

RAMSGATE FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND RAMSGATE HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Joint Transport Board	14th December 2021
Report Author	Grant Burton, Capital Development Manager
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Reece Pugh, deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Status	For Recommendation
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	Central Harbour Ward

Executive Summary:

As part of a successful Future High Street Fund bid, Thanet District Council has been awarded £1,641,014 for Highway Improvement in Ramsgate. The scheme developed seeks to improve the public realm and provide connectivity between the popular harbourside area and the town centre. Through improved crossing facilities and creating a more inviting space, the scheme aims to help and encourage visitors to move from the harbour area up into the town. This is part of a package of different projects (funding from various sources) with the overall aim of making Ramsgate a more inviting and attractive place to live in, work in and visit.

This paper sets out the background to the design, the findings of recent consultation on the proposed improvements and aims to gather views of members of the Joint Transport Board to assist in influencing the next developments of the scheme.

Recommendation(s):

Subject to the views of the Board, and using information from the consultation, the project progresses to the detailed design stage and subsequent delivery.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

The scheme has been developed based on the budget received from the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The scheme will be fully funded using this external funding and will be delivered at no cost to either Thanet District Council or Kent County Council. Any amendments and changes to the scheme will need to fit within this funding envelope.

Both financial and performance monitoring of this scheme is essential, and clear monitoring and evaluation processes have been established to ensure that the project both achieves its objectives as well as remains in budget.

Legal

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Corporate

The Ramsgate Future High Street Fund programme supports Thanet District Council's corporate priority for Growth, by encouraging the regeneration of Ramsgate Town Centre. It will also enhance the environment through traffic management proposals with the aim of reducing vehicle dominance and reducing speed.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken prior to detailed design work.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *Growth*
- *Environment*
- *Communities*

1. Background and Development of the scheme

- 1.1. Thanet District Council was awarded £2.7m for two projects from the Government funded - Future High Street Fund. This funding programme was established to help local areas to respond to and adapt to changes. One of these projects was for Highways Improvements, with the aim of creating an inviting space which will encourage visitors to move from the Harbour area further into the town.
- 1.2. The initial idea for the design was developed in conjunction with the Ramsgate Coastal Community Team and Ramsgate Town Council. Using this information, Kent County Council assisted Thanet District Council in producing initial conceptual design drawings as part of the Future High Street Fund bid. These designs were then developed further by the Councils appointed consultancy team with regular input from Kent County Council.
- 1.3. During the development of the plans, Kent County Council and Thanet District Council pro-actively worked with StageCoach, and numerous site visits were held. The plans were subsequently amended to try and address the issues Stagecoach raised. The scheme is attached as appendix 1.

2. Consultation Methodology

- 2.1. Thanet District Council, along with Kent County Council, considered it important to undertake public consultation to assess the support of the project. The consultation was

launched on the 12th October and concluded on Friday 26th November. This took the form of:

- An online survey (182 respondents)
- Two drop in sessions to discuss the plans (46 attendees)
- The opportunity to email comments to consultation@thanet.gov.uk (4 responses)

