huntingdon and St Ives (linking to the Guided Busway). Stagecoach also offer a peak time direct Busway service to and from Cambridge. There are no peak time services to Huntingdon and no evening or weekend services whatsoever.

Community transport:

HACT offer a daily demand responsive service to Huntingdon.

Ramsey and District Community Bus Association operate three local services:

- Upwood - Ramsey (Friday only)
- Ramsey - Ramsey Forty Foot (Friday only)
- Huntingdon - Upwood (Thursday only)

Rail

Ramsey has no direct access to the rail network, with the nearest connections being at Huntingdon, Peterborough and Whittlesea, all within 12 miles.

Passenger numbers have increased markedly at each of these:

Entries and exits and selected stations					
Station	2005/06	2009/10	2013/14	2016/17	% increase
Whittlesea	16,770	23,506	26,938	30,474	82%
March	276,938	301,832	357,864	395,950	43%
Huntingdon	1,448,338	1,542,100	1,692,134	1,840,936	27%
Peterborough	3,720,034	3,930,704	4,398,491	4,774,744	28%

Whittlesea and March

- Location: Both stations are on the line between Cambridge and Peterborough. Whittlesey is just over 8 miles from Ramsey, and March 14 miles.
- Services: Both stations have a reasonably regular train service, with direct 12 services traveling between Whittlesea and Peterborough on weekdays.
- Travel time: Travel times from Whittlesea to Peterborough is 8 minutes, and Whittlesea to Cambridge 50 minutes.
- Interchange: Whittlesea railway station is to the south east of the town centre with the closest bus stop being three quarters of a mile away. No multi-modal ticketing is available.
- Cost: Return fares between Whittlesea to Peterborough are £5.50.

Huntingdon and Peterborough

- Location: Both stations are located on the route of the East Coast Mainline.
- Services: Peterborough offers a wide range of local and intercity services.
- Travel time: Travel times from Huntingdon to London are just over 1 hour and Huntingdon to Peterborough 16 minutes.
- Interchange: Bus and rail stations are located close to each other at Huntingdon and Peterborough. No multi-modal ticketing is available.
- Cost: An off-peak return between Huntingdon and Peterborough is £6.40. The peak time fare is £8.30.

The Alconbury Weald development master plan contains a proposal for a new station on the East Coast mainline near Abbots Ripton, between Huntingdon and Peterborough. It is unclear when this will be delivered. At around 6 miles from Ramsey, it would offer a good rail head for the town were it to come to fruition.

Walking and cycling

Provision for cyclists in and around Ramsey is limited. The area has no access to the National Cycle Network with the nearest route being NCN 12 (Peterborough – Huntingdon) which is more than 9 miles from Ramsey at its closest point.

Cambridgeshire County Council has produced a map aimed at leisure cyclists. This details a largely circular route beginning and ending at Sawtry, via Raveley, Ramsey and Warboys. [https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/Sawtry_and_Ramsey.pdf?inline=true]

A transport study from 2010 raised concerns about the safety of local roads for cycling and interaction with motorists and recommended a network of cycle paths to address the issue. These proposals were subsequently transposed to the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan but have yet to be constructed.

Coaches

Ramsey parish has no access to the coach network, with the nearest stops and interchanges being at Huntingdon and Peterborough.

3. Finances and funding

Supported bus services

Across the country, local authority spending to support bus services has collapsed in recent years. Research by Campaign for Better Transport shows a 45 per cent reduction in funding for bus services across England and Wales between 2010-11 and 2017-18. The situation in the Cambridgeshire County Council area closely mirrors this, with funding declining by 43 per cent.

Cambridgeshire CC spend on supported buses	
2010-11	£3,123,395
2016/17	£1,745,588
2017/18	£1,844,270
2018/19	£1,770,262 (budget)

Peterborough's spending on supporting bus services has declined by approximately half the national average - 23 per cent since 2010/11. It is notable, however, that Peterborough's budget for buses has been increased slightly in each of the last two years. This may be due in part to the city adopting more bus-friendly policy as part of efforts to reduce road congestion, air pollution and problems associated with over-reliance on private cars.

Peterborough CC spend on supported buses	
2010-11	£927,666
2016/17	£680,553
2017/18	£698,668
2018/19	£715,116 (budget)

Although local authority spending on buses varies considerably across the country, predominantly rural counties with similar sized populations to Cambridgeshire spent the following:

Selected county council spend on supported buses 2017-18	
Lincolnshire	£5,311,866
County Durham	£3,082,437
Norfolk	£2,805,785
Cambridgeshire CA area	£2,542,938
Dorset	£1,582,191

Key points from the above tables are:

- In 2018/19, the total Combined Authority area budget for supporting buses is expected to be £2,485,378 compared with over £4m in 2010/11.
- The fall in Cambridgeshire County Council's support for bus services mirrors the national picture in percentage terms. Peterborough City Council has made significantly smaller cuts.
- Spending on supported buses in the Cambridgeshire CA area is comparable with some similar counties albeit significantly below the highest spending counties.

Route subsidy

Cuts in support for bus services mean a total of 90 per cent of bus services across the county are now run commercially. Cambridgeshire County Council has recently reviewed the remaining subsidised bus services for 2017 – 2019 [<https://ccc->

live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/Local%20Bus%20Service%20Review%20Project%20Plan%202017-2019.pdf?inline=true] with the intention of identifying further efficiency savings from services subsidised by more than £4 per passenger.

Two Ramsey bus services were identified as receiving support totalling just over £100,000 per annum:

22 Ramsey - St Ives	
Minimum subsidy	£51,170.88
Passenger numbers	14,484
Subsidy per passenger	£3.53

31 Ramsey - Whittlesey	
Minimum subsidy	£50,714.77
Passenger numbers	42,416
Subsidy per passenger	£1.20

Important points emerge from the review:

- The Ramsey services both receive a relatively small subsidy compared with the costliest. The adjacent section of the 22 route between Warboys and St Ives, which had a per passenger subsidy of over £30 was among the least efficient highlighting the local nature of flows in the area.
- The Combined Authority has made clear that "there can be no guarantee that existing bus subsidies will be maintained at or above current levels in the future." [para. 2.7]. This suggests that while existing service patterns may be protected, falls in patronage and/or available funding would put them at risk.

Other transport spending

Public spending in support of public transport around Ramsey extends significantly beyond that offered in conventional bus subsidies. Transport for schools, health service patients and social services transport are among the other sources of spending operating in the area.

Freedom of Information requests regarding transport spending in the Ramsey area have yielded the following data.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group expenditure on patient transport	
Year	Total Spend
2014/15	£3,360,627
2015/16	£3,543,570
2016/17	£5,153,990

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust spending on patient transport.	
Year	Total Spend
2014/15	£765,681
2015/16	£827,971
2016/17	£799,624

The Trust comprises of Peterborough City Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and Stamford & Rutland Hospital. The Trust also provides community clinics at Princess of Wales Hospital in Ely, Doddington Hospital and North Cambs Hospital in Wisbech.

