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Image Credit: Thanet Tourism

Ramsgate Future Investment Plan: Phase 1 Engagement Summary



Image Credit: Thanet Tourism

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Ramsgate Future Investment Plan: Phase 1 Engagement Summary
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Executive Summary

Thanet District Council is working to create a plan for the future of Ramsgate that supports a thriving town centre and the needs of local people.

The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan will seek to build on secured funding, including the Future High Street Fund and High Street Action Zone, and bring further funding and investment into the town to:

- Create new and better employment;
- Enable local people to develop new skills for the economy of the future;
- Support local businesses to grow;
- Improve connections and make it easier to get around;
- Celebrate and invest in our Seafront, History and Heritage.

To support this process an initial programme of community and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken. Conversations with local people, businesses and organisations has highlighted the following priorities for consideration and exploration in the development of the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan.

A Ramsgate Economy that Creates Jobs

Engagement suggests the community and stakeholders would like to see the economy of the town diversify and become less reliant on seasonal trade. This is aligned with a desire to create jobs and opportunities for local people.

Supporting Local Businesses

It is clear from engagement that local businesses are facing challenges and barriers that limit their ability to grow and develop. The Investment Plan should outline how Thanet District Council and partners will work with local businesses to transform Ramsgate's economy.

Opportunities for Young People

Just 4% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'Ramsgate has opportunities for young people.' There is a perceived lack of opportunity and support for young people in Ramsgate which is connected by stakeholders and the community with low attainment, limited aspiration and anti-social behaviour.

“Ramsgate has so much potential to be so much more.”

East Kent College Focus Group Participant

Skills and Training

Stakeholders and the community agree there is a need to provide those in Ramsgate with access to new skills and routes to employment, particularly to support recovery post Covid-19.

The Port

39% of survey respondents selected investment to support the regeneration of the Port of Ramsgate as their first choice priority. Wider engagement suggests the Port is seen as integral to the town's future.

The Royal Harbour

Seen as the jewel in Ramsgate's crown, the community and stakeholders would like to see the Royal Harbour enhanced and celebrated. They would also like it to continue to contribute to the local economy both through jobs and attracting visitors into the area.

The Town Centre

Throughout the engagement process the current condition and future of the high street was highlighted as a concern. A thriving high street and town centre is seen as vital to the town.

The Public Realm

The look and feel of the town is a concern for local people and stakeholders. There is a need to address community concerns, across the public realm, around issues including safety, appearance and accessibility.

Celebrating History and Heritage

Ramsgate's rich history and heritage is part of what makes it special. Engagement has shown a desire to see Ramsgate's history celebrated and shared.

The Green Agenda

Ramsgate's role in addressing the climate emergency is a priority among the community and stakeholders. They want to see plans for the future that provide a pathway to a green future for Ramsgate.

Community Wealth

Investment in the town thorough programmes such as the Levelling Up Fund is welcome. There is a desire to see investment in infrastructure create a legacy for the future and build community wealth.

Introduction and Background

Thanet District Council asked local people and stakeholders to join the conversation about the future of Ramsgate. This report summarises the engagement process and the key emerging themes.

1. Context: Ramsgate Future Investment Plan

The overarching objective for the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan is to *“put together a plan for Ramsgate that supports a thriving town centre and supports its communities.”*¹ The brief for the project sets out an aspiration to *“encourage community buy-in and confidence that the Investment Plan will make a tangible difference to Ramsgate’s economic growth and productivity, supporting the communities it is intended to benefit.”*²

Thanet District Council has decided to put forward a Levelling Up Fund bid, in an effort to secure capital funding and start the process of delivering the Investment Plan. Levelling Up Funding³ is focused on three themes.

- **Transport investments** including (but not limited to) public transport, active travel, bridge repairs, bus priority lanes, local road improvements and major structural maintenance, and accessibility improvements. Including proposals for high-impact small, medium and by exception larger local transport schemes to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, cut congestion, support economic growth and improve the experience of transport users.
- **Regeneration and town centre investment**, building on the Towns Fund framework to upgrade eyesore buildings and dated infrastructure, acquire and regenerate brownfield sites, invest in secure community infrastructure and crime reduction, and bring public services and safe community spaces into town and city centres.

- **Cultural investment** maintaining, regenerating, or creatively re-purposing museums, galleries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces) and heritage assets as well as creating new community owned spaces to support the arts and service as cultural spaces.

The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan seeks to support a thriving town centre and the needs of local people. Based on the Ramsgate Atlas, the evidence base that informs the investment plan, we sought to engage people and stakeholders around four key themes:

- **Jobs: Creating New and Better Employment:** There is an opportunity in Ramsgate to create more jobs that more people want to do. Ramsgate needs more quality employment space at the right price to support new business, growth and innovation.
- **Connections and Movement:** Ramsgate’s relatively compact footprint is conducive to walking and cycling. The town would benefit from public realm improvements to make active travel safer and public transport more efficient.
- **Opportunity and Skills:** There is a need to provide those in Ramsgate access to new skills and routes to employment, particularly to support recovery post Covid-19.
- **Seafront, History and Heritage:** There is an opportunity to build on Ramsgate’s distinct identity and create new spaces and places for Ramsgate’s residents and visitors.

¹ Ramsgate: Stakeholder Engagement Brief

² Ramsgate: Stakeholder Engagement Brief

³ [Levelling Up Fund: Prospectus, March 2021](#)

2. Focus of the Engagement

The proposals for the future of the town will be informed by a range of evidence, an element of which is engagement with stakeholders and the community. This initial phase of engagement focused on:

- Understanding participants perspectives of Ramsgate; what is unique about the town? Why do people, live, work, invest in and do business in Ramsgate?
- Informing a shared vision for the future of Ramsgate which is shared by stakeholders and the wider community.
- Working with participants to develop objectives for the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan and wider strategy for the future.
- Understanding what priorities individuals and organisations have for the future of Ramsgate.
- Identifying any issues and barriers which may impact on the implementation / delivery of the Plan.
- Myth Busting: Helping the community understand how the Investment Plan will be developed and what it seeks to achieve.

3. Opportunities to Engage

The Levelling Up Fund prospectus states “bidding authorities should consult a range of local stakeholders across the full geography of a place in developing their proposed investments for the Fund. Potential relevant local stakeholders and partners include local businesses, public transport providers, police and emergency services, community representatives, environmental representatives and universities and Further Education Colleges (FECs).⁴”

To support the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan and Levelling Up Fund bid an approach to engagement was designed to ensure it was:

- Open and inclusive to all interested parties, with particular emphasis on widening participation amongst members of the community who do not traditionally partake in consultations.

- Engaging all communities, including those from wards that are not within the town centre.
- Robust and representative, ensuring that those involved in the process can evidence the value of their participation.
- Providing adequate opportunities for all interested parties to have their say to help shape a plan.
- In-line with current guidelines relating to Covid-19 and social distancing.
- Innovative in the way that engagement can take place, accessing as many of the different community and stakeholder groups as possible.

It is important to acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions have changed how we can engage with stakeholders and the community. The approach sought to blend a combination of suitable face to face engagement with digital participation opportunities. Ways in which people could participate included:

- Completing questionnaires;
- Attending Covid-19 secure drop-in events;
- Participating in digital stakeholder workshops;
- Taking part in digital coffee mornings;
- Focus groups and meetings delivered in partnership with organisations including education providers, the third sector and other networks; and;
- Emailing, writing to, texting or telephoning the engagement team.

4. Analysis

This report presents an analysis and summary of the results of the engagement process. Detailed notes of all meetings and engagement have been shared with the project team. It also puts forward recommendations and approaches for future engagement to support the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan.

⁴ [Levelling Up Fund: Prospectus, March 2021](#)



About the Respondents and Responses

How People and Organisations Could Participate

Phase 1 of the engagement to support the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan took place in June 2021. The community and stakeholders could participate in a number of ways.

Ramsgate Future Microsite

A specific microsite has been developed to inform local people and organisations about the aims and aspirations of the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan and the ways in which they can get involved.

Questionnaires

Three questionnaires were developed for local people, businesses and third sector organisations / community groups. The map overleaf shows the geographical spread of respondents across Ramsgate. Questionnaires were also completed by people living in areas across England including Staffordshire, Shrewsbury and Basingstoke.

Digital Town Hall

An open community event to enable local people to find out about the Investment Plan and discuss the four key themes.

Digital Business Briefings and Walkabouts

Engagement with businesses through digital business engagements and walkabouts to talk to local business owners.

Focus Groups and Meetings

Focus groups and discussions with local community groups, and their members, including EKG Group, Pie Factory, East Kent Mencap, Newington Big Local and a Ramsgate Accessibility and Disability Group.

Community Drop-in events

Two socially distanced Covid-19 secure, drop-in events in Ramsgate High Street (Saturday, 6 June 2021) and Newington Community Centre (Sunday, 7 June 2021).

Walk and Talks

Spending time in and around the town talking to local people and visitors in key locations including the Harbour, high street and local parks and open spaces.