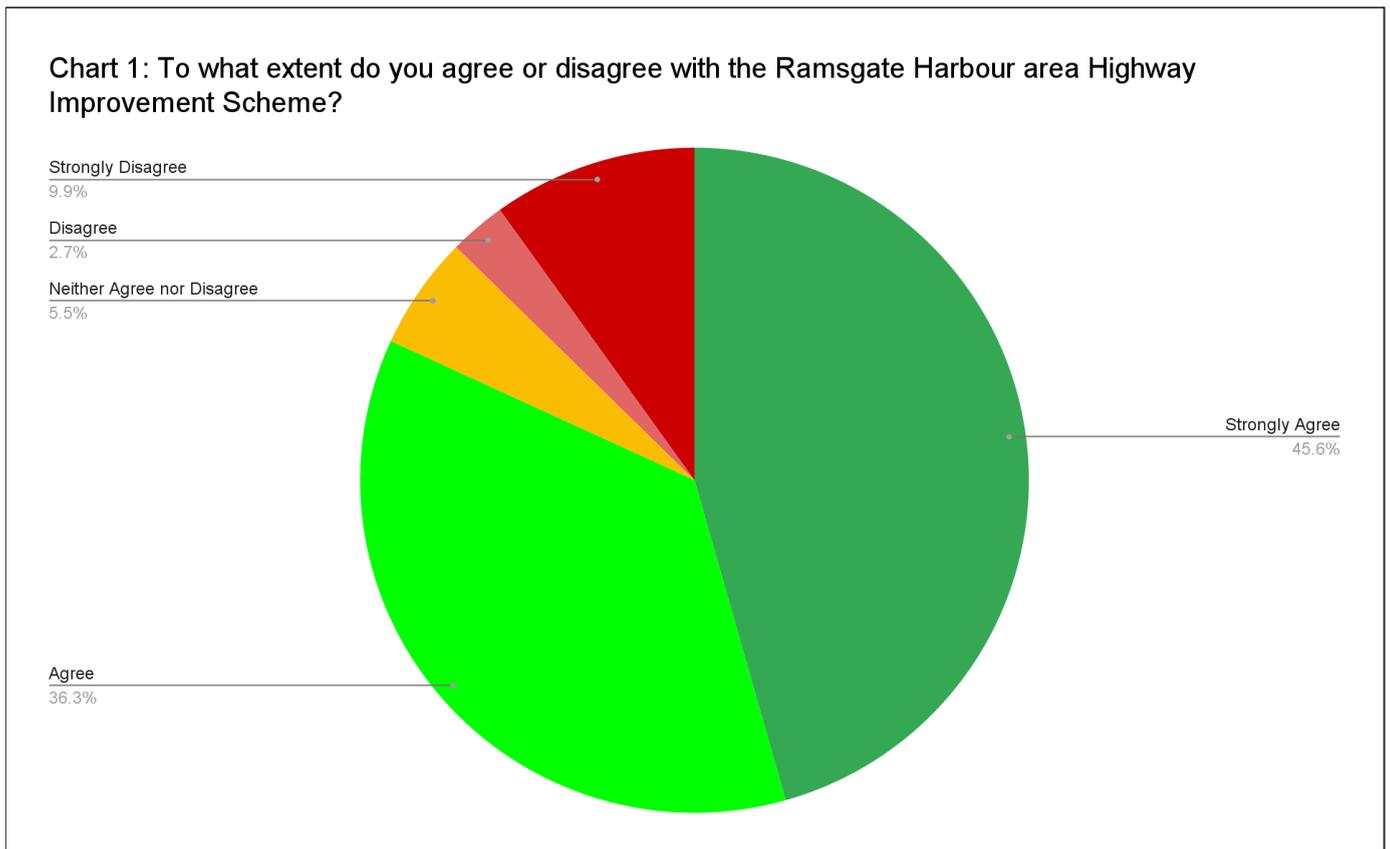
2.2. Appendix 3 outlines the demographics of those completing the questionnaire.

2.3. The consultation was promoted in a variety of ways including:

- Social media
- Thanet District Council website
- Advert placed in Thanet Extra - promoting the drop in sessions.

3. Key Findings

3.1. As can be seen by chart 1, in total 81.87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed scheme with 12.64% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposals.



3.2. Respondents were asked whether they believed that the project would achieve the aims of the project. As you can see from chart 2 over 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the scheme would enhance the environment; create a more inviting character

for the harbour area; and reduce vehicle speeds. Respondents felt that the least impact would be on reducing the dominance of vehicles although over 66% still strongly agreed or agreed that it would achieve its aim.



3.3. Respondents were then asked what elements of the scheme they agreed with, the below chart outlines these key elements. The below table shows that significantly in over 80% of cases respondents liked or strongly liked the proposal to improve the crossing facilities at Military Road and Leopold Street, and creating a 20mph zone to the seafront area. The least liked element was the reduction of the bus layby with 53% either strongly liking or liking this element.