Freedom of Information request concerning additional county council spending to support transport have yet to be responded to.

Key points from additional transport spending are:

- CCG spending on patient transport has risen sharply and is now double that of local authority spending on supported buses, which continues to decline
- Between 2014/15 and 2016/17, CCG spending on patient transport increased by around £1.8m while spending on supported buses in the Cambridgeshire CA area declined by £1.4m between 2010-11 and 2017-18
- North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust spends more on patient transport than Peterborough City Council spends on supporting buses
- None of the bodies commissioning transport services were able to provide a local breakdown of spending, highlighting the low priority given to managing costs and seeking efficiencies

4. How Ramsey's public transport compares

The tables below set Ramsey's bus service offer alongside those of comparable towns. These were selected because they have:

- Similar size population
- A public transport offer reliant on bus (no direct railway access)
- Proximity to regional or sub-regional centre

Frequency: The following table shows the number of direct bus services to a key destination throughout the day:

Town	Destination	Morning peak (6 - 8.30 am)	Off-peak (8.30am - 4.30 pm)	Evening peak (4.30 - 6.30pm)	Evening off-peak (post 6.30pm)	Saturday	Sunday
Ramsey	Peterborough	2	5	1	1	7	0
Ramsey	Huntingdon	0	4	1	0	7	0
Sawston	Cambridge	7	23	5	7	42	19
Cambourne	Cambridge	10	29	8	8	52	9
Horncastle	Lincoln	5	12	3	2	17	10
Holbeach	Spalding	3	17	4	2	23	11

Journey time: The following table shows the distance and price of bus travel to a key destination.

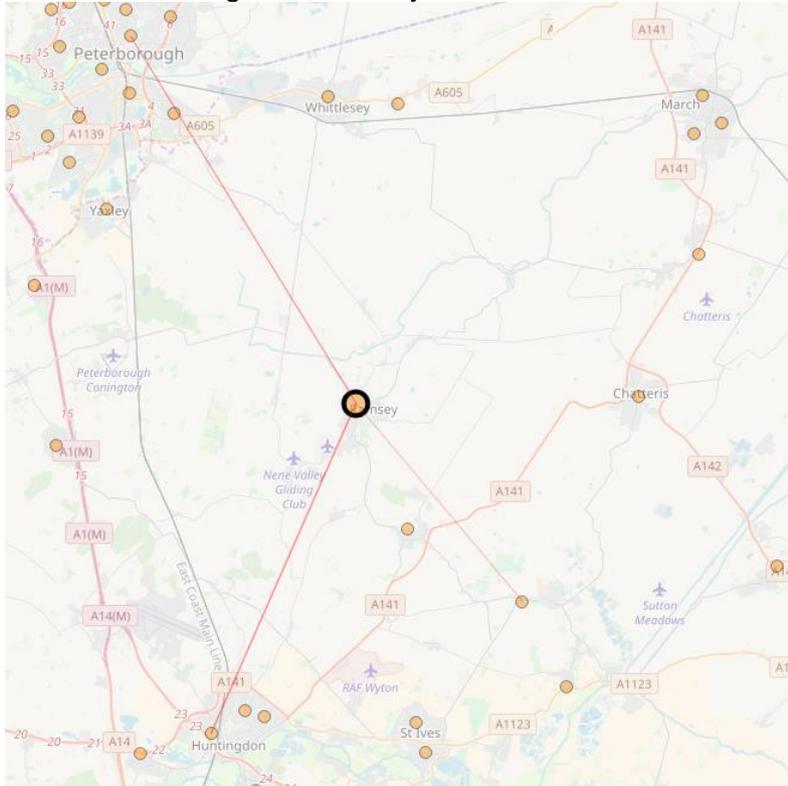
Town	Destination	Distance (miles)	Journey time	Average speed (mph)	Ticket price: Single	Ticket price: Return
Ramsey	Peterborough	12.6	56	13	£4.00	£7.00
Ramsey	Huntingdon	12.1	55	13.2	£4.00	£7.00
Sawston	Cambridge	7.3	44	9.5	£4.00	£7.00
Cambourne	Cambridge	11.5	43	16	£4.00	£7.00
Horncastle	Lincoln	22.3	47	29	£5.60	£8.70
Holbeach	Spalding	8.1	21	23	£3.20	£5.80

Ramsey has very poor bus connections compared with similar settlements. The data held in the tables demonstrates this:

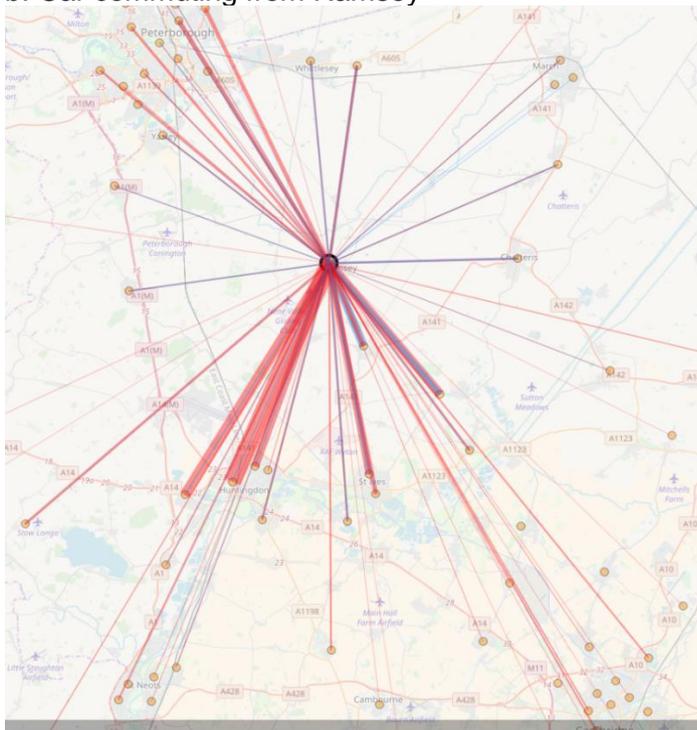
- Across peak, day time and weekend services, Ramsey offers less than 25 per cent of bus service levels of similar sized towns in South Cambridgeshire
- At peak time there are no direct bus services to the most popular commuting destination, Huntingdon
- Daytime weekday services from Ramsey are approximately every two hours compared with between two and three services per hour for comparable towns
- Evening weekday services are virtually non-existent in Ramsey, compared with a good service in South Cambridgeshire and skeletal one for Lincolnshire towns
- Ramsey's Saturday services are less than one an hour – more than 80 per cent less than those in South Cambridgeshire and more than 50 per cent less than Lincolnshire towns
- Sunday services are completely absent for Ramsey compared with hourly services or better for all comparison towns
- The existing public transport offer is fractured by the involvement of multiple commercial and community transport operators with no shared planning of services

Commuting: Using public transport to access employment is an important part of the transport mix. The following graphics show commuting destinations from comparable towns. Based on census data from 2011, the thicker the red line, the larger the number of people undertaking the journey. Images taken from Data Shine (<http://commute.datashine.org.uk>).