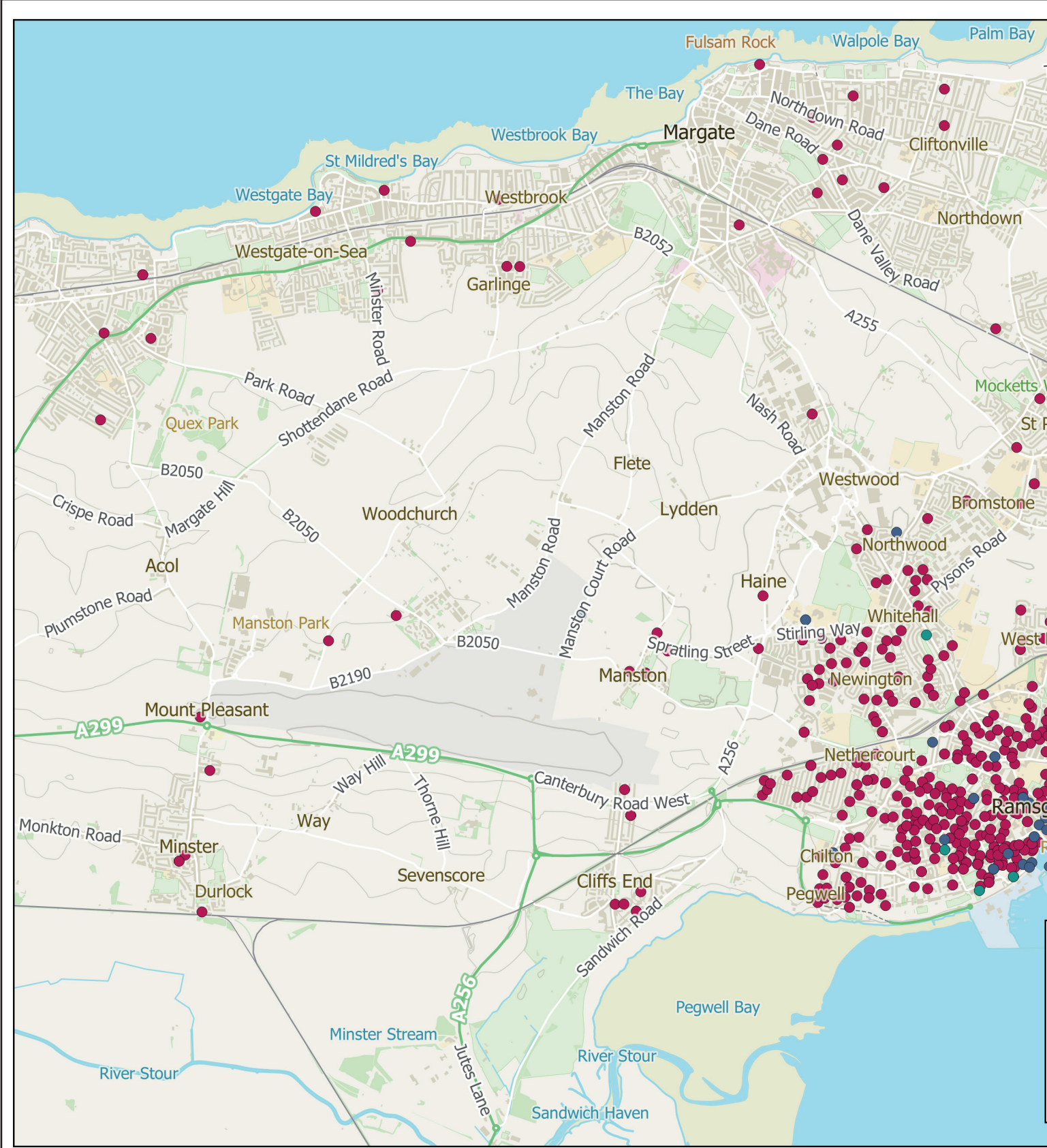
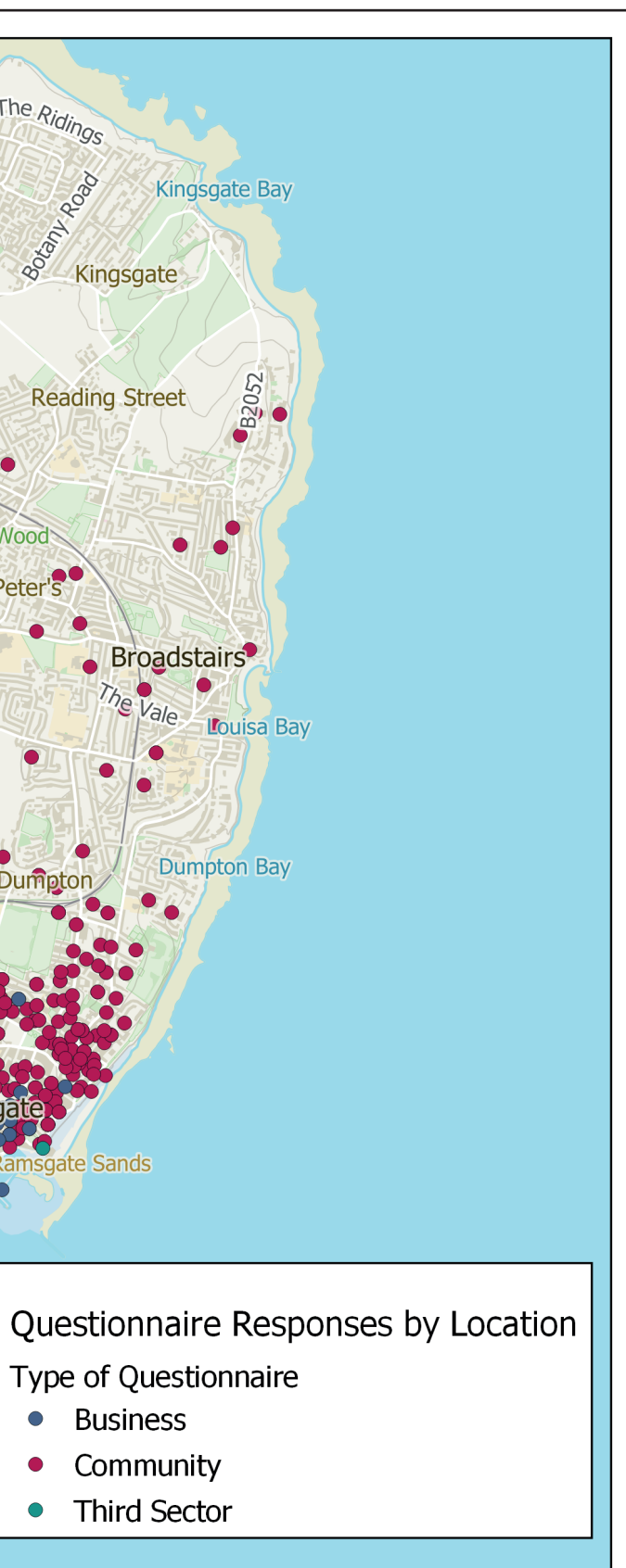


Figure 1. Questionnaire Reach



Social Media

#RamsgateFuture was used across social media to raise awareness of the Investment Plan and encourage participation. A social media listening exercise was also used to capture people's perceptions and aspirations for the town.

Email, Post or Telephone

Members of the public could email, write to the project team freepost or telephone the team directly during the engagement period. All correspondence was logged and coded as part of the qualitative engagement analysis.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders are defined as those individuals and organisations that are affected by the Investment Plan, affect it or both affect and are affected by the Investment Plan. The Consultation Institute recommends using the 'Six Tests' method for the basis of identifying key stakeholders¹:

- Test 1: Who is directly impacted by this decision?
- Test 2: Who is indirectly impacted?
- Test 3: Who is potentially impacted?
- Test 4: Whose help is needed to make the decision work?
- Test 5: Who knows about the subject?
- Test 6: Who will have an interest in the subject?

¹ <https://www.consultationinstitute.org/challenge-consulting-many-stakeholder-identification>

Asking Local People and Organisations to Join the Conversation

This approach has enabled the identification of a wide range of stakeholders to engage. Appendix 1 shows the stakeholder mapping work, using an interest/influence matrix to enable us to design our approach in relation to the needs of the stakeholder and the level of interest and influence they are likely to have. This mapping work has influenced the method selection and will be updated and reviewed as work on the Town Deal continues.

High influence and high interest stakeholders were primarily engaged in three ways:

Digital Stakeholder Launch

Stakeholders, including third sector organisations, community groups, associations and businesses, were invited to participate in a launch event to share the aspirations of the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan and how the plan will be developed.



Digital Stakeholder Workshops

Discussion sessions for stakeholders were based around the four key investment plan themes:

- Jobs: Creating New and Better Employment
- Connections and Movement
- Opportunities and Skills
- Seafront, History and Heritage

Targeted Engagement With Stakeholders

Individual meetings with key stakeholders in relation to the proposed projects including: EKC Group, the Fisherman's Associate, Historic England, Town Team, Harbour Master & Marine Operations Manager, Architectural Heritage Fund, Arts Council, Department of Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus, South East Local Enterprise Partnership, London Array, Vattenall, Coastal Community Team, Neighbourhood Plan Team and Ramsgate Society. Engagement was also undertaken by the wider project team with Town, District and County Council members and the Local Member of Parliament.

All stakeholders were asked to participate in the community engagement programme and to encourage their members, staff and / or the people they worked with to participate in the project.

Engagement Summary



Figure 2.. Engagement Reach

Analysing and Understanding What People Told Us

All engagement activity was recorded and logged in an appropriate manner. All engagement tools have been designed to capture information and feedback from participants, whether this be comments on displays or completion of a questionnaire.

Quantitative data such as responses to questionnaires and polling was analysed using a two step process:

Stage 1: Tabulation Analysis: In essence, tabulation analysis involves laying out data in easy to understand summary tables. This commenced with a frequency distribution analysis, which communicates the number of respondents who gave each possible answer to a question. This enables an understanding of the number and percentage of respondents who gave answers to each question and provides an overview of the pattern of responses, which informed further tabulation and analysis.

Further analysis of the data took the form of a cross-tabulation process which enabled the cross-referencing of responses to one question relative to responses from one or more questions. For example, if people who lived in town for 10 years or more had different perspectives to those who had moved into the area in the last 3 years. This provided invaluable insight to inform our understanding.

Stage 2. Statistical Analysis: The next stage was to undertake statistical analysis to examine the data further and identify or confirm patterns to determine if they are statistically significant e.g. “if a particular difference is large enough to be unlikely to have occurred due to chance or sampling error, then the difference is statistically significant (Wilson, 2006).”

Qualitative data gathered through techniques such as focus groups and online and offline events, was analysed using inductive coding. The data collated was then reviewed to identify words or phrases that participants used repeatedly. These were used as codes to look for themes and patterns in responses.

Understanding What People Think about Ramsgate.

Understanding the current situation and perception of the town, is important in order to identify challenges and priorities for the future. Based on questionnaire responses and qualitative data collated through events and activities this section of the report explores what participants think about Ramsgate. 776 people completed the community survey, 39 people the business survey and 7 the third sector survey.

“The magnificent harbour and the opportunities it provides.”

To explore this, participants were asked what made Ramsgate distinct, compared to the other towns in Thanet. The word cloud overleaf illustrates how respondents answered this question. Coding of responses showed that The Royal Harbour was the most significant distinction in the mind of respondents with 61% of people referencing it in their answer.

“The history that surrounds the town, the harbour and its geographical location. The mix of architecture, the beaches, the rise of bijou businesses and proximity to London (with good communication links) mean the area has potential to prosper.”