Question	Strongly like	Like	Neither L / DL	Dislike	Strongly Dislike	Don't know
Improving crossing facilities at Military Road and Leopold Street	54.95%	32.97%	5.49%	2.75%	3.30%	0.55%
Removing pedestrian guards at Albion Hill / Harbour Parade / Madeira Walk	29.12%	35.16%	18.13%	10.99%	4.95%	1.65%
Introducing a raised table	32.97%	35.71%	17.58%	6.59%	4.95%	2.20%
Installing signal junction and crossing point	46.70%	33.52%	7.69%	6.04%	4.95%	1.10%

at Albion Hill / Harbour Parade / Madeira Walk						
Reducing the bus layby capacity on the north side of Madeira Walk	20.33%	32.97%	26.92%	10.44%	7.14%	2.20%
Creating a 20mph zone to the seafront area	63.74%	23.63%	5.49%	2.75%	2.75%	1.65%

4. Key Messages

- 4.1. In addition to the quantitative questions, people were given the opportunity to make comments on the proposed scheme. Key messages from this include:
- Harbour Parade area (from Madeira Walk to the Pavilion Sands)
 - Consideration of restricting access or pedestrianising the harbour parade area
 - Restricting parking in the Harbour Street area.
 - The need to increase the 20mph zone (the most frequently cited areas of the extension was moving the zone from the bottom of Madeira Walk up to Wellington Crescent)
 - Concerns were raised about the state of the High Street area, and the need for this area to be improved.
 - Concerns about the bus layby restrictions but also the option to move the layby to Leopold Street.
- 4.2. Chart 4, overleaf, provides a summary of the comments received. Appendix 2 provides details of every comment received.

5. Stakeholder comments

- 5.1. In addition to the general comments we received, we also received comments from Ramsgate Town Council and Kent Police.

Ramsgate Town Council:

The Committee considered its response to the Thanet District Council Future High Street Fund: Highway and Pedestrian Movement Scheme.

RESOLUTION: Ramsgate Town Council welcomes and supports the proposed measures but raises concerns in relation to the route for large vehicles and HGVs when the road tunnel is closed. Turning left from Military Road into Royal Parade will be problematic and vice versa. To mitigate the issue it is suggested that tunnel maintenance should take place overnight or traffic control used if carried out during day time hours. It is also recommended that the scheme is monitored to check on its success.

Kent Police

In relation to the entire scheme, Kent Police agree that the work will enhance the visual aesthetics of the Harbour area. The removal of the roundabout will improve vehicular flow but may not necessarily reduce the inbound speed of vehicles. The raised table will definitely deter the majority of motorists to adhere to the 20 mph limit, however we are concerned that a level of non compliance will expose the scheme to a potential enforcement regime that previously did not exist. The National Police stance on 20 mph limit enforcement is clear and Kent Police remain to following the national advice and will not routinely enforce 20 mph limits or zones. This area may require further engineered solutions to ensure compliance post build.

The Royal Parade is subject to heavy vehicular use and any redevelopment of the harbour will only increase the need for access. We recognise the requirement to remove guarding to reduce potential casualties and support this part of the scheme. Particular care should be given to the alignment of any tactile surfaces to ensure safe passage of visually impaired patrons. We support the creation of the signalised crossing point to aid the above requirement.

The Harbour area and through traffic will benefit from this scheme and we the Police recognise the measures incorporated to mitigate danger to all users.

From a deployment perspective, we would wish be included in any scheme updates or changes that may result from the consultation.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. It is proposed that the project team meet to consider the comments received from the consultation and Joint Transport Board, and that the project commences to detailed design stage through a Section 278 Agreement. We will also give feedback to those who have engaged in this consultation, with the key messages received and proposed changes that we have made as a result of the consultation.

Contact Officer:	Fiona Tomlinson, Towns Project Manager
Reporting to:	Louise Askew, Director of Regeneration

Chart 4. Summary of comments received

