

Civic Quarter Liaison Group

8 May 2025

One Cambridge, fair for all

Agenda

- Recap and update since last meeting
- Engagement boards
- Engagement programme and how people can get involved

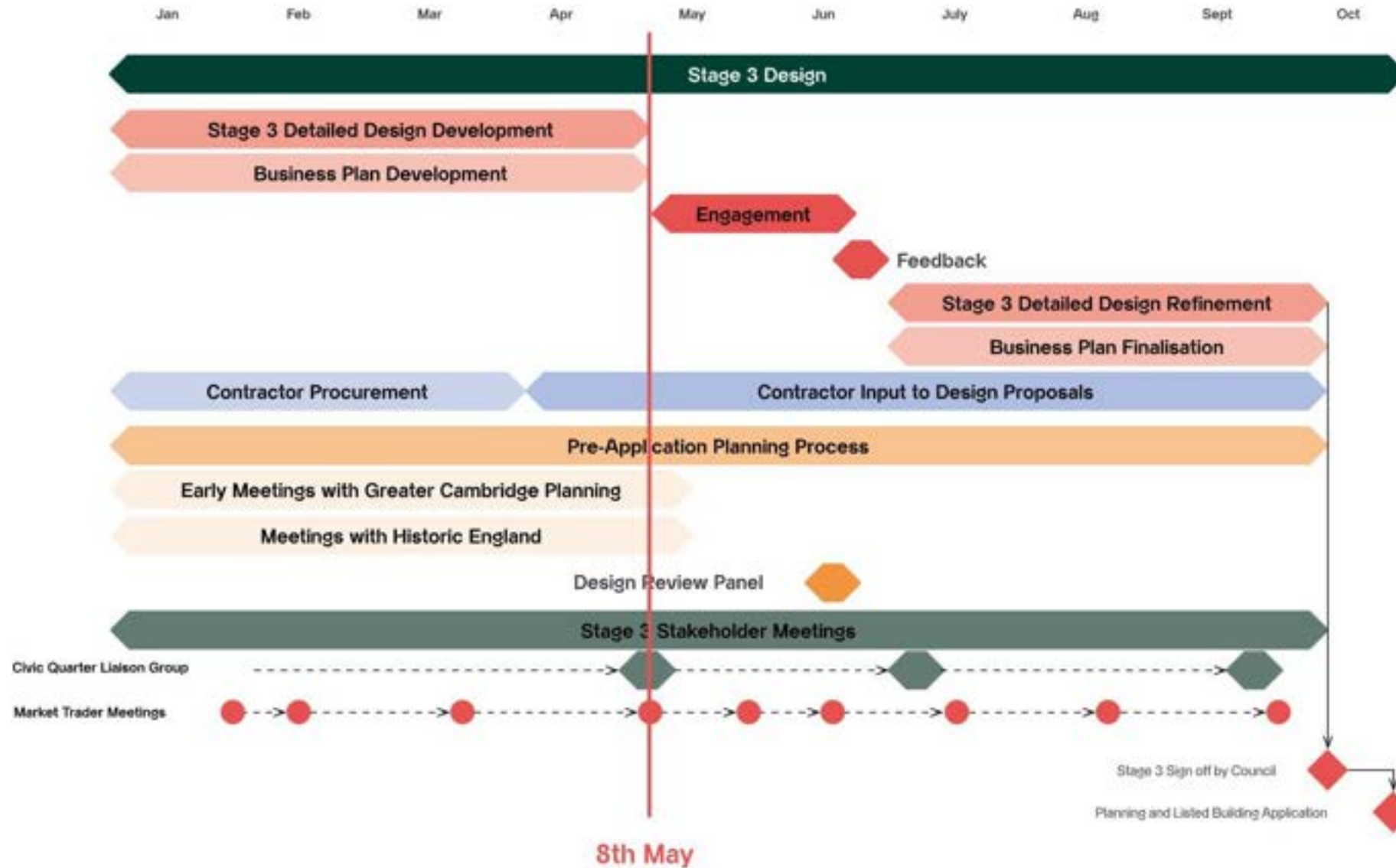
Recap

- Previous round of engagement - 17 June – 28 July
- Mix of online, physical engagement, including interviews, workshops, surveys, doorknocking and postcard distribution.
- 885 survey responses, and feedback from various other channels throughout.
- Summarised in consultation report and data provided to the project team to reflect on.
- Ongoing dialogue with the market traders.