Ramsgate’s heritage and architectural assets were also seen as an important part of what makes the town unique and special. The desire to make the most of these assets and to promote the town’s rich history was a factor in

discussions about the towns future, which are summarised later in this report.

“Its vibrant wholesome ever growing community.”

People and community were also seen as part of what makes Ramsgate special. There were references to the role and importance of community groups and how local people contribute to the town. However, as shown in figure 2 below, a quarter of respondents do not think that Ramsgate has a good sense of community.

Figure 2: Do you think Ramsgate has a strong sense of community?

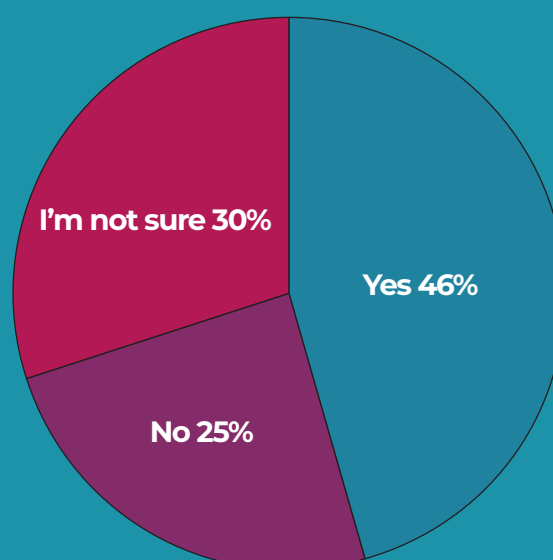




Figure 2: In a few words, what do you think makes Ramsgate distinct from the other towns in Thanet?
Questionnaire Response Word Cloud

“It is less trendy than Margate and less posh than Broadstairs - more ‘under the radar’. I prefer it for those reasons but I do think it needs some investment, especially the town centre.”

Questionnaire Response to the question “In a few words, what do you think makes Ramsgate distinct from the other towns in Thanet?”.

People’s perceptions and opinions on Ramsgate are shaped by a range of factors. The questionnaire and a wider programme of community engagement enabled us to explore what people think about the town.

The Look and Feel of the Town

“It is a town with great natural and architectural beauty.”

There is a proportion of participants who describe the town using words like beautiful, stunning, attractive and amazing. These participants believe that this is what makes Ramsgate unique and special. However, there is concern about the maintenance and appearance of the town.

“Neglected, dirty, unkempt, badly maintained, nightmare parking overall. This is reality. We should deal with these problems and make the most of good assets.”

For example, while 43% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that the town is “attractive to visitors as well as locals” only 9% agree or strongly agree with the statement that “Ramsgate is clean and well looked after.” Discussions with local people showed that concern about the look and feel of the town is also connected to feeling safe in the space.

“It’s terribly run down, it’s dirty, at times it’s not safe to go there.”

A quarter of people said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I feel safe when I visit”. Interestingly, among people who’ve lived

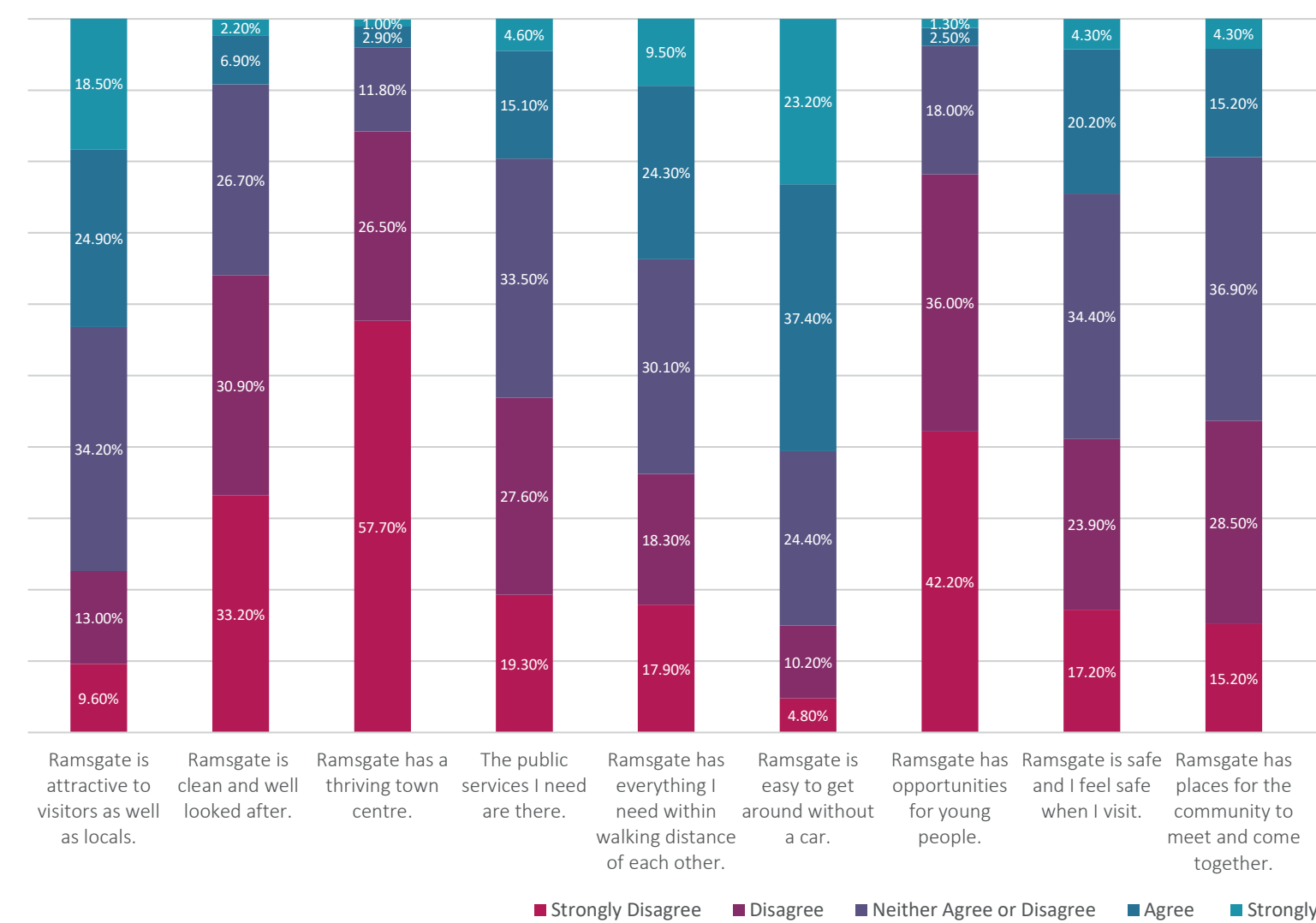
in the area 3 years or less the agreement level increases to 35%, among those who’ve lived in Ramsgate 10 years or more it decreases to 20%. As part of the Safer Streets Fund application 2021 - 2022 *“the local school and youth centre were surveyed and only 12% felt safe in the area during the evening. 88% felt concerned or unsafe walking through alleyways and cut throughs. Large groups ‘hanging around’ were a common concern as were drunk males and drug usage. Of note, the ‘reputation’ of the areas were reported to ‘trump the feeling of being safe’ and ‘what the place looks like.... just feels and looks unsafe.’¹”*

In qualitative engagement, not feeling safe was attributed to people (day drinkers, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti, and groups of young people) and place (dark alleyways, poor lighting, poor street cleanliness and high levels of litter). People of all ages had this perception with young people describing the area as *“unsafe, knife crime is a real issue in Ramsgate.... It also looks awful, every time I go into Ramsgate the litter is appalling.”* People with disabilities and learning difficulties specifically mentioned feeling unsafe and concerns about anti-social behaviour *“it’s not just that it’s hard to get around it’s the anti-social behaviour you don’t feel safe. You can’t use the disabled toilets because they’re being used for drug taking.”*

¹ Safer Streets Fund Application 2021-22 Section C

What factors affect people’s opinions of the town?

Figure 4. Perceptions of Ramsgate



“Ramsgate harbour and our beautiful architecture are the jewels in the crown of Thanet but they need polishing.”

Questionnaire Response to the question “In a few words, what do you think makes Ramsgate distinct from the other towns in Thanet?”.

The Town Centre

The appearance and future of the town centre was a particular area of concern. As shown in Figure 4 only 4% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement: “Ramsgate has a thriving town centre.”

“After seeing a stunning harbour one quickly comes across the juxtaposition of an apocalyptic high street!”

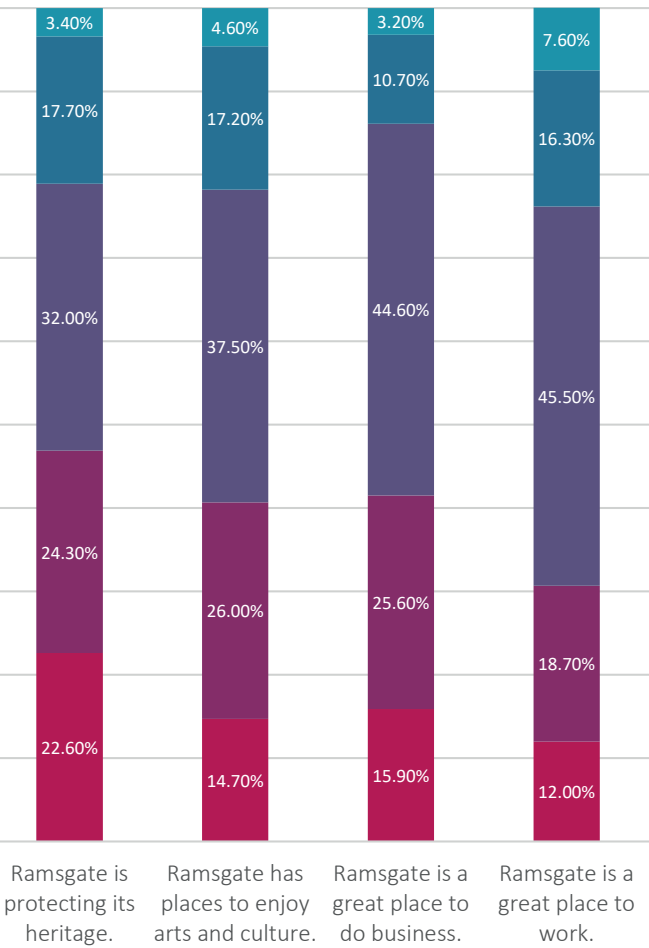
“I feel passionately about the town centre being made welcoming, clean and refreshed for our community and visitors. It would make a huge positive impact.”