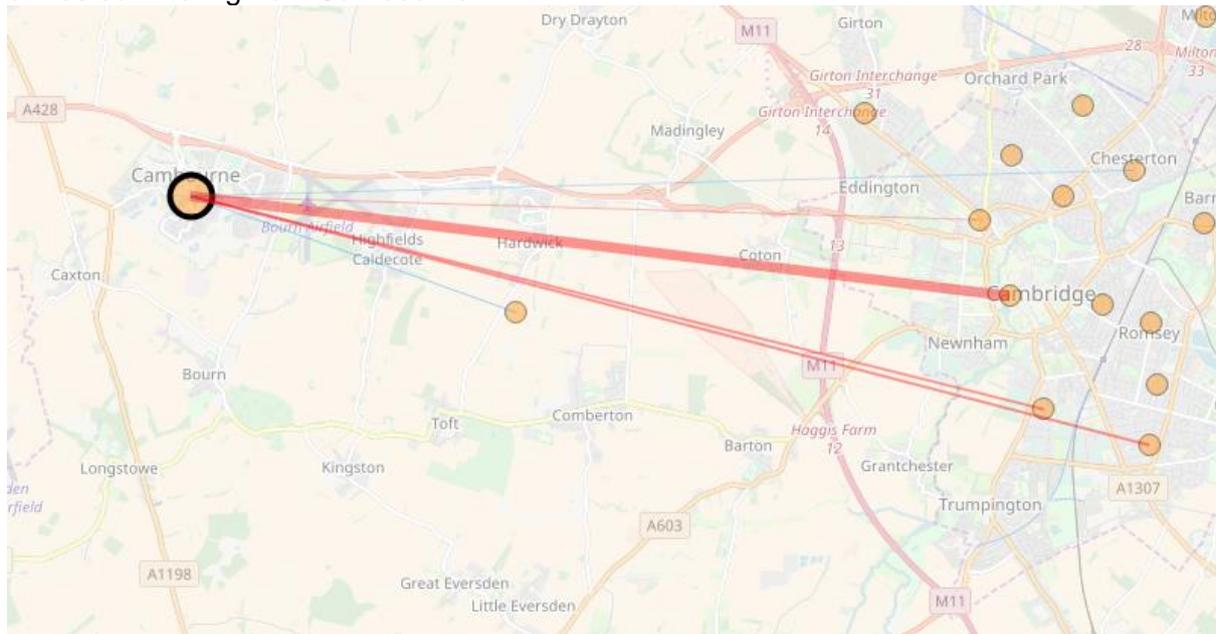
a. Bus commuting from Ramsey



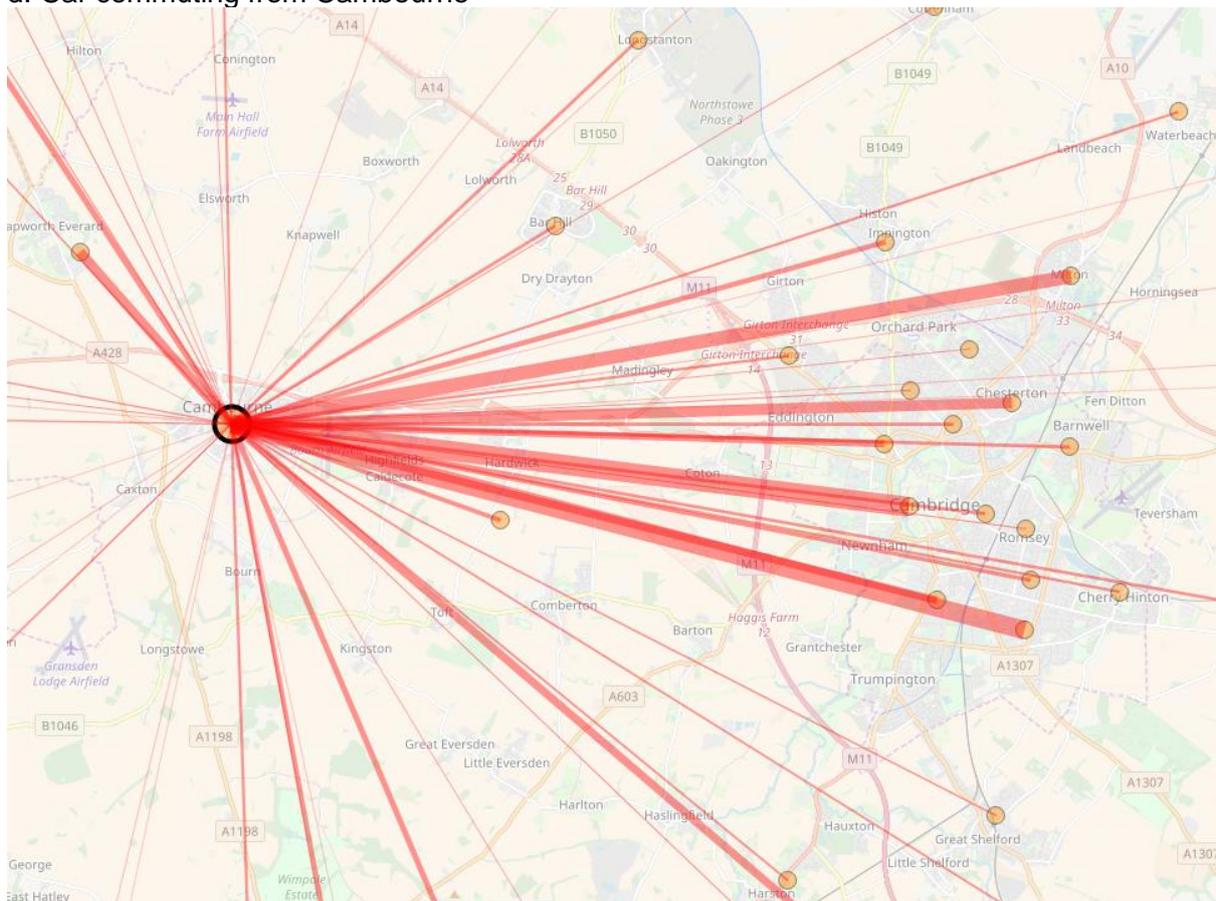
b. Car commuting from Ramsey



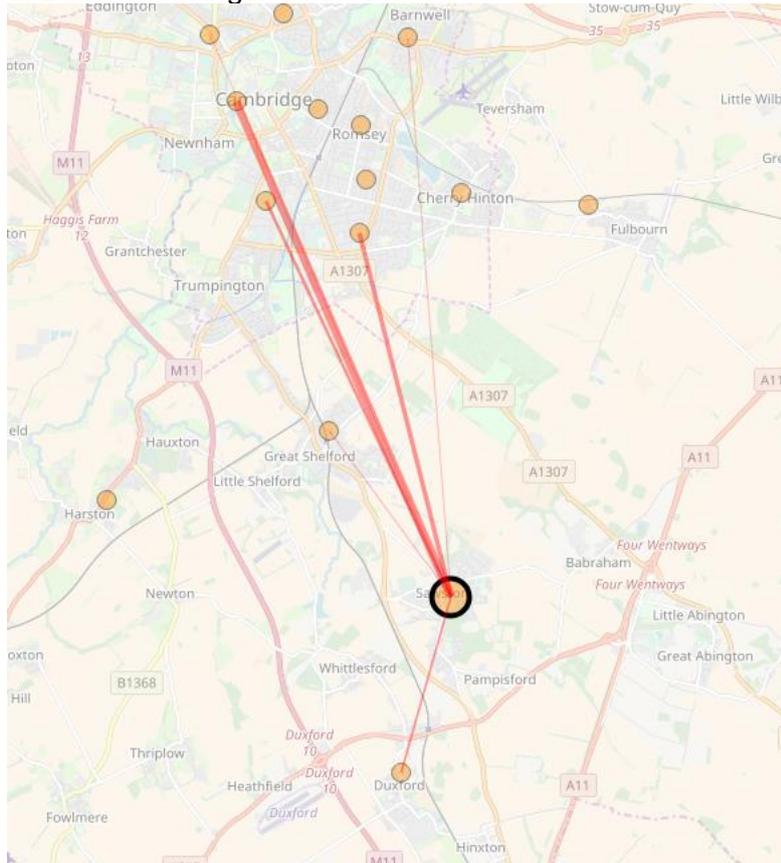
c. Bus commuting from Cambourne



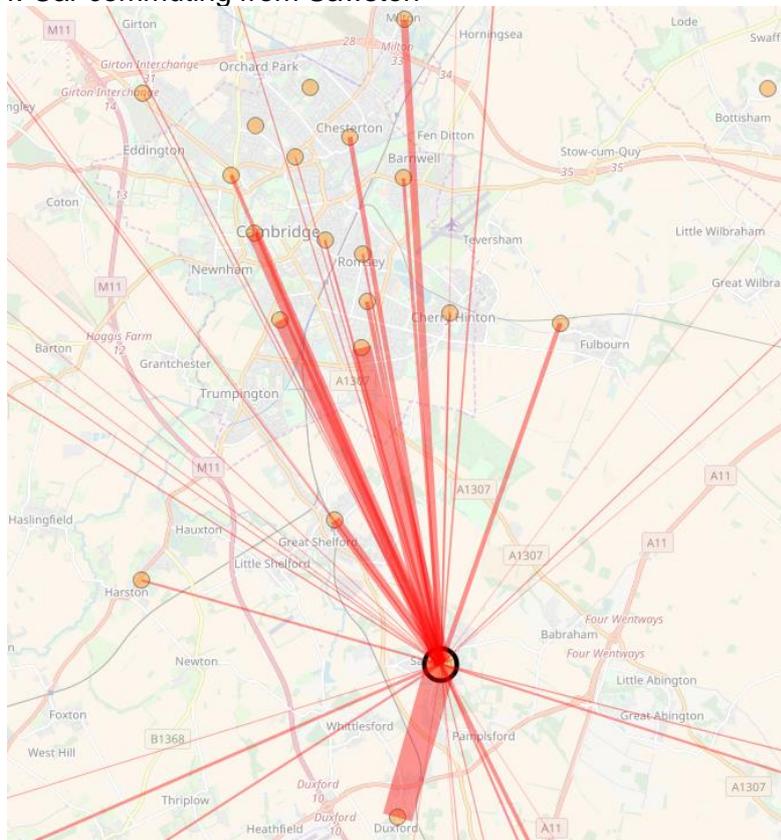
d. Car commuting from Cambourne



e. Bus commuting from Sawston



f. Car commuting from Sawston



Observations on commuting patterns

- Small numbers of people currently commute by bus from Ramsey, with only Huntingdon and Peterborough generating any significant numbers of journeys.
- Huntingdon is the largest commuter destination for those commuting by car - a journey for which there is no direct bus service equivalent at peak times
- Other places such as Cambourne share the limited number of commuting destinations offered at Ramsey
- Bus commuting is a more important part of the transport mix for the other settlements looked at, attracting larger numbers of passengers and reflecting weaknesses in Ramsey's bus services

5. Transport policies

Relevant elements of strategies and plans from the Combined Authority, county and district authorities are set out below.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Business Board

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CA) set out its growth plans in March 2018. These recognises transport as "a key component" in meeting the CA's economic priorities, with transport investment central to:

- Improving connectivity, particularly around access to employment and housing
- Unlocking new developments
- Improving journey time and/or journey time reliability
- Providing greater mode choices such as walking and cycling, private car and public transport

Each of these four areas is relevant to the Ramsey district.

The CA set out £22m of transport spending in 2017-19 with projects to be led by district, county and CA. A transport budget of £35m is planned for 2019-21. An additional £75m of funding is supporting transport projects through the Business Board (formally the Local Enterprise Partnership). Other major projects are being pursued via third party sources.

None of the funding is targeted specifically at Ramsey or the surrounding area. Only two initiatives could be said to benefit Ramsey - improvements to Whittlesea railway station (£2.5m for the regeneration and a proposal to lengthen the platform).

It is notable that virtually the entirety of currently planned CA transport spending is capital with only a tiny proportion for supporting services.

Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031 was updated in July 2015. Three of the LTP's eight overarching objectives highly pertinent to the Ramsey area:

Challenge 2: Reducing the length of the commute and the need to travel by private car

- Support the development strategy for Cambridgeshire by aiming to reduce the need to travel and by providing sustainable travel options for new developments.
- Focus on securing school, workplace and residential travel plans and support and encourage employers to adopt smarter choices measures to help reduce the need to travel. (note, the Abbey College has no travel plan nor any plan to produce one)
- Support and encourage journey planning tools to improve information available for journeys by sustainable modes.

Challenge 3: Making sustainable modes of transport a viable and attractive alternative to the private car

- Make sustainable modes of transport more attractive by developing walking and cycling networks.
- Make it easier for people to change between modes of transport.
- Work with bus operators to provide high quality bus services.
- Improve the environment and safety of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

- Focus on raising awareness of available transport choices, and the health and environmental benefits of cycling and walking.
- Work with local planning authorities to ensure facilities for sustainable modes form an integral part of new development

Challenge 5: Ensuring people – especially those at risk of social exclusion – can access the services they need within reasonable time, cost and effort wherever they live in the county

- Focus on access to key services in the nearest main service centre, e.g. large village or market town.
- Consider the whole journey, including the interaction between different modes of transport, aiming to provide suitable transport provision for necessary journeys.
- Continue to support the development of community transport and investigate alternative forms of public transport where traditional bus services do not meet people's needs.
- Work with service providers to innovate in the way services are delivered locally.

The LTP is not directly funded. Much of the county's capital transport spending comes via block allocation from central Government. This currently stands at £4.6m per annum. This figure is fixed for the current spending round but is falling in real terms.