Recap

- Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee approval gained in Nov 2024
- Full Council approval gained in Nov 2024
- These approval allowed the Design Consortium to be re-appointed to complete RIBA Stage 3 Detailed Design.
- Proposals will return to committee this autumn ahead of being submitted for Planning and Listed Building Consent.

Recap



One Cambridge, fair for all

Engagement Programme

Date	Time	Activity	Venue
Wednesday 21st May	11.30am-12.30pm	Area Pop up 1	Train Station/Bus station
Tuesday 27th May	11am-12.30pm	Accessibility Workshop 1	Online
Tuesday 27th May	2.30pm-3.30pm	City Centre pop up 1	Market Square / Kings Parade Rd
Tuesday 27th May	17.00-19.00	Community Workshop 1	Guildhall
Wednesday 28th May	10.30am-11.30am	Cultural Workshop 1	Online
Wednesday 28th May	3pm-4pm	City Centre pop up 2	Grande Arcade Shopping Centre
Thursday 29th May	10am-11am	Cultural Workshop 2	Online
Tuesday 3rd June	3pm-4pm	City Centre pop up 3	St Matthew's Primary School
Wednesday 4th June	5.30pm-6.30pm	Area Pop up 2	Waitrose Supermarket
Tuesday 10th June	14.30-3.30pm or 3pm-4pm	Area pop up 3	North Cambridge Academy
Tuesday 10th June	6pm-7.30pm	Market Traders Workshop	Online
Saturday 14th June	10am-11.30am	Community Workshop 2	Lichfield Community Hall
Saturday 14th June	1pm-2.30pm	City Centre pop up 4	Cambridge Pride

One Cambridge, fair for all

Key Updates - Market

- Extensive stakeholder engagement on the Market designs have resulted in significant updates, including;
 - An increased number of permanent stalls
 - An overall increase in stalls
 - Retention of the fountain
 - Reduction in the canopy size, now limited to a smaller covered seating area

Key Updates - Guildhall

- Further engagement with the potential community uses are basement level with a fall back option to provide commercial office space
- Refinement of environmental proposals with the goals of being Net Zero Carbon in Operation
- Proposals developed to make the Council Chamber a more flexible and accessible space, noting the need to balance heritage, flexibility and accessibility
- More accessible public facilities, such as a Changing Places toilet