The high street was seen by local people and stakeholders as crucial to the future of the town. When asked which geographical area of the town to invest in, 61% of community respondents and 57% of business respondents said the high street.

“Empty shops allowed to be left by their owners/managers/estate agents in a disgraceful state making an even bigger blight on the town beyond being empty.”

“There are too many empty spaces in our high street meaning I have to go out of town when I would rather be supporting Ramsgate.”

A vibrant and active high street is an aspiration for the community, as one young person put it *“I want to walk down the high street and be excited to see new things and stuff go on, not to be like oh. Is that it.”* The high street’s dual roles as a barometer for the success of the town and key to its economic future were emphasised in discussions. Whilst people acknowledge that retail and high streets are facing challenges across the UK, there is a belief that *“if we can’t get shops back in the high street we should be using those buildings for other things like offices or community centres.”*



Agree

“It has the most stunning fascinating harbour. The beach is always beautiful and the coastline endlessly breathtaking. The architecture of Ramsgate is outstanding. The local community is a brilliant mix. It has an exciting and fascinating history. I adore Ramsgate.”

Questionnaire Response

Businesses are concerned and frustrated by perceived high rent in the area and would like to see incentives for example: *“I would incentivise landlords to keep empty buildings rented, with attractive short term rents, to enable small businesses to get started and improve the whole look and feel of the town”* and *“the town centre is encouraged to thrive through low or zero business rates periods.”*

Support for People and Communities

As shown in Figure 4, 20% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement “the public services I need are here.” Throughout the qualitative engagement the role of people and communities was highlighted. There is a perception among local people that the *“community is having to step in and fill the gap left by the Council”* particularly in relation to maintaining the public realm. Local people made reference to litter picks and community projects as examples of this approach and there is a concern around perceived decline in standards.

“Ramsgate desperately needs more facilities to engage young people. The beach is wonderful for small children and adults but it has very little to engage the youth of the town. It needs community youth clubs/ skateboard parks/ film clubs etc to keep young people occupied.”

A consistently raised need was support for young people, Figure 4 illustrates that only 4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Ramsgate has opportunities for young people.” Discussion with the Department of Work and Pensions and the Jobcentre Plus highlighted the dearth of apprenticeships within the area; at the time of writing there are six available apprenticeships within two miles of Ramsgate².

“I don’t think there’s any inspiration or ladder here to move up or get a job.”

“You can find a job in Ramsgate but not a lifetime job. Not a career.”

Young people we spoke to in focus groups do not associate Ramsgate as a place that offers aspiration and opportunity, particularly around employment. They spoke of the challenges of finding jobs - from Saturday jobs through to career opportunities. There was a belief that Covid-19 has exacerbated an issue but that the seasonal nature of the local economy is also a factor.

“Jobs are limited in this area, there’s not a lot of options.”

On street engagement with young people, during a walkabout with Pie Factory youth workers, illustrated that young people do not have access to things to do and places to spend time. This has been heightened by the temporary closure of youth provision including youth clubs. The knock on affect of has contributed to concerns and perceptions around anti-social behaviour. During qualitative engagement when asked what they would invest in, young people’s focus was on creating opportunities for their future including support to access employment and training. There was also a focus on things to do with popular requests including *“a better leisure centre”, “giant 3G pitch”* and *“improving the skate parks, what older people don’t understand is skate parks are not just about the skating they’re also places where we can socialise.”*

² [Find an Apprenticeship](#) (10 June 21)

Getting Around Ramsgate

Evidence suggests that Ramsgate's relatively compact footprint is conducive to walking and cycling. As shown in Figure 4:

- A third of respondents agree or strongly agree "Ramsgate has everything I need within walking distance of each other."
- 61% agree or strongly agree that "Ramsgate is easy to get around without a car."

In discussions with local people and stakeholders there was an agreement with the theory that the town is conducive to walking and cycling. However, numerous barriers were raised that prevented a move to active transport.

"Very poor, good coastal routes but not good links in Ramsgate... I feel safer cycling in London."

These included not feeling safe walking around the town, firstly in terms of the roads and routes around the town. People referenced factors such as the need to enforce the pedestrian area in the town centre and to improve crossings in key locations including the town centre to harbour, Leopold Street and Addington Street to the Jacob Steps.

"You can walk around it, but you wouldn't want to."

The second aspect related to safety, in terms of active travel is the quality of the public realm and the perception of anti-social behaviour. Participants described not wanting to "walk down dark and poorly lit alleyways" and not feeling safe "in the dirty and poorly looked after town centre, where people are drinking, swearing and shouting."

"Quality of life and independence means being able to live your life and go to town."

"The town should provide reasonable access, prioritise people over the picturesque."

As part of the engagement process, we spoke to people with disabilities and learning difficulties about their experiences of getting around Ramsgate. Issues they raised included:

- The challenges of getting around the town which are increased by narrow pathways, cobbled areas and the lack of drop kerbs.
- Frustration that businesses are not meeting their obligations in terms of accessibility "why are there so many shops we can't get in to."
- A desire to be able to visit the waters edge, "it would be lovely to put my toes in the sea."
- The need for more disabled parking closer to the Harbour "Leopold Street is too far for those with accessibility issues to get to the harbour or to the beach."
- Improved disabled toilets and a changing place in the town centre.

"It is an indignity that we have to go into the road, it is outrageous and dangerous."

Among those with additional access needs there is an aspiration to see Ramsgate "appeal to the purple pound and brand itself as an accessible town."

These discussions, and conversations with the wider community and stakeholders, also illustrated a desire to see the two lifts restored to working order as "they are important, vital services to connect people to all parts of the town. It is particularly important for those with disability issues."

"Ramsgate - it's underwhelming... There's been a really big change, it used to be full of life and full of people."

Focus Group Participant

“Parking charges need reducing in all our car parks... Visitors to my shop say they will not return because of the cost of parking, locals opt for Westwood (Cross Shopping Centre) because of its free parking, leaving Ramsgate looking like a ghost town.”

Parking, both in terms of location and cost, was seen as a barrier to attracting people to the town. Businesses are particularly concerned that it is putting off both local people and tourists and contributing to the further decline of the high street.

“There is a perception that a mile and a half is impossible to walk.”

It was felt among some participants that “the culture of car usage” is one of the biggest challenges to active travel across the town. In terms of public transport ‘The Loop’ was seen as an important provision, however it was seen as expensive by some and residents in Newington were disengaged by the route “they left us off the Loop, that tells you what they think of Newington.” In addition, links between the train station and town centre / harbour were described as confusing.

Heritage, Arts and Culture

47% of community questionnaire respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “Ramsgate is protecting its heritage.”

In addition 40% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “Ramsgate has places to enjoy arts and culture.”

“Ramsgate has a rich and unique heritage, both architecturally and culturally.”



Credit Thanet Tourism

In qualitative engagement with local people there was a range of perspectives around the role and contribution that Ramsgate’s heritage, arts and culture offer.

“Our history, is our selling point, it is what makes Ramsgate unique.”

For a proportion of the population the history of the town is fundamental to what makes it unique and should therefore be a focus for investment. Among this group there is an aspiration to see heritage, arts and culture as a focus.

“Create a vibrant hub involving arts and heritage.”

“Enough about the past, what about my future?”

However, there is also a group of people who believe the focus on the past and the cultural sector means that consideration is not being given to their needs and aspirations specifically around employment, training and skills.

A Place to Work and Do Business

We asked local people and businesses if they agree with the statement that “Ramsgate is a great place to do business. As shown in Figure 5, 14% of community respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement compared to 29% of businesses who agreed with the statement.

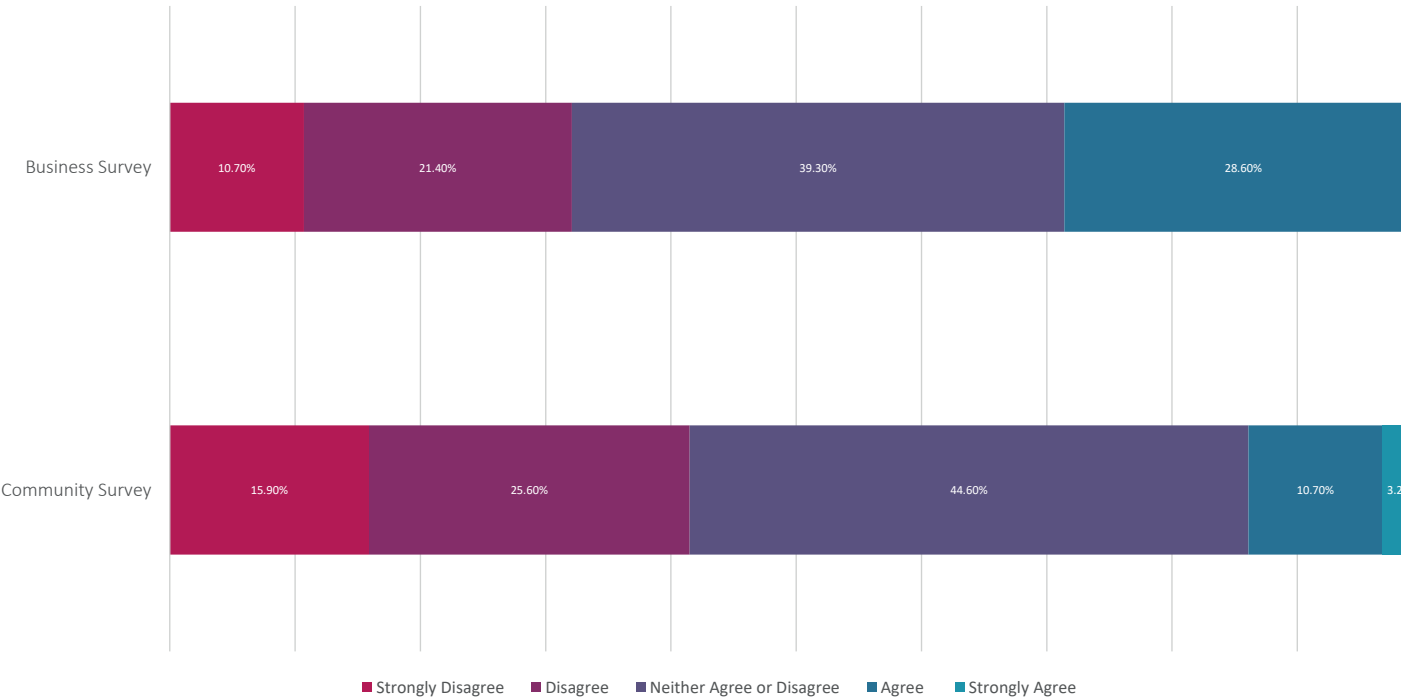
“When it comes to business the council needs to stop being a blocker and start being an enabler.”