[<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-capital-block-funding>]

The current Cambridgeshire Transport Investment Plan (TIP) was signed off in December 2017. It is used to identify and prioritise schemes to be included in the Cambridgeshire Transport Delivery Plan which has a three-year rolling programme of delivery.

TIP schemes for the Ramsey area come from the Ramsey Market Town Transport Strategy [https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/R-TP-Ramsey_Market_Town_Transport_Strategy.pdf?inline=true] which was published in 2010.

Many of the problems the strategy highlights are still extant today. For example:

- Low bus patronage, particularly for commuting
- Low walking and cycling rates (the report speculates this is partly the result of concerns about road safety, which on-road parking and freight traffic particular problems)
- Poor range of public transport destinations, with no direct service to Cambridge
- Lack of clockface timetabling making services difficult to navigate for irregular users

To address these shortcomings a £4.5m investment programme is included in 2010 document, focusing on infrastructure and capital spending. These projects have subsequently been transposed into the county TIP. With no funding earmarked for their delivery, however, none has so far been included in the county Transport Delivery Plan.

The Ramsey schemes in the current Cambridgeshire TIP are:

[<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/transport-investment-plan/>]

Buses

- RTPI screens at Ramsey bus stops
- Improvements to bus stops at Field Road and Great Whyte.

Walking and cycling infrastructure

- Off-road route from Upwood School to High Street and Abbey College

- Pedestrian and cycle routes north of Ramsey, to the Great Fen using disused railway line (£527k, from developer contributions, no timetable for delivery)
- Maltings, to the High Street (and RAF Upwood)
- Northern Gateway Site, to Abbey College
- From Ramsey towards Warboys and Wistow Woods via disused railway
- Link from Ramsey to Ramsey Forty Foot
- Key locations around Ramsey town centre

Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Schedule

[<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2693/infrastructure-schedule.pdf>]

shows no specific timetables for any of the projects. In terms of funding, only the 'north of Ramsey' scheme has a potential funder identified (developer contributions) with others listed as 'unknown'.

Huntingdonshire District Council

The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 is at an advanced stage and is currently being considered by the Planning Inspector.

It identifies eight locations for housing developments in and around Ramsey. If all were to reach fruition, it would mean an additional 895 new houses and a likely population increase of over 2000 people. Only one of the proposed develop sites is of a significant size - the redevelopment of the former RAF Upwood, which would accommodate around 450 new dwellings.

Key points

- The Combined Authority's objectives for transport fit well with the Ramsey area's needs, focusing on better connectivity, improving journey times and increasing modal choice
- Spending is strongly focused on capital investment and no Ramsey area projects have yet been identified for support. No revenue funding will be available until 2019-20 when the CA takes over responsibility for bus services.
- The County Council's Local Transport Plan is due to be updated over the next six months. Retaining objectives to reduce car reliance, make sustainable modes more attractive, and ensure all people can access services are retained and invested will be important in addressing Ramsey's transport needs
- Housing growth set out in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan must be designed with good transport services in mind

6. Emerging strategies

Two new strategies are currently under consideration or active development which have the potential to greatly improve Ramsey's transport offer.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Strategic Bus Review

The review has recently begun (July 2018) with consultants SYSTRA winning the contract for the £150,000 project.

Much about Ramsey's future public transport is reliant on the outcome of the Strategic Bus Review and whether or not a move to a franchise-based model is adopted.

The study covers all bus services in the Combined Authority area. It looks to form the basis of a Combined Authority bus strategy. It will

- Review existing networks and services including fixed timetable services, on-demand, and community transport.
- It does not specifically relate to other transport providers such as Non-Emergency Patient Transport, but 'total transport'-type solutions are included in the scope
- Understand the social and economic benefit and potential of buses
- Evaluate alternative delivery and funding of different models
- Look at a variety of services type including
 - city centre services
 - rural services
 - connections from market towns
 - connections to employment sites and public services
 - Park and ride
 - Guided busway
 - Services for those not able to access traditional services

Reporting to CA during September, the study will develop a menu of potential options for improving bus services across the county as part of a 'whole network solution' (interpreted as including other modes and use of technology). It is notable, however, that significant operational improvement would be likely to require 'considerable public sector subsidy' which the authority does not feel it is in a position to offer.

Public consultation is explicitly outside the brief to consultants. Bus providers, local authorities and Bus User Groups are involved, although a clear weakness has been exposed in the lack of representative bodies to act on behalf of bus users in Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland in particular.

The Combined Authority's review of bus services is taking a strategic overview of commercial, subsidised and community transport operations in the county. The outcome of the process will closely inform the CA's bus strategy as it aims to make the most efficient use of resources and to use the powers set out in the Bus Services Act.

While there is no formal public consultation being undertaken as part of the review of bus services, consultation with operators, local authorities and interest groups is being undertaken during August 2018. Ramsey Million Partnership should therefore take the opportunity both to make Huntingdonshire District Council aware of their expectations for the review of bus services and to approach consultants directly regarding the improvements needed and how they might be delivered.

There will be future public consultation on the Combined Authority's Bus Strategy as it will form part of the new Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan (LTP).

Development of the plan began in July 2017 and intended to be complete in February 2019. As a statutory document, the LTP will include a formal public consultation.

Market Town Masterplans

In March 2018, the Combined Authority agreed to fund the development of masterplans for market towns in the county. Ramsey is one of 9 towns identified for such a masterplan, which are due to be produced over 2018-19.

The objective of each plan is to create "an evidence-based ambition that describes the new job opportunities, education and skills provision, community facilities, local attractions, and other reasons for enthusiasm that will exist in the future." Each masterplan is to be overseen by a partnership of District Council and Parish Councils, civil society and business.

St Neots is the first place to have completed its plan including a business case for £4.1m of investment with a further £1.7m of partner contributions (the Combined Authority Board will decide whether to sign off the investment).