Key Updates – Corn Exchange

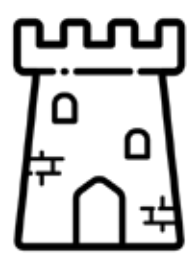
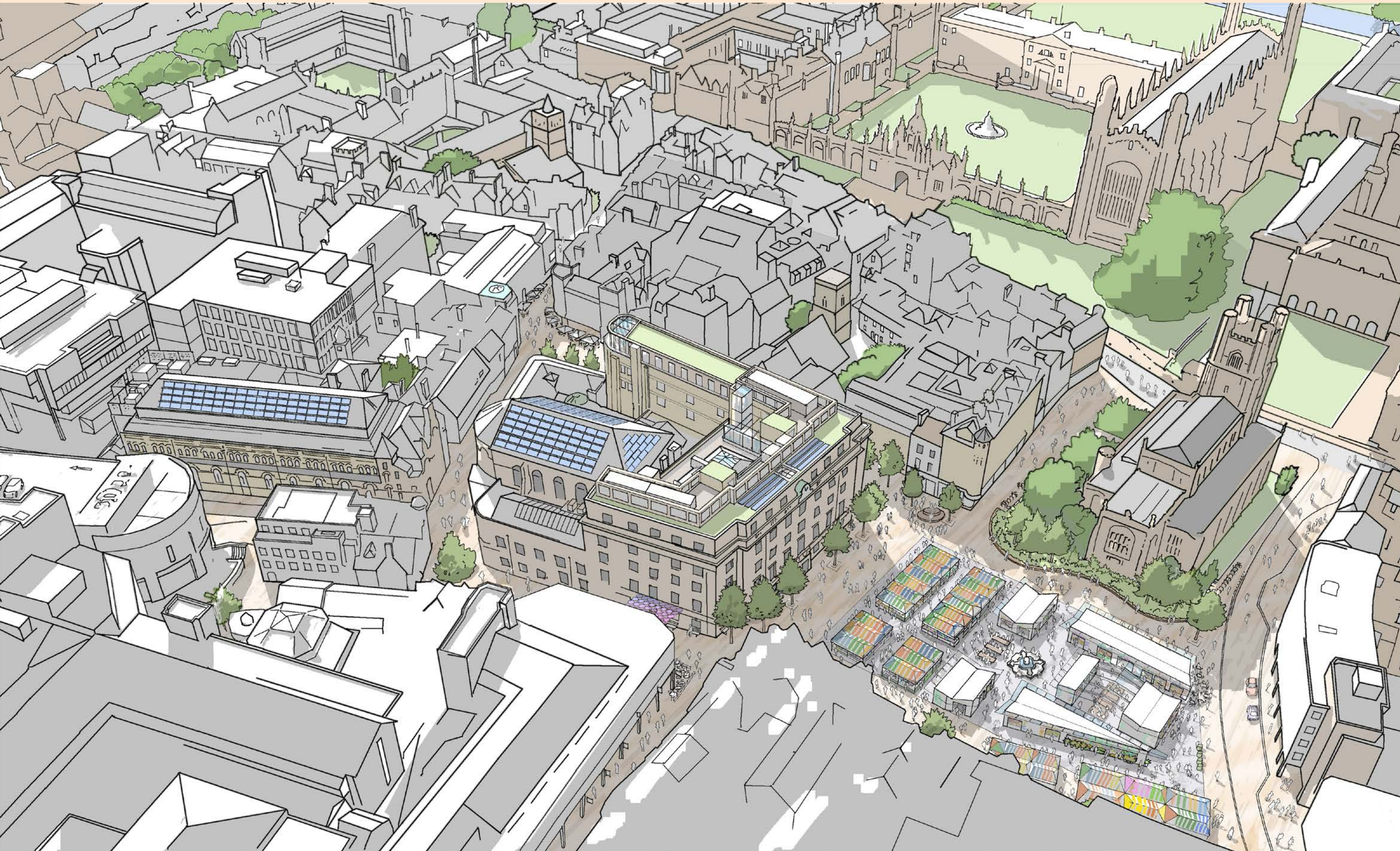
- Further engagement with the technical team to refine upgrades to AV and lighting
- Revised foyer bar designs to make this a more welcoming place to visit



Cambridge Civic Quarter

Creating a vibrant civic heart

We have a once-in-a-century opportunity to reimagine the area around the Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Market Square to create a new focal point that residents can be proud of and that lives up to the city's reputation.



Preserving and modernising historic sites

As custodians of these historic sites, it's our duty to invest in their maintenance and ensure they are modernised to serve a 21st century society.

Traders have been running stalls on the Market Square since the Middle Ages, the Guildhall site has been a seat of local democracy for 800 years, and we are celebrating 150 years of the Corn Exchange in 2025.



A place to meet and enjoy cultural events

Improving the experience of residents and visitors to the city centre, by creating more inclusive and accessible buildings that are open to all, with better public spaces where people can meet and enjoy cultural events, so that everyone can benefit from the city's prosperity.



A green, sustainable place

The council has committed to getting its own operations to net zero by 2030. We will target net zero operational carbon in the Guildhall and significant reductions in the Corn Exchange, water neutrality, and a net gain of 20% biodiversity, including trees to provide shade.