Digital Town Hall Participant.

A Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) project undertook a survey in March 2021, it was completed by 127 businesses across Thanet of which 29 replies came from business in Ramsgate. An analysis of the RHSSF survey responses from businesses in Ramsgate suggests that:

- 81% of respondents turnover was more than 50% down during tier 3 restrictions (3 - 19 December 2020) based on the previous year.
- 78% has seen profits decreased by more than 50% during the same period.
- 48% believe their business would survive the next 12 months, but 52% were not sure.
- 70% wanted to see “collaboration between businesses and the council to make high streets appealing and welcoming for shoppers.”

Figure 5. Ramsgate is a great place to do business



39 local businesses completed the Ramsgate Future survey. Of those, 46% rated Ramsgate as a good place to do business. The top three reasons for why Ramsgate is a good place to do business were:

- The Heritage of Ramsgate (60%)
- Ramsgate is an up and coming area (56%)
- The affordability of the business base (41%)

When asked how they would invest in Ramsgate, based on first choices, the top three priorities were:

- Regenerating leisure and retail sites to encourage new businesses and public services to locate there (42%).
- Removing derelict buildings and other eyesores to make way for new developments (33%).
- Acquiring and refurbishing key cultural and heritage sites (30%).

As with the wider community the town centre was the priority area for investment among businesses, with 58% of respondents selecting this as the key geographical area for investment.

In discussion with Ramsgate based businesses there was a concern and a perception that Thanet District Council is not as supportive and enabling as it could be. It was considered that, there is a gap in terms of forums and support to help businesses *“survive and thrive in these challenging times.”*

“Building industries that focus on experiences for Tourism, Green jobs, Creative & Digital jobs to bring sustainable, better paid employment for the people of Ramsgate and Thanet.”

Tourism and the visitor economy were seen as important to the future success of the town, but there is also an aspiration to create a more diverse and less seasonal economy that can provide employment and aspiration all year round.

Length of Residence

Figure 6 shows the survey responses related to the perception of Ramsgate, in relation to the length of time resident in the area. As previously discussed there is a distinct difference around perception of safety associated with time living in the area. In addition there is an 11 point difference in perceptions around how easy it is to get around without a car.

As shown in Figure 7, people who have lived in the town over 10 years are almost 10 times more likely to say they are not proud to live / work in Ramsgate than those who have been in the area for 3 years or less.

42% of those respondents who have been resident for 10 years or more think the town has a strong sense of community compared to 60% who've been there 3 years or less.

“A sense of community is where the local people support each other and strive to make the place they live and work better for everyone. People are proud of Ramsgate”

Questionnaire Response.

Figure 6. Perceptions of Ramsgate by Length of Residents

Percentage of people who agree or strongly agree with each statement

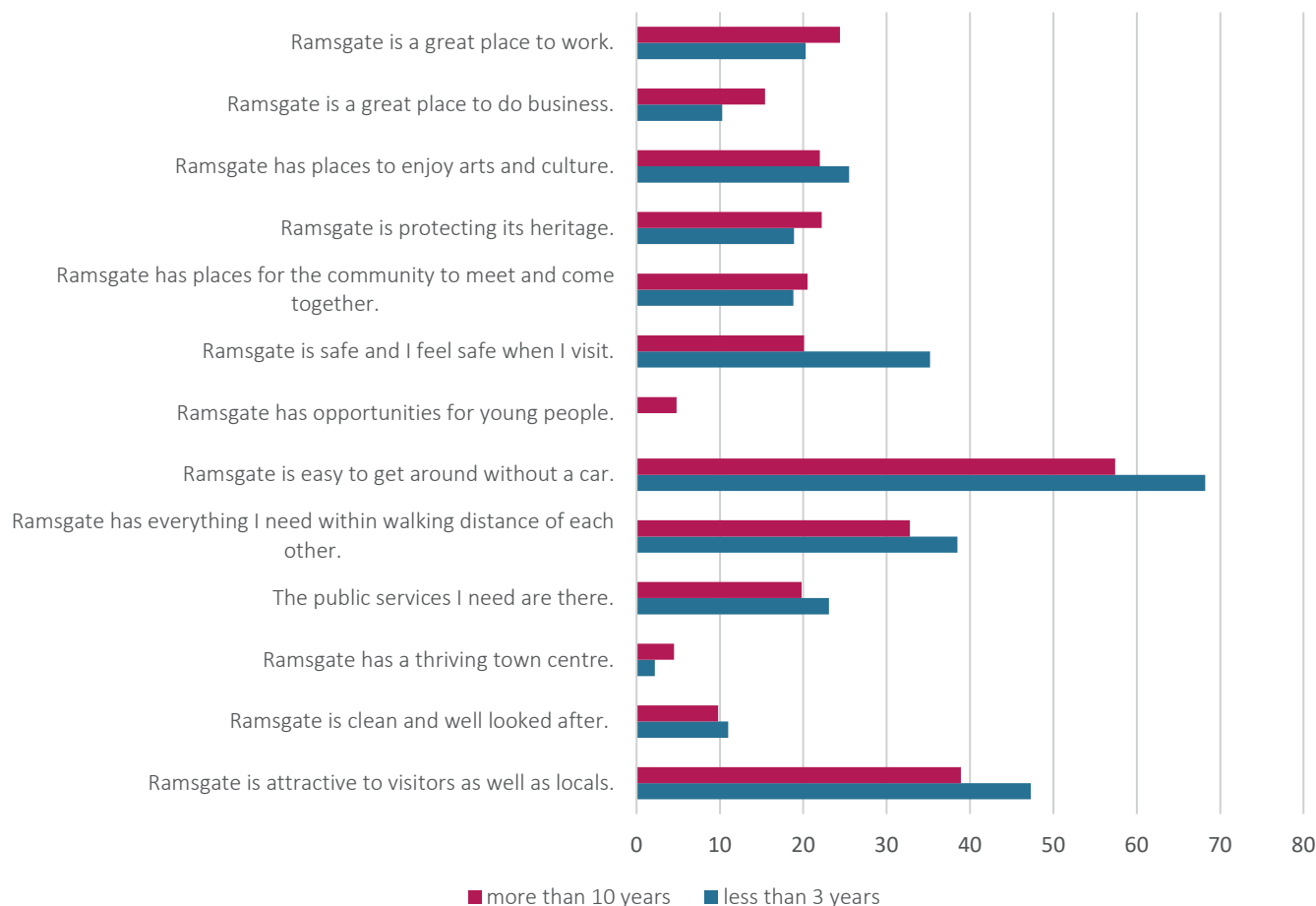


Figure 7. Are you proud to live and / or work in Ramsgate?

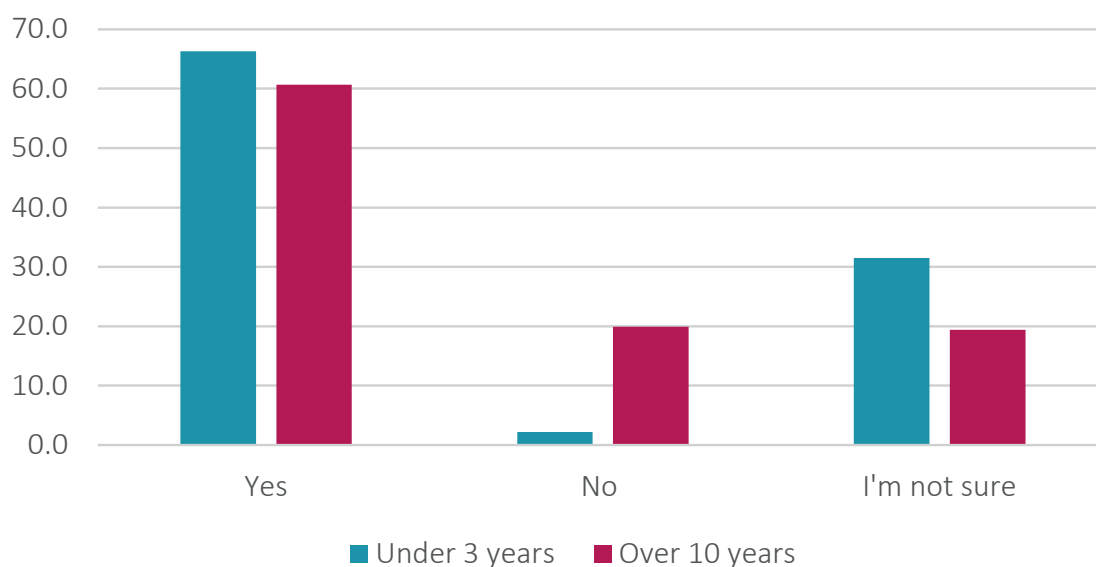




Image Credit: Thanet Tourism

Thinking About Investment

Understanding Priorities for the Future

The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan will be informed by the Ramsgate Atlas, an evidence base that identifies and explores the challenges facing Ramsgate. To support the Investment Plan process, we engaged local people and stakeholders to understand their priorities for the future with a particular focus on four key themes:

- **Jobs: Creating New and Better Employment**
- **Connections and Movement**
- **Opportunity and Skills**
- **Seafront, History and Heritage**

Within each theme, we set out to sense check the key data and information, to understand if it reflects people's experiences of Ramsgate. We also sought to explore what they thought would make the biggest positive difference within each theme. To do this we used both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative methods (meetings, drop in sessions and focus groups).

“Set out a vision and give people hope for a future that is brighter than the present and be realistic.”