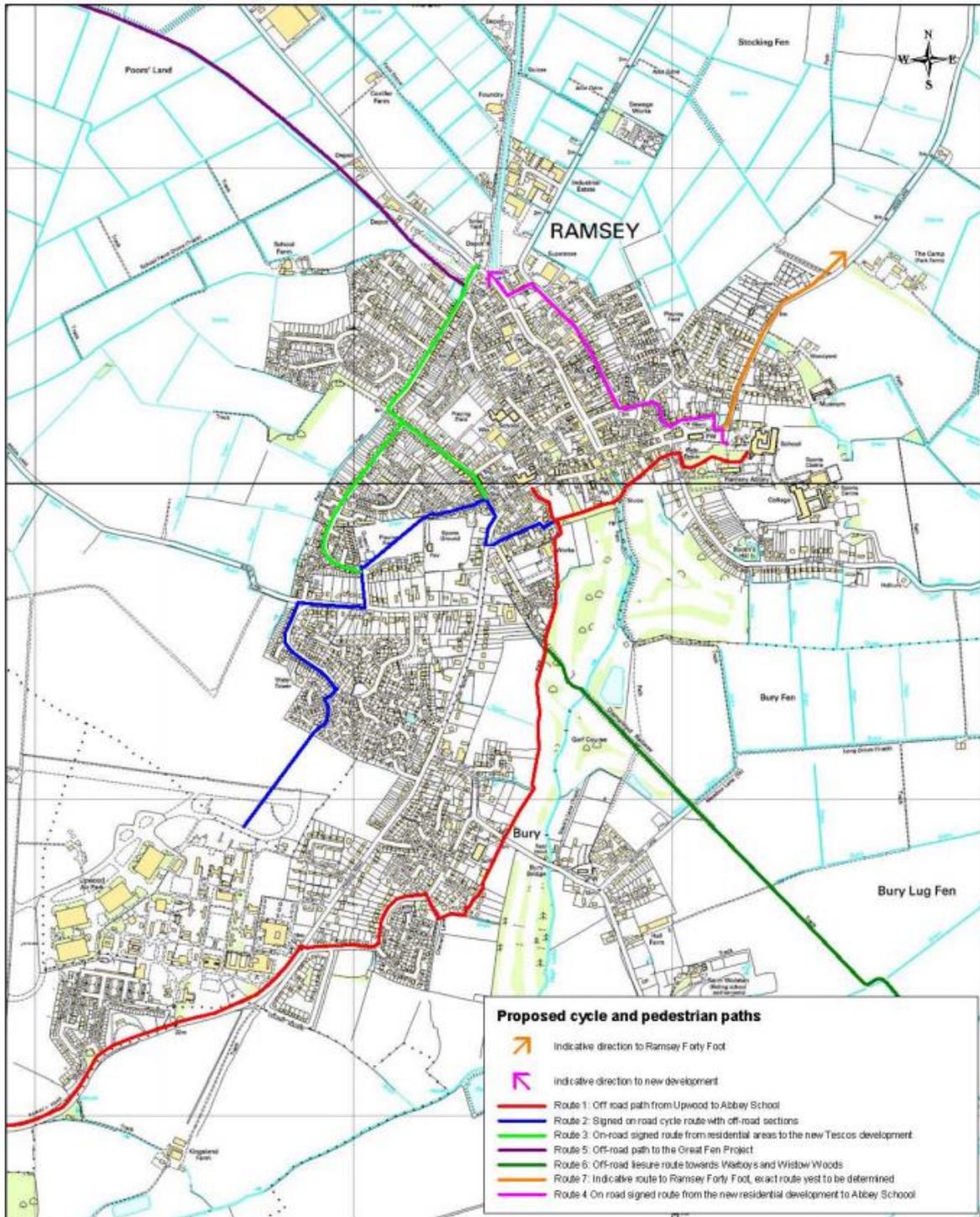
The key projects include:

- A new foot and cycle bridge linking the riverside area with the market square (£3.1m requested towards the £4.6m scheme)
- Funding to develop:
 - A transport study to resolve the traffic flow in the town centre
 - Creation of a Business Improvement District (area where an additional levy is charged on all business rate payers to fund the development of mutually beneficial projects e.g. environmental improvements).
 - Measures needed for roll out of super-fast broadband

Transport infrastructure interventions needed in Ramsey have already been identified. The Ramsey Market Town Transport Strategy (2010) proposed the following cycle and pedestrian routes as priorities.

- Off-road route from Upwood School to High Street and Abbey College
- Pedestrian and cycle routes north of Ramsey, to the Great Fen using disused railway line (£527k, from developer contributions, no timetable for delivery)
- Maltings, to the High Street (and RAF Upwood)
- Northern Gateway Site, to Abbey College
- From Ramsey towards Warboys and Wistow Woods via disused railway
- Link from Ramsey to Ramsey Forty Foot
- Key locations around Ramsey town centre

These schemes remain in the Huntingdonshire Transport Infrastructure Plan, although none has a timetable for funding for deliver. Informal discussions with members of the Ramsey Cycle Club strongly suggest that these remain highly advantageous schemes whose delivery would make cycling and walking significantly easier and more attractive in and around Ramsey town. Making them a core part of Ramsey's Market Town Masterplan should therefore be a priority.



(taken from https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/R-TP-Ramsey_Market_Town_Transport_Strategy.pdf?inline=true)

Main opportunities presented by strategy reviews

- The strategic review of bus services in Cambridgeshire is a key opportunity to make the case for improved public transport services for Ramsey.
- The absence of formal public consultation on the development of the strategy will require the Ramsey Million Partnership to seek indirect means of emphasising their case.
- The forthcoming Ramsey Market Town strategy should be used to emphasise the need for investment in walking and cycling, in line with research undertaken in 2010

7. Other approaches and best practice

Case studies

CASE STUDY Protecting services - Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire has been forced to make significant cuts to its budget for supported buses. In some places, service losses have started a negative spiral:

- Where supported services have been withdrawn, more expensive dedicated school transport has been required to fill the void
- Where bus operators no longer need to open their depots on Sundays, overheads have to be borne by the other six days thus increasing cost of providing services
- Demand responsive 'Connect' services were forced to increase fares and introduce charges for concessionary pass holders

Elsewhere, creative solutions have been sought to protect services:

- The county council has maintained funding for a post to help coordinate services
- Several parish councils have set a precept to raise monies to support bus services and others have provided one-off funding to support public transport.
- Organisations with minibuses have been encouraged to set up trading arms and obtain a PSV 'O' licence, allowing them greater freedom to undertake all types of work and to generate revenue.

CASE STUDY Total Transport

Public - and publicly funded - transport is frequently less than the sum of its parts. As well as subsidised buses, school bus services, community transport, non-emergency patient transport, and social services transport all operate in Ramsey. Originating in the Netherlands, Total Transport is the name given to pooling resources from existing transport spending (both services and funding) and devising a network which meets the needs of the wider community as well as individual service requirements.

After a picture of existing services and funding has been established, a provider or providers are commissioned to deliver it. There are various models for doing this including creating a social enterprise. This can be composed of the transport commissioners who directly employ a member of staff to manage the contracts and recycle savings back into transport services.

Pilots of Total Transport took place from 2015 and a number have resulted in permanent contracts. Other outputs included:

- Devon achieved joint working with its Clinical Commissioning Group and established a single point for all health transport referrals and requests.
- Oxfordshire and West Berkshire were able to use their in-house fleets to support South Central Ambulance Service in enhancing patient transport services.
- Cambridgeshire reviewed all transport in part of East Cambs including market day bus services, dial-a-ride and adult social care transport. A new DRT service, called East Cambridgeshire Connect, was introduced in April 2017 to meet all these requirements in an integrated way. Whilst successful in opening up new travel opportunities, such as for medical appointments, work and education, and enjoying greater usage than the individual services it replaced, the service is costing more, essentially due to the costs of the call centre and booking and scheduling software system. Despite having to pay half fare (£2 per journey), many concession holders are using the service, suggesting that they value the service and are able to make trips that they would not otherwise be able to make for free on conventional bus services.

- A joint project involving Essex and Suffolk envisaged the need for a digital booking platform operated by the local authority that would enable residents to easily book local demand responsive services including taxis, community transport and commercial bus.