A place that works for Cambridge

Improving the experience of residents and visitors will make it easier for people to spend more time in the Corn Exchange, Market Square, and city centre shops, restaurants and bars. Modernising the sites will help reduce the council's running costs, and providing space for commercial occupiers would increase the council's income to support frontline council services.

We are now inviting you to provide further feedback.



Cambridge Civic Quarter

You said, we did

Shaping the next stage of the Cambridge Civic Quarter

Between June and July 2024, we invited local people, businesses, market traders, and community organisations to share their views on the future of the Guildhall, Market Square, Corn Exchange, and the public spaces that connect them. Over 885 people responded to surveys and many more took part in workshops, pop-ups, webinars, and targeted sessions. Here’s a summary of what you told us—and how we’re using that feedback to shape the next stage of the project.

You’re concerned about safety and anti-social behaviour in the Market Square, especially at night	You want to see more greenery, trees, and biodiversity integrated throughout the Civic Quarter	Accessibility is key: cobbled surfaces and street clutter make the area difficult to navigate for many	You had mixed views on permanent vs demountable stalls, with support for flexible options if well-designed
We have developed the designs through consultation with the Police, creating open space, clear sight lines, good quality lighting and increased management presence to deter anti-social behaviour	We’ve worked hard to incorporate high quality planting and areas of greenery, maximising the opportunity to increase biodiversity in the Civic Quarter	Accessibility is a key driver of the Civic Quarter Project, we are working with Historic England and the council’s conservation officer to make the cobbles accessible to all	We have been working with Market Traders to develop designs for the Market Square and will be testing demountable stalls on the market in the near future
Market traders worry about the impact of construction, and want clear planning and phased implementation	The Guildhall should be more open, inviting, and community-friendly, with uses like cafés and play spaces	Feedback on the hotel proposal was balanced; some supported the idea, others raised concerns about its impact	The Corn Exchange needs better acoustics, more comfort, and a more welcoming entrance to attract performers
We are in the process of engaging with a main building contractor. Adding this expertise to our design team will provide more certainty on phasing of the works	The proposals include a public café at the heart of the Guildhall, visible from the main entrance, to welcome the public into the Guildhall	Following review of the different proposals, the decision was taken to not proceed with a hotel in the Guildhall	Working with our acoustician we have developed proposals to improve the acoustics, whilst the redesigned foyer will create a beautiful entrance to the Corn Exchange
You want the public realm to be more pedestrian- and cycle-friendly, with improved surfaces and less traffic	Sustainability is a top priority—people asked for solar panels, reused materials, and environmentally-friendly design	You want the Market Square to remain a vibrant seven-day market that supports local traders and maintains its traditional character	You value the market as a community hub, not just a commercial space—many supported ideas for social spaces to meet, sit, and relax
We too want the public realm to be improved and traffic reduced. Our proposals use high quality material and reuse the listed Setts to make surfaces accessible	We’re designing the Guildhall to be Net Zero Carbon in operation and drastically reducing energy use in the Corn Exchange. Solar panels are being installed, and embodied carbon is a key focus.	We’re committed to keeping the Market Square a vibrant seven-day market that supports local traders and preserves its traditional character	We’re enhancing the market as a community hub with more spaces to meet, sit, and relax—making it a welcoming place beyond just shopping
You’d like to see more diverse and themed events, such as evening and night-time markets, to bring the space to life beyond daytime hours	You suggested the Market Square could host small-scale performances or cultural events, provided they don’t displace traders or clutter the space	You called for better signage, clearer wayfinding, and welcoming entrances—especially at the Guildhall and Corn Exchange	You want the Civic Quarter to feel inclusive, with public seating, community amenities, and fewer barriers to access
We’re exploring a more diverse mix of events, including themed evening markets, to bring the space to life after dark.	We’re exploring options for small-scale events in the Market Square that celebrate culture without disrupting traders or overcrowding the space	We’re improving signage and wayfinding throughout the Civic Quarter. Entrances are being made more welcoming and proposals are presented below	We’ve worked hard to include public seating. Inclusivity and accessibility is being improved across all aspects of the Civic Quarter