Questionnaire Response

“I always say if you’ve got money to spend, first spend it on the young, they need a good start.”

Drop In Event Participant

What type of projects and change do people and stakeholders want to see delivered by the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan.

As part of the community questionnaire, respondents were asked to select and rank five priorities for change. Figure 8 below shows the priorities for investment by percentage of respondents who ranked the option as their first or second choice.

It shows the top three selected first choice options were:

- Investment to support the regeneration of the Port of Ramsgate (39%).
- Improving the public realm including high streets, parks and green spaces, designing out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour (39%).
- Developing the coast as a unique destination for visitors (32%).

When asked which geographical area of Ramsgate should be the focus of investment and regeneration, the top three responses were:

- Ramsgate town centre (61%)
- Port of Ramsgate (14%)
- The Harbour (9%)

“The Port could be a real asset that brings in jobs, particularly in this post Brexit time, encouraging visitors and providing fishing opportunities for now and the future, and receiving goods from via the Port.”

There is a strong community perspective that the Port is fundamental to the future and regeneration of the town. Qualitative engagement, suggests that the focus should be on activating the Port and its potential to provide jobs, training and skills for local people.

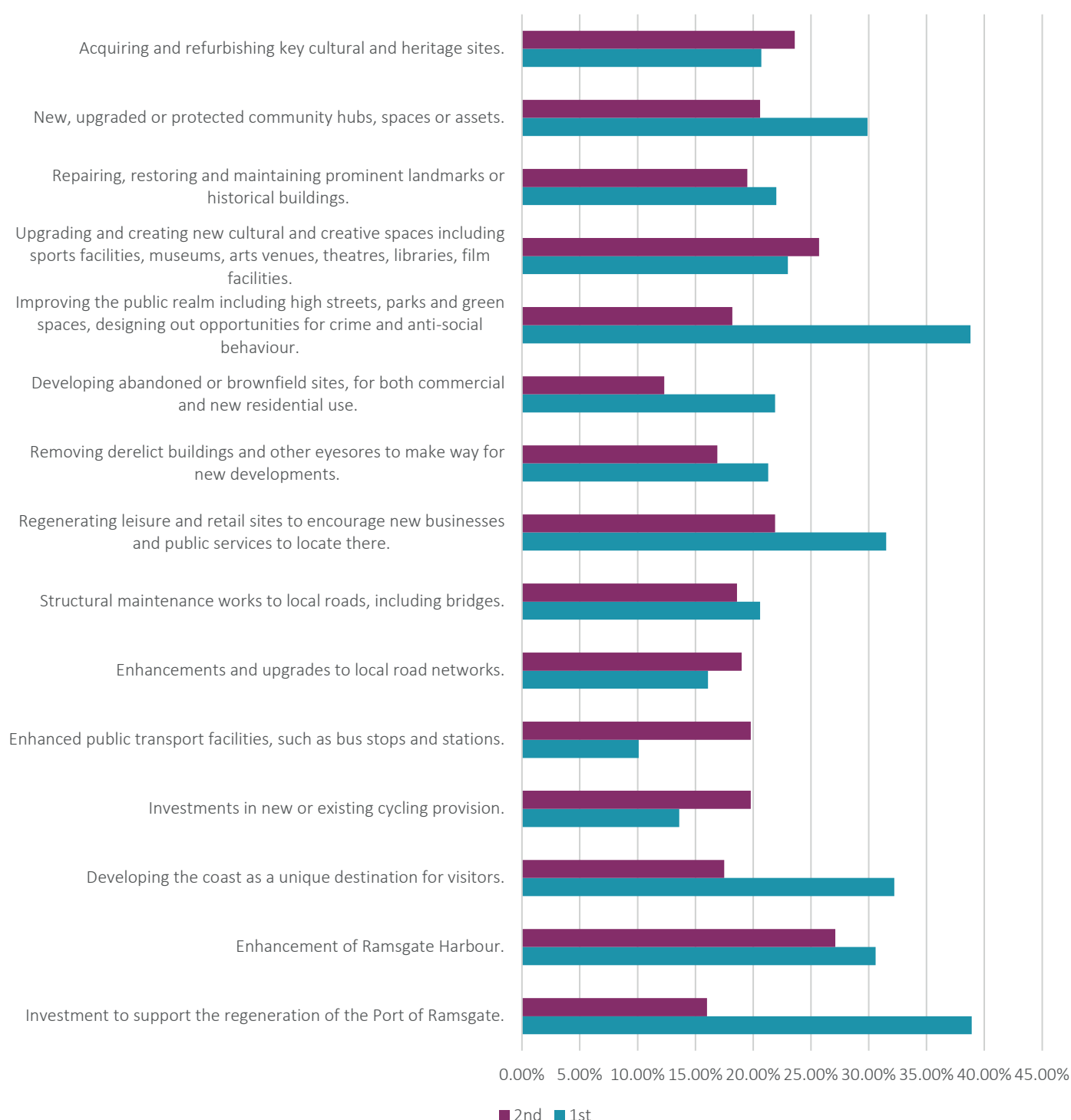
Credit: Shutterstock



“Ramsgate could be amazing . There is a wealth of talent and expertise. Co-creation should involve all the communities in Ramsgate. Not just the gated few. Be mindful that locals are valued and that gentrification doesn’t price them out of their town.”

Questionnaire response

Figure 8. Priorities for Investment % raking each priority as 1st or 2nd Choice



“If you’re a young person the only job you can get is at Maccys in Westwood.”

Young People’s Focus Group Participant

As with the perception of the town, there is evidence of divergence in terms of priorities for investment between new and longer standing residents of the town. As shown in Figure 9, 60% of respondents who have lived in the town for ten years or more believe investment in the regeneration of the Port should be a priority compared to 43% who have lived in the area for less than three years.

Upgrading and creating new cultural and creative spaces including sports facilities, museums, arts venues, theatres, libraries, film facilities is a first or second choice priority for 63% of those who have lived in the town for 3 years or less, compared to 42% who have lived there for 10 years or more.

“Ramsgate residents want investment in our town.”

Questionnaire Response



Figure 9. Priorities for Investment % ranking each priority as 1st or 2nd choice by length of residence



“The town centre is the part that is declining most rapidly. It should be used to draw in visitors, businesses, investors, create jobs and be a place for residents and the community to gather, enjoy, support businesses and be proud of.”

Questionnaire Response

For each of the four key themes we explored the communities and stakeholders perspectives on a statement and their priorities within the theme.

Theme 1: Jobs, Creating New and Better Employment

There is an opportunity in Ramsgate to create more jobs that more people want to do. Ramsgate needs more quality employment space at the right price to support new business, growth and innovation.

There is a clear aspiration within the community and stakeholders for the provision of jobs with a particular focus on creating pathways from low skilled and entry level jobs to meaningful careers. Young people in particular spoke of their challenging experiences of finding work:

“I applied for an apprenticeship, there was two places available and I was third choice. I can’t find anything else at the moment so I’ll have to carry on housekeeping and wait for another opportunity.”

“I think I’ve applied for at least 30 part time jobs and got nowhere. It doesn’t exactly fill me with confidence about getting a job when I leave college.”

Stakeholders do agree with the evidence that commercial space is more expensive in Ramsgate than elsewhere in Thanet and attribute rents and business rates as the reason for empty premises throughout the town. However, 41% of respondents to the business

survey felt Ramsgate was a good place to do business because of its affordability as a business base. In addition 56% of respondents described the town as an upcoming area. Supporting creative businesses to grow and develop is a focus for stakeholders and proportions of the community but as illustrated in Figure 9 there are some differences in perspective about the value and role of the sector. There is a significant proportion of the population who feel *“art galleries, yoga, coffee shops I can’t afford are not going to help me and my family.”*

“In terms of a creative offer there is a strong base on which to build in Ramsgate. The town needs to do more to shout about itself and its creative sector – places like Manchester and Margate are better at shouting about what they’re doing.”

The concept of activating underused spaces was supported, in particular to address and respond to empty premises on the high street and within the town centre. This was complimented by support for refurbishment of heritage assets, but the consistent message was that this work should be used to create jobs and opportunities for local people.

“It sounds good but if you need to bring in people from London to build it what is the point. Whatever you do needs to create jobs for people living in Ramsgate.”

“Employment. We should be seeking to become a green energy hub.”

Questionnaire Response

Wetherspoons was consistently cited as an example of restoration of a heritage asset that has revitalised an asset and provides jobs for local people.

“The recent Royal Sands developments, Royal Victoria Pavilion/Wetherspoons investment and resurgent cafe culture brings new life and vibrancy to the seafront and commercial areas.”

Unused or underused buildings that people would like to see activated included:

- The former Argos, New Look Stores and other empty premises on the high street and in the town centre.
- The Old Fire Station.
- The Clockhouse and Pier Yard.
- The Granville Theatre.
- The Smack Boys.

In addition to the above there is support for improving and enhancing the Royal Harbour to develop and enhance the tourism and hospitality offer, whilst also enabling training and development for local people. Among stakeholders within the heritage sector there is a belief that Ramsgate should become a *“hub for heritage skills... and create a centre of excellence around reducing the carbon footprint of heritage buildings.”* In addition they would like to see this role address the lack of local qualified trades people to work on heritage assets in the town and reliance on *“people being brought in from London.”*

As previously discussed the Port is seen as an opportunity for job creation and regeneration for the benefit of the wider town. There isn't a clear preference for what the future of the Port should look like beyond the focus on supporting job creation. There is concern about bringing retail into the Port, when the high street is already in decline and there is a high level of empty premises.

The current use of the Port for aggregates has been criticised by some engagement participants and there is concern on the impact this has on the wider town. Options for the Port suggested in community and stakeholder engagement events and activities included:

- Green energy hub.
- Maritime.
- Light engineering.
- Studio and workshop provision.

Community and stakeholder engagement also highlighted the *“need for all year round jobs, not seasonal jobs.”* Creating a sustainable all year round economy is a clear priority for local people.

“Ramsgate is easy to get around if you’re mobile. It’s not if you rely on a wheelchair.”

Focus Group Participant

Theme 2: Connections and Movement

Ramsgate’s relatively compact footprint is conducive to walking and cycling. The town would benefit from public realm improvements to make active travel safer and public transport more efficient.