Taking such an approach around Ramsey would require the agreement of the Combined Authority.

CASE STUDY Low-cost initiatives - Lift sharing

Smartphone technology is making low-cost lift sharing approaches easier to organise: Essex and Suffolk county councils have developed their own smartphone applications aimed at encouraging shared lifts to destinations such as major centres of public sector employment. This also allows taxi drivers to upload a booked journey and enable other passengers to join them.

Eynsham in Oxfordshire has operated a flexible car sharing scheme since 2017. It developed to serve outlying villages offering lifts into the Eynsham for shops and services after a local bus route was withdrawn. The project operates via a Facebook group and a WhatsApp group for Smartphone users and received a start-up grant from Oxfordshire County Council. Drivers have developed an identity card scheme

CASE STUDY Alternative sources of funding for bus services

As local authority financial support for buses has fallen away, so alternatives have risen to the surface. Some examples include

- DalesBus, part of the Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company (D&BCIC), runs regular buses which are only partly commercial. Sponsorship from organisations including Harrogate Spring Water, National Trust, Northern Railways, Northern Powergrid allow them to make ends meet.
- West Norfolk Community are funding some of their routes via a crowdfunding-based model where every parish on the routes puts some money in
- The Oxford Bus Company is funding on-bus audio-visual equipment and aims to recouping the capital investment through advertising

CASE STUDY Integrating services

Cornwall Council has recognised the essential role rural bus services play in ensuring access to facilities, employment and education for all residents. Revenue support will always be important in the provision of rural public transport with the priority being to achieve this in the most cost-effective way. To do this, Cornwall is working to integrate public transport as a single public network. Elements of this include:

- A single team in the council is responsible for transport decisions in order to achieve economies of scale and integrate different budgets.
- More frequent train services on the Cornwall main railway line between Penzance and Plymouth are being used as a catalyst for an integrated bus-rail timetable where bus services connecting at rail stations along the route.
- Bus-rail interchanges have also been created at some railway stations to create hubs for rural transport networks.
- Making buses easier and more attractive to use through capital investment such as smart ticketing technology on all buses. There is a further desire to develop multi-modal ticketing with train and bus.

CASE STUDY Bus franchising

Jersey has had bus franchising powers since 2002. In 2013, a new franchise was let which aimed to incentivise the operator to grow passenger numbers. The contract was won by Libertybus, a subsidiary of HCT Group - a social enterprise bus operator.

Revenue risk in the franchise lies with Libertybus, who in return are able to design the network themselves within a broad specification set by Jersey. Since the new contract began, passenger numbers are up by a third, five new routes have been added, frequencies have improved, passenger satisfaction is up by five per cent and subsidy levels are down by £800,000.

CASE STUDY Information and marketing

Hertfordshire has a well-established bus partnership, marketed as Intalink. Funded by operators and district councils, it offers shared information and marketing for county, including:

- Stop-specific timetables.
- Real time passenger information linked to the council's traffic management system
- Investment in transport hubs at many of the county's town centres and railway stations.
- A range of multi-operator fares for day or weekly travel; and a saver card for 11-18-year olds.

Dorset County Council has improved its management of bus stops by cataloguing and assessing them. It has also introduced a map with real time information at each bus stop.

CASE STUDY Rural Travel Hubs

Rural Travel Hubs serve as interchanges, close to existing transport corridors served by a reliable and frequent public transport service. Residents in rural areas can walk, cycle or drive to the hubs and continue their onward journey using a sustainable mode of travel. The intention is to build on the experience of the informal travel hub that developed at the Swavesey guided busway stop. Hubs are currently being developed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership at three sites, with the aim of reducing private car journeys into Cambridge from surrounding villages. The idea can be extended across rural parts of the county, creating a link with demand responsive transport and community transport. Hubs will be designed to meet specific local requirements but will generally include car and cycle parking and bus interchange and passenger facilities, including real time information.

Other options for improving services

Tendered Network Zones

The concept of Tendered Network Zones uses Quality Contracts or franchising to allow local authorities to plan a local network, specifying the fares, frequencies, timings, routes and tickets. Bus operators then bid to run the services which are specified. The network is maintained by the local authority working with the Traffic Commissioner, who would refuse to register a commercial service if it undermined the broader network. All funding for the network, including the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) would be given to the local authority, giving the network greater stability.

Inter-urban bus services

Over the last 20 years, while rural buses have been in decline, inter-urban bus services have prospered. There are opportunities to build on this success, properly planning a network based around common journeys between major urban centres and fully integrating them with other local transport services including DRT, taxis, and rural transport hubs (see below).

Working with non-emergency patient transport (NEPT)

In Cambridgeshire, the Clinical Commissioning Group now spends significantly more on transport than the county council. Finding ways of bringing these services together makes clear sense but require both the local authority and clinical commissioning group to want a new approach.

There is much duplication within patient transport with people from similar areas being transported to hospital in different ways – for example, those eligible using NEPT transport, whilst ineligible patients use a volunteer car scheme or travel with a friend. Whilst the health transport market is getting more complex, about half of current NEPT users do not require specialist transport. Demands are increasing and so the current model of provision seems unsustainable. This is demonstrated by some of the stories by service users highlighted in Age UK's 'Painful journeys' publication.

The Community Transport Association has made recommendations to develop more effective NEPT:

- Commissioning through contracts that support innovation in transport provision, offering flexibility and opportunities for collaboration with community transport that is providing for social need
- Patient involvement in co-creating their own travel solutions, so that transport is patient-centred
- Collaborative approach to NEPT which draws on the contributions of a broader range of stakeholders, including working with other transport providers
- Involvement of community transport as a means of adding distinct value to the patient experience
- Collect and share better and more meaningful data to improve service design and improvement, including real time information and integration of booking transport at the same time as appointments are made.

8. Ways forward

Ramsey's public transport is very poor when compared to other parts of the county and to other places of a similar size. Better transport is needed to help tackle local social and economic weaknesses – there are areas of Ramsey which suffer economic disadvantage, with low skills a particular problem. Enhanced transport aimed at improving the size of the labour market would help this. Need is relatively high and growing among those sections of the community most likely to be reliant of public transport. Integration between operators and modes is poor. Relatively large amounts of money is spent on transport services in the district, but this is currently less than the sum of its parts.

Public transport in and around Ramsey is characterised by

- Sporadic service patterns
- Slow journey times
- Disjointed planning and integration, and
- Expensive ticket prices.

Key destinations such as town centres, hospitals and connections to other modes at Huntingdon and Peterborough, and the guided busway at St Ives are very poorly served at peak and off-peak times compared with other areas with a population the size and proximity of Ramsey's. Some potentially useful destinations such as the railhead at Whittlesea have no bus service whatsoever and off-peak services are often very limited, with no Sunday services operating.

Journey times are slow. The nature of Ramsey's road connections and the requirement of the infrequent buses to make numerous stops combine to make journey times similar to those of congested urban routes.