We are now inviting you to provide further feedback



Cambridge Civic Quarter

Preserving our heritage and modernising for the 21st century

The Cambridge Civic Quarter project is working towards a Planning and Listed Building Application. To help us continue developing our planning application, we are undertaking another engagement programme to help shape our proposals. We want to create designs for the area that will:

- **create a focal point in the centre of Cambridge** that local people can be proud of and which lives up to the city's reputation as a centre of excellence and cultural significance
- **attract residents and visitors to spend more time** in the Market Square, Corn Exchange, and city centre shops, restaurants and bars
- **build on the agreed vision for the Market Square** supporting the seven-day market to continue, while being a more accessible, attractive, welcoming, exciting and safe place to visit, shop and gather
- **make the Corn Exchange a more modern and appealing venue** with updated facilities, while exploring new commercial opportunities and reducing operational costs
- **conserve the Grade II listed Guildhall as a net zero-carbon building** to save running costs, with a welcoming environment for the public, and fit-for-future working spaces for council uses; while **creating new spaces for commercial occupiers in order to increase the council's income** to support frontline council services

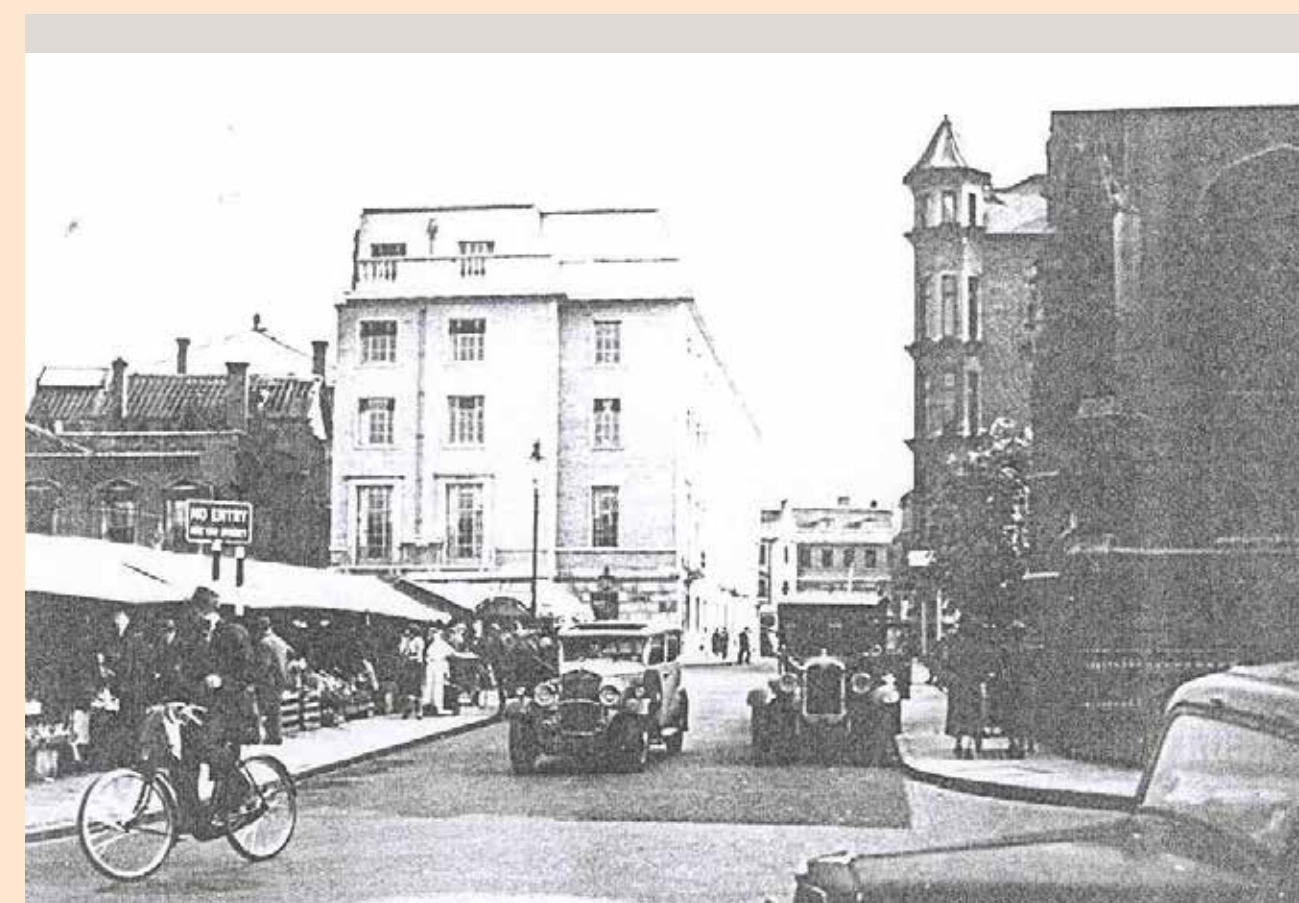
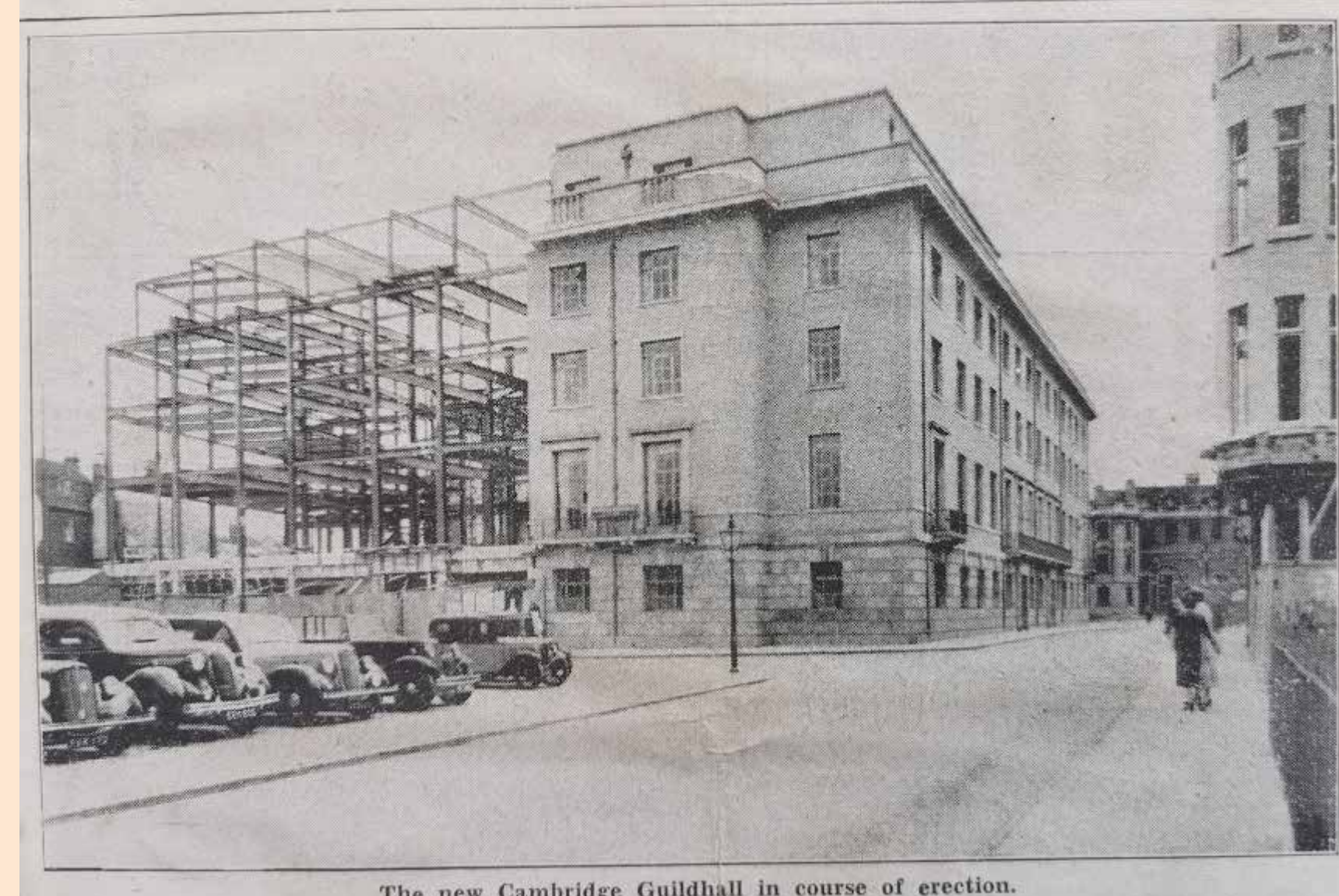