Community and stakeholder engagement around the above statement suggests there is a difference between the theory and the practise. On the whole there is an agreement that the town should be easy to get around but there are a number of factors that prevent it from being so.

“I could walk to and through town but I won’t, it’s not safe anymore.”

Among these barriers is a perception that it’s not safe to travel by foot, bike or public transport. A number of participants expressed concern about walking in and around town, highlighting factors including dark alleyways, areas with limited or no lighting, vandalism and graffiti and groups of people. There was also concern about the speed and use of electric scooters in the town.

“The road crossings between the town car park and the harbour is treacherous.”

The concern about safety also links to the infrastructure of the space. For example the

link between the high street / town centre and the Harbour was highlighted as an area that needs improving.

Others areas highlighted in engagement included:

- Elms Avenue between the two grammar schools.
- Crescent Road, Ellington Road and ‘narrow streets’ introduction of one way systems.
- A dedicated electric bus service from the train station to the Harbour.
- Restoration of the West Cliff and East Cliff lifts.
- Relocation of parking from the Harbour to the Port.
- King Street.

There is evidence of support for pedestrianisation around the Harbour and front. As well as a desire to see improved enforcement of the current pedestrian zone in the town centre.

Participants with learning difficulties and physical disabilities would like to see the town become an *“exemplar for accessibility.”* In particular they would like to see improved routes in and around the town centre including King Street, Clements Road, St. Lukes Avenue and Chatham Street. As well as improved York Street and Church Street, near ALDI, where *“wheelchair users currently have to use the road.”*

This group highlighted the need to address anti-social behaviour so they feel safe in the town and for local businesses *“to do what they’re legally obliged to do when it comes to access.”* A significant aspiration is for people of all abilities *“to be able to put their feet in the sea.”*

Cycling and walking infrastructure ideas proposed included:

Walking:

- Safer crossing by St. Augustine’s Church.
- Better quality paving in the town centre.
- Improved street cleanliness and addressing litter.
- 20mph limit on coastal streets, 5mph in pedestrianised areas.
- Reduce traffic volumes on Queen Street.
- Zebra crossings: Chilton Primary, Nethercourt Hill and London Road.
- Zebra crossing to link Addington Road to Jacob’s Ladder.

Cycling:

- “Boris” bikes scheme.
- Bike racks and storage in town centre and parks.
- More cycle lanes, suggested locations included West Cliff Road and Cliffs End to Minster.

“We need to be doing more to break the culture of car usage in our town.”

In addition a number of participants highlighted the need to encourage people to move away from the car, towards methods of active travel for the environmental benefit.

“There’s the number 34, but nothing on a Sunday which means people who need a bus can’t leave Newington on a Sunday or after 7pm.”

Discussion of public transport suggested that ‘The Loop’ is a well used and well valued service. However, there was concern about its cost and it was highlighted that areas to the west of the town including Newington and Pegwell are not served by the loop *“and have to rely on a bus that takes about 2 hours.”* The current train station is felt to have poor links to the town centre and the harbour, *“you won’t be able to find your way without a phone or someone who knows where they are going.”* In addition there was concern about the introduction of Thanet Park Way Station and how that will affective movement in and around the town.

“Transport links aren’t the best, there are jobs available in places like Dover, but people can’t get to them easily and affordably.”

Connections were also associated with opportunities to access employment. The need to improve access and links to employment in Ramsgate and other towns was highlighted.

“Ramsgate at the moment it is not pedestrian friendly at all.”

Questionnaire Response

“We need to hold on to the skills that are developed in the town, so people don’t leave and take their skills with them.”

Workshop Participant

Theme 3: Opportunities and Skills

There is a need to provide those in Ramsgate access to new skills and routes to employment, particularly to support recovery post Covid-19.

There was consistent agreement with the above statement. Only 13% of respondents to the business survey say Ramsgate is a good place to do business because local people have the skills they need for their business. As discussed earlier in the report there is considerable concern about the perceived lack of support for young people. Stakeholders have emphasised a need to create pathways and opportunities for young people.

“Any plan for the future needs to address the need for the low grade, unskilled employment.”

“We need to give young people in Newington more options than if you’re a lad you can do mechanics. If you’re a girl you can do hair or care.”

There is an acknowledgement among stakeholders that the low skill base highlights a need to provide access to skills and training. Stakeholders would like to see pathways established that enable people to start in a low skill role and develop a skill base and career.

“If you’re a small business, with no HR you might not have the time to think about an apprenticeship and if you do you wouldn’t know where to start.”

Apprenticeship, training and work experience opportunities were seen as lacking and vital for enabling young people to begin a journey to a career. There is a desire to provide a wide range of apprenticeships and acknowledgement that Ramsgate micro and small business based economy is challenge.

“The biggest barrier for young people here in Newington is getting them through the doors.”

“As a start we need to get them out the house and re-engaged.”

Supporting and enabling businesses of all sizes to provide opportunities for young people and those furthest away from the job market was seen as a key step moving forward. In addition there was an acknowledgement among stakeholders for the need to build relationships with those who are disengaged within their communities and help them to access support and training. Approaches such as community hubs were seen as important for outreach and engagement.

Whilst support for young people was a clear priority, a number of participants raised the need for opportunities and skills to be available to everyone. Particularly those needing to find new options and opportunities post Covid-19.

“Its not just the young who’ve lost jobs and opportunities because of COVID, don’t forget the rest of us.”

Being aspirational and creating a ‘centre of excellence’ was highlighted as a opportunity by a number of stakeholders. The suggestions ranged from a centre of excellence for green energy to heritage skills. Establish the town as a place that attracts and retains aspirations was seen as an important part of Ramsgate’s economic future.

“We need to start building community wealth, projects in Ramsgate should create jobs in Ramsgate.”

Stakeholders cited the Preston Model and a desire to see approaches that encourage community wealth building. Ensuring that capital investment in infrastructure delivers “commitment to apprenticeships, attitudes to skills and training, local labour recruitment, approach to sub-contractors and length of supply chains.”¹ Local people want to see investment providing opportunities for those leaving school or looking to re-skill and supporting local businesses.

“We are already working with these people who want to work, we just need to be able to signpost them, help them to access that support.”

Third sector and community groups working with people looking for opportunities and support highlighted the need for “more joined up thinking” and advocated community hub and one stop shop approaches to enable people to find and access the support they are eligible for.

“We need suitable housing to attract the workforce to the town. Need to show the community the benefits of housing growth.”

“I like Ramsgate but if I can’t afford to buy a home here and I can’t get a decent job here. I’m not going to stay after college.”

The strong link between the skills agenda and housing strategy was illustrated in discussion with stakeholders. The ability for skills and training to enable people to earn more, have better jobs and the ripple effect of that in terms of buying / renting a home was illustrated, as well as the need to retain the skills and aspirations of those learning and developing in the area.

¹ [What is Preston Model?](#)

“Ramsgate should aim to be a centre of excellence for green energy skills.”

“Ramsgate has potential, it should be a busy, welcoming seaside resort.”

Questionnaire Response

Theme 4: Seafront, History and Heritage

There is an opportunity to build on Ramsgate's distinct identity and create new spaces and places for Ramsgate's residents and visitors.

Ramsgate's rich and wide ranging history and heritage was seen by stakeholders and elements of the community as part of what makes the town unique. The seafront is linked to this history and is and continues to be fundamental to the town's economy.

“Perhaps we have too much history.”

“Ramsgate needs a focus on a future built on history, heritage, tourism and leisure.”

“We have all the raw materials but can't seem to make them stick together. A coherent vision is missing.”

There was a concern among stakeholders that the town lacks a distinct identity, particularly when compared to other towns in the area *“Margate is about art, Broadstairs is about Dickens, Ramsgate doesn't have that clear focus.”* During a stakeholder workshop on seafront, history and heritage there was a suggestion that Ramsgate should focus on a particular point in time - *“we need to choose a snapshot in time and that should be World*

War Two.” Whilst this was supported by some stakeholders, others believed this approach would be *“pigeon-holing ourselves into World War Two. There is so much here... where is the future in World War Two.”* There was agreement that Ramsgate would benefit from a clear shared vision to support collaboration and partnership working.

“Successful towns have strong leadership from their local authority and a clear vision that brings them together. We don't have either.”

There was a perspective among stakeholders that Thanet District Council is a barrier to projects that local community groups and those within the sector would like to deliver. Those who attended the workshop session would like to see a more collaborative approach that enables projects to move forward and funding to be brought in from sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

“The image of the Royal Harbour is always used by Visit Kent, but there's not enough promotion of Ramsgate to bring people to the town.”

Stakeholders felt that more needed to be done to promote and raise awareness of the town. For example there was frustration that The Royal Harbour is a key selling point for the town, but not defined as a visitor attraction by Visit Kent and Visit England. Promoting the town was seen as part of celebrating the town's heritage.

“Ramsgate is steeped in our collective cultural history from James Bond to Swallows and Amazons to Pugin to Van Gogh to Coleridge to the first Vegetarian society to Frith to Turner to Tissot to Jane Austen to Wilkie Collins and to Royalty.”

Questionnaire Response

Sustaining and maintaining the town’s historic infrastructure was an important focus. Particularly when it could be connected to spaces for businesses and / or creation of jobs. During engagement, the Royal Victoria Pavilion conversion into a Wetherspoons was cited as a good example of heritage led regeneration. Alongside, it was felt there is a need to connect local people to the history of their town and its story as a way of illustrating, celebrating and sharing its value.

“The value of public open space “is underestimated by the Council. They can do a lot for local people, but the level of maintenance in open spaces suggests they are not seen as an asset.”

As shown in the survey results ‘improving the public realm including high streets, parks and green spaces, designing out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour’ was a first choice investment priority for 39% of respondents. Engagement with the community suggested there was some support for new greenspace with potential locations put forward including the Argyle Centre and Staffordshire Street Car Park. There was some demand for increased tree planting in and around the town, but the key focus was on improving and enhancing the existing public realm. For example young people raised Warre Recreation Ground - *“it’s where the skate park is, its the only park where young people are welcome and its a mess, the bins never get emptied and the skate park is not big enough.”* The investment in Ellington Park was seen as a positive but overall there was a perception that Ramsgate *“needs a big clean up of its public areas.”* In conversations with local people it was clear that the look and feel of the public realm was connected to the people’s perception that the town is in decline.