A mixture of commercial, subsidised and community transport operations has evolved. This has resulted in services that are poorly coordinated, with the limited resources available not being used to the optimum. There is no clock-face timetabling and joint ticketing across operators and modes is not available.

Flat fares offered by Stagecoach represent reasonable value for money for longer peak-time journeys, but other fares are necessarily expensive for operators attempting to cover costs.

The outcome of the above factors is that public transport in and around Ramsey is likely to be attractive only to those with limited alternative options. This disadvantages those groups who rely on public transport and discourages those who might use such services if they were of a higher quality. It is notable that despite these problems, demand remains relatively high. Of the three regular conventional routes serving Ramsey town, one is commercially viable and the other two receive a relatively small per passenger subsidy.

Improving service levels

Improving public transport in the Ramsey area requires assessment of the frequency, journey times and interchanges which can be reasonably achieved. The detailed work to underpin this would require consultation with potential user groups, operators and other bodies including local authorities and larger employers. It would also have knock effects on other communities whose interests need to be taken into account. Such assessment is outside the scope of this research.

However, it is judged that a high-level transport aspiration for Ramsey parish could be useful as a starting point for discussions. Drawing on service patterns supported elsewhere

in the county, such an aspiration could take a form as set out below. This would be supported by demand responsive services.

Frequency:

Destination	Morning peak (6 - 8.30 am)	Off-peak (8.30am - 4.30 pm)	Evening peak (4.30 - 6.30pm)	Evening off-peak (post 6.30pm)	Saturday	Sunday
Peterborough (alternating via Forty Foot and St Marys, all stopping at Whittlesea rail)	3-5	Hourly	2-3	Hourly	Hourly with some evening services	Hourly 10-4
Huntingdon (direct)	2-3		2-3			
St Ives (via busway)	3-5	Hourly	2-3	Hourly	Hourly with some evening services	Hourly 10-4
Local village service (similar to that offered by Ramsey Bus Hoppa)		Circular route				

Journey times:

Examination is needed as to whether journey times to the most important destinations can be reduced. This could help to make services more attractive and competitive with private car journeys. Options for this would include reduced stops for some services at peak times and alternative routing.

Interchange:

Improved modal interchange and ticketing should be a priority for the Ramsey area. Smartcard multi-operator ticketing would help address the fractured nature of existing services. This is being progressed for the Cambridge area, but would be of benefit county-wide.

In addition to the existing busway interchange at St Ives, there is potential for improved links with rail at Whittlesea in concert with other planned improvements to the station. In the future, proposals for a new railway station at Abbots Ripton (serving the Alconbury Weald development) could also be advantageous for Ramsey and should be considered as such.

Service delivery

Improving Ramsey's transport services requires two sets of activities. The first relates to improvements that can be coordinated and funded locally, and the second to campaigning work enabling others to understand and respond to Ramsey's needs at a more strategic level. Proposals for how each might be addressed are discussed below.

Local improvements

- Seek grant funding for a post to coordinate community transport in and around the Ramsey area.
- Seek additional sources of funding to allow an expansion of community transport services. This could include changes to the fares structure, contributions gathered by parish councils and corporate sponsorship for local businesses.

- Establish lift sharing between villages via existing social media outlets, as with Eynsham's Facebook and WhatsApp groups
- Influence market town strategy, arguing for a place on the steering group and highlighting the need for active travel infrastructure and RTPPI - as already identified as priorities. There is also a case for updating to the Ramsey transport plan produced in 2010.

Strategic improvements

Promote the Ramsey area as a pilot for enhanced rural public transport services. Establishing such pilots is within the gift of the CA and the following options should be considered independently or in combination:

Local Franchising - Work with operators, communities and local authorities to redesign all or part of the bus network serving the Ramsey and adjacent areas. Tenders would then be sought for a contract to deliver services the success of which would be judged against agreed parameters (e.g. increased patronage).

Total Transport - bringing together the funding of transport services across CA, County Council, NHS and Bus Service Operators Grant funding. Those commissioning services would then jointly agree a network of services which meet their collective needs with efficiency savings being invested in service improvements.

Integrated public transport network - Following the Cornwall model, this would need to be pursued at county level. Local features of the scheme for Ramsey should include

- Rural transport hubs and St Ives and at Whittlesea offering improved local bus services
- Multi-modal ticketing across bus and train operators
- Shared information and marketing to improve awareness of services on offer

How to achieve objectives

It is important that in making Ramsey's case, work highlights both the weaknesses of the existing transport offer and what needs to be done to address it. Simply asking for more investment is unlikely to be successful, hence the suggested approaches which seek to make existing resources go further. Useful data and proposals to do this are set out in this report.

The bus services review and market town studies both offer opportunities to highlight current weaknesses in Ramsey's transport provision and to propose way by which this could be addressed.

The case for improved rural public transport will be heard more clearly if made collectively. Joint working will be key to any success. Ramsey's substandard public transport offer is not an isolated case within Cambridgeshire. For example, like Ramsey, the Earith, Bluntisham, Colne and Somersham villages have a combined population of around 8,000 but are served by only a small number of local bus services. They are likely to need similar interventions to Ramsey and there will be benefits to contacting them to discuss objectives.

Similarly, well timed initiatives that highlight the breadth of concern about existing service levels are most likely to be influential. Sign up from local businesses, school and voluntary groups will help to do this. A short written briefing to relevant local councillors ahead of key decisions may help at county level.

It is important that creative and proactive ways of engaging with these processes are adopted. Suggestions and timings for this are set out briefly below.

Bus services review

What	Objective	Suggested activity	When
CA bus services review	Consultants accept that current bus services are unacceptable	Joint letter to HDC requesting they represent Ramsey's needs – from RMP, Town Council and other relevant bodies	July 2018
	Bus strategy includes measures to improve Ramsey's service levels	Meeting and written submission to county councillors highlighting relevant sections of consultants' report with recommendations for responses most applicable to Ramsey's needs (e.g. improvements in frequency, speed, interchange, need for rural transport pilot such as Total Transport)	September 2018 (as consultants' report is submitted)
Review of Cambs Local Transport Plan	Plan includes measures to improve Ramsey's service levels - dependent on outcome of bus strategy	Written response to public consultation	November 2018 – January 2019
		Encourage public organisation responses through form, joint letter, media work	

Market towns studies

What	Objective	Suggested activity	When
St Ives and Whittlesey Market Town studies	Better rural transport interchanges to service Ramsey area	Request a place on the study steering group for RMP Written response highlighting potential of towns rail and bus services to be transport hubs for local area	Now – studies due 2018
Ramsey Market Town Study	Investment allocated to active travel and bus infrastructure improvements	Seek info from District Council regarding timing and process for study	Now – study due in 2019
		Meeting with Market Study team to discuss how outcomes can contribute to community plan	Timing not yet announced
		Contact and encourage relevant organisations to contribute to Market Town study (e.g. schools, businesses, parents' groups, cycling group)	
		Written response matching community plan objectives with market study objectives highlighting active travel infrastructure needs	
		Update of Ramsey transport plan	

Campaign for
Better Transport 

August 2018