Fig 7. The first phase complete in 1936

The first phase of Guildhall complete in 1936

CAMBRIDGE DAILY NEWS JUBILEE SUPPLEMENT, May, 1938.



The new Cambridge Guildhall in course of erection.

The second phase during construction in 1938



1841 - buildings in front of Great St Mary Church



Fountain circa 1840's



The Market Square in 1921



The Market Square in the 1960's



Permanent structure in 1972



Permanent structure 1990s to today



The Market Square in 1992



Open air cinema in the Market Square 2017

We are now inviting you to provide further feedback



Your voice matters

In 2024 we ran an engagement programme which helped to shape proposals for the Cambridge Civic Quarter. These were discussed by councillors at the Strategy and Resources Committee in November 2024, with approval given to progress the project to the next stage. We have reappointed the consultancy team to continue developing the proposals and run a further public engagement programme starting in May 2025. From this an updated report will be presented to councillors in autumn 2025, ahead of submitting a planning application.

We want you to tell us what you think of the current proposals

From Monday 12 May to Sunday 22 June, we are running a comprehensive public engagement programme to gather your ideas and feedback.

Please participate in our survey, community meetings and workshops.

These sessions will allow participants to learn more about the project and share your thoughts on specific aspects of the development.

Your input will help influence the design of the Civic Quarter.

Join us

Be a part of shaping the future of Cambridge. Your engagement is crucial to creating a Civic Quarter that reflects the values and desires of our community.

Engagement events and activities

We will be popping up in the Market Square and at a variety of other events throughout May and June to make sure we hear from people who live in and visit Cambridge.

Live locally and want to know more?

Come along to one of our community workshops. If you would like to attend, please visit cambridge.gov.uk/ccq to register your interest.

Guildhall

Tuesday 27 May, 5 to 7pm

Lichfield Community Hall

Saturday 14 June, 10 to 11.30am



Complete our online survey



cambridge.gov.uk/ccq



07542 016 586



General Enquiries

Info@cambridgecivicquarter.co.uk



Media Enquiries

communications@cambridge.gov.uk



Cambridge Civic Quarter

Public spaces

The wider Civic Quarter

The public spaces within the Civic Quarter are proposed to be transformed into spaces which are inclusive and accessible to all. Trees and low level planting will provide shade, shelter and much need biodiversity, whilst clear sight lines and high quality lighting will deter anti-social behaviour. And reducing vehicle movements through the area will make this a place for people.



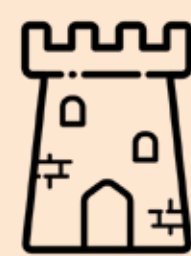
What we're planning to do:



High quality public spaces with access for all, through high quality surfaces, the re-use of historic setts, public art and integrated discrete children's play.



Reduce the space for vehicles, whilst maintaining access for servicing, to create attractive and inclusive public spaces.