“We need to bring life back to the town. Events. Food Festivals. Markets. Give people a reason to come to Ramsgate.”

In terms of investment, stakeholders felt that Ramsgate would benefit from a hub / museum to *“welcome people to the town, tells the story of the town and then sends people out to other attractions.”* The wider community support investment in heritage attractions and would like to see elements that bring footfall back to the town including markets, events and activities both on the seafront and in the high street.

“The Royal Harbour was built to be a working harbour, its not just something pretty for tourists to look at.”

The seafront and the Royal Harbour were seen as *“important to Ramsgate’s future as its past.”* There was support for investment in the Royal Harbour to retain and enhance the asset, and to create employment and support local industry including tourism, fishing and maritime services such as boat repairs.

32% of questionnaire respondents selected ‘developing the coast as a unique destination for visitors’ as first choice priority for Ramsgate. There is support for enhancement / creation of a coastal offer, with a focus on a diverse food and beverage offer *“you should be able to get everything from a cheap fish supper to a Michelin star meal.”* Again this is linked to an aspiration for improved jobs, skills and training *“if we’re going to have new restaurants that our young people can’t afford, they should be working in those restaurants learning a trade.”*



Image Credit: Thanet Tourism

What Does Success for Ramsgate Look Like?

This section of the report draws on the findings of the engagement process to put forward priorities for consideration in the development of the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan.

A Shared Vision

Engagement with stakeholders has highlighted the need for a shared vision for the town around which partners can collaborate.

The next phase of engagement is to support the co-production of a vision that sets out a future for Ramsgate, informs decision making and enables partnership working.

Priorities

Community and stakeholder engagement suggests the following priorities should be addressed in the development of the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan.

A Ramsgate Economy that Creates Jobs

Engagement suggests the community and stakeholders would like to see the economy of the town diversify and become less reliant on seasonal trade. This is aligned with a desire to create jobs and opportunities for local people. Within this priority, consideration should be given to:

- Growing the tourism economy, attracting more visitors and encouraging them to stay longer.
- Exploring opportunities to develop a coastal offer in partnership with other towns in Thanet and Kent.

- Building the hospitality and night-time economy and offer.
- Diversifying the local economy and reducing reliance on seasonal trade.
- Creating a centre of excellence that attracts businesses and provides jobs, skills and training for local people.
- Developing pathways from low skill entry level jobs to career opportunities.

Supporting Local Businesses

It is clear from engagement that local businesses are facing challenges and barriers that limit their ability to grow and develop. The Investment Plan should outline how Thanet District Council and partners will work with local businesses to transform Ramsgate's economy.

- Support and advice for local businesses, such as incubator approaches to encourage entrepreneurship.
- Activation of underused spaces to provide affordable workspace.
- Improved business networks and information sharing.

“I would take a strong sense of community as meaning local people sharing a common vision and goal for the town and working together supportively, positively and collaboratively to achieve it.”

Questionnaire Response

Opportunities for Young People

Just 4% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Ramsgate has opportunities for young people.’ There is a perceived lack of opportunity and support for young people in Ramsgate which stakeholders and the community believe is related to low attainment, limited aspirations and antisocial behaviour. The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan needs to consider how it will:

- Encourage young people to be aspirational.
- Provide skills and training pathways.
- Support local businesses to offer work experiences and apprenticeships.
- Address young people’s concerns about not feeling safe in the town.
- Invest in young people’s infrastructure and places where they can spend time including parks and open spaces and youth clubs.
- Build trust with young people and provide gateways to support in their communities.
- Enable young people to see there are options and opportunities for them in Ramsgate.

Skills and Training

Stakeholders and the community agree there is a need to provide those in Ramsgate access to new skills and routes to employment, particularly to support recovery post Covid-19. Within this priority, consideration should be given to:

- Developing unprecedented choice of jobs, apprenticeships and career opportunities.
- Working in partnership with charities / social enterprises to focus investment into outreach work to improve pathways new opportunities and employment in Ramsgate’s more deprived areas.
- Improving community outreach and promotion of skills and training offer.
- Engaging with local people in their communities and in partnership with organisations they trust.

The Port

39% of survey respondents selected investment to support the regeneration of the Port of Ramsgate as their first choice priority. Wider engagement suggests the Port is seen as integral to the town’s future. Within this priority, consideration should be given to:

- Defining the role of the Port and its contribution to the wider town.
- Creating opportunities for local people including jobs, skills and training.
- Supporting the green agenda, a green port for the future.

The Royal Harbour

Seen as the jewel in Ramsgate's crown, the community and stakeholders would like to see the Royal Harbour enhanced and celebrated. They would also like it to continue to contribute to the local economy both through jobs and attracting visitors into the area. Within this priority, consideration should be given to:

- Protecting and retaining the Harbour for the future.
- Improving the public realm around the Harbour.
- Developing the Harbour as a visitor attraction.
- Enhancing the hospitality offer as a mechanism for training and up-skilling local people.
- Supporting local fishermen and other businesses to grow.
- Improving the waterfront offer.

The Town Centre

Throughout the engagement process the current condition and future of the high street was highlighted as a concern. A thriving high street and town centre is seen as vital to the town. Within this priority, consideration should be given to:

- Diversifying the town centre and bringing new uses into the area.
- Tackling empty and derelict buildings.
- Improving the look and feel of the high street.
- Collaborating with existing businesses.
- Bringing activity and footfall to the town centre through events such as markets and festivals.
- Improving the link between the Train Station, high street and Harbour.



Image Credit: Thanet Tourism

“Make Ramsgate the place to be. That will bring in the people we need and great people will drive great businesses that bring prosperity to the town.”

Questionnaire Response

The Public Realm

The look and feel of the town is a concern for local people and stakeholders. There is a need to address community concerns, across the public realm, around issues including safety, appearance and accessibility. The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan needs to consider how it will:

- Tackle concerns around safety and anti-social behaviour.
- Address concerns about the appearance of the town including litter and graffiti.
- Improve the infrastructure and maintenance of existing parks and greenspaces.

- Invest in new public realm spaces for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- Create spaces for events and activities such as markets and festivals.
- Raise the standard of cleanliness and maintenance across the town.
- Improve access in and around the public realm.
- Address poor pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
- Work towards the aspiration of an “accessible for all town.”



Image Credit: Thanet Tourism

Celebrating History and Heritage

Ramsgate's rich history and heritage is part of what makes it special. Engagement has shown a desire to see Ramsgate's history celebrated and shared. The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan needs to consider how it will:

- Enhance Ramsgate's historic identity.
- Develop the skills locally to protect and enhance heritage assets.
- Use heritage assets to provide new business or cultural spaces.
- Share the story of Ramsgate with visitors and local people.
- Support collaboration and partnership working across the sector.

The Green Agenda

Ramsgate's role in addressing the climate emergency is a priority among the community and stakeholders. They want to see plans for the future that provide a pathway to a green future for Ramsgate. The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan needs to consider how it will:

- Define the role of the Port in the context of the green economy.
- Encourage and enable active transport.
- Help businesses to reduce their environmental impact.

Community Wealth

Investment in the town through programmes such as the Levelling Up Fund is welcome. There is a desire to see investment in infrastructure create a legacy for the future and build community wealth. The Ramsgate Future Investment Plan needs to consider how it will:

- Leverage capital investment to provide opportunities for local people including apprenticeships, skills and training.
- Develop and retain skills in Ramsgate.
- Deliver a community legacy from the Levelling Up Fund.

Future Engagement

There is a perception among the community and stakeholders that they are under engaged and not able to shape the future of the town in which they live and work. This initial phase of engagement has focused on understanding perceptions and aspirations for the town. During phase 1, a dedicated website and in-box have been established to enable continued engagement. In the next phase, to support the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan, it is recommended that engagement focus on:

Development of a Shared Vision for Ramsgate:

Working with stakeholders and the community to develop a shared vision for the future of the town that informs decision making and supports collaboration.

Working with Stakeholders: To incorporate the wide variety of projects and initiatives into the plan. To understand how the Local Authority, statutory organisations and public, private and third sector organisations can work in partnership to support and enable project delivery.

Working with the Wider Community: Sharing information and updates widely with the community. Explaining decision making processes and highlighting opportunities when they can engage with the process.

Thank You

The Ramsgate Future Community and Stakeholder Engagement has been shaped, supported and enhanced by a wide variety of people and organisations. Every person who took part in the conversation has played a part in shaping the future of Ramsgate and the development of the Ramsgate Future Investment Plan.

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Thanet District Council

APPENDICES



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Appendix 1.
Stakeholder Mapping

Appendix 2.
Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 3.
Engagement Log

Stakeholder Map

The diagram below is a thematic stakeholder map, based on the Ramsgate Futures Investment specific organisations and individuals. The map below uses an interest / impact to focus approach where the way we engage with them will be different.

APPENDIX 1

Power and Influence

HIGH

LOW

LOW

KEEP SATISFIED

- Community / Volunteer Groups
- Local businesses and their representatives / organisations that work with them
- Cultural and creative institutions
- Tourist attractions
- Developers and housing associations
- Local Schools, Colleges and Training Providers
- Third Sector Organisations
- Travel providers e.g. bus and rail service and taxis
- Emergency / public services
- Arms-length bodies and other non-departmental government agencies
- Investors and philanthropists
- Housing Associations

MONITOR

- Emergency / public services
- YourLeisure, gyms and local sports teams
- Wider TDC & KCC Staff

Plan aspirations and the Levelling Up Fund priorities. An accompanying stakeholder register builds on this map with details of approaches to support engagement. It is not to say that those in the high interest / low impact won't be engaged with but that the

HIGH

MANAGE CLOSELY

- The Residents of Ramsgate
- Ramsgate Town Council
- TDC and KCC Councillors
- Heritage Action Zone
- Future High Street Fund
- Town Team
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Jobcentre Plus Kent
- TDC & KCC Staff in Key Departments: Economic Development, Planning, Skills / Education, Employability, Parks and Leisure, Active Travel and Transport
- Key / major businesses in sectors impacted by the Strategy
- MP Craig Mackinlay

KEEP INFORMED

- CCG / QEQM / QEQM staff, Local GPs and health professionals
- Local Media
- Faith Groups
- Visitors / Tourists
- Mailing List Subscribers

Interest

APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 3