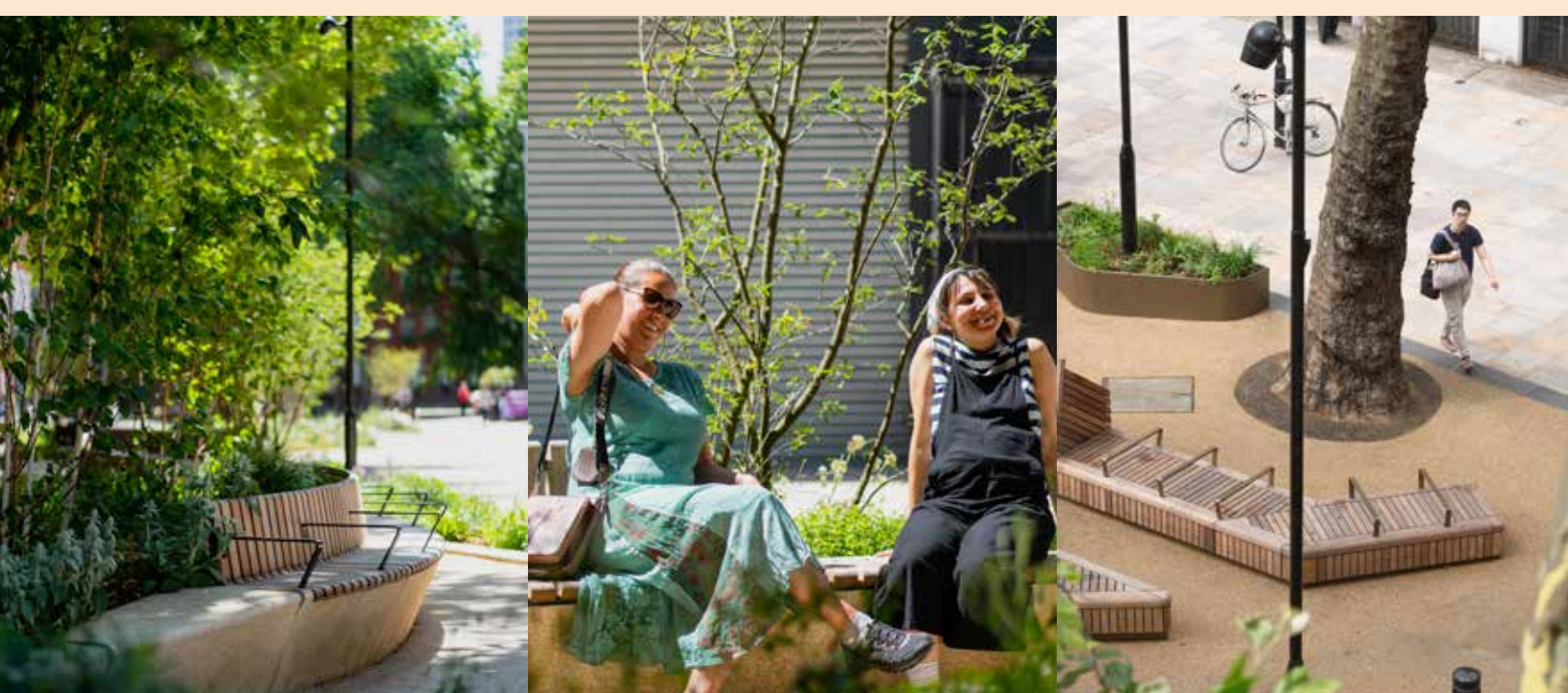
Create spaces which enhance the setting of the historic environment and celebrate the listed buildings.



Provide green infrastructure to support biodiversity, increase resilience to climate change and improve people's experience.



Provide flexible public spaces to support various types of events and uses.



Seating and planting combined, providing shade, shelter and opportunities to dwell whilst increasing biodiversity



Open areas of public space which can foster community activities and help make this a new cultural quarter for Cambridge. Examples of outdoor screens and low level animation of public space





Cambridge Civic Quarter

The Market Square

Keeping a seven-day market and creating more space for people



Market proposals

We are committed to supporting a thriving seven-day market in the centre of Cambridge and the proposals include:

- a slightly larger market area than is currently in operation
- 36 market stalls in place seven days a week
- 58 demountable stalls, allowing the market to expand and contract as demand requires
- the balance of traders and types of stalls of the market will be very similar to present day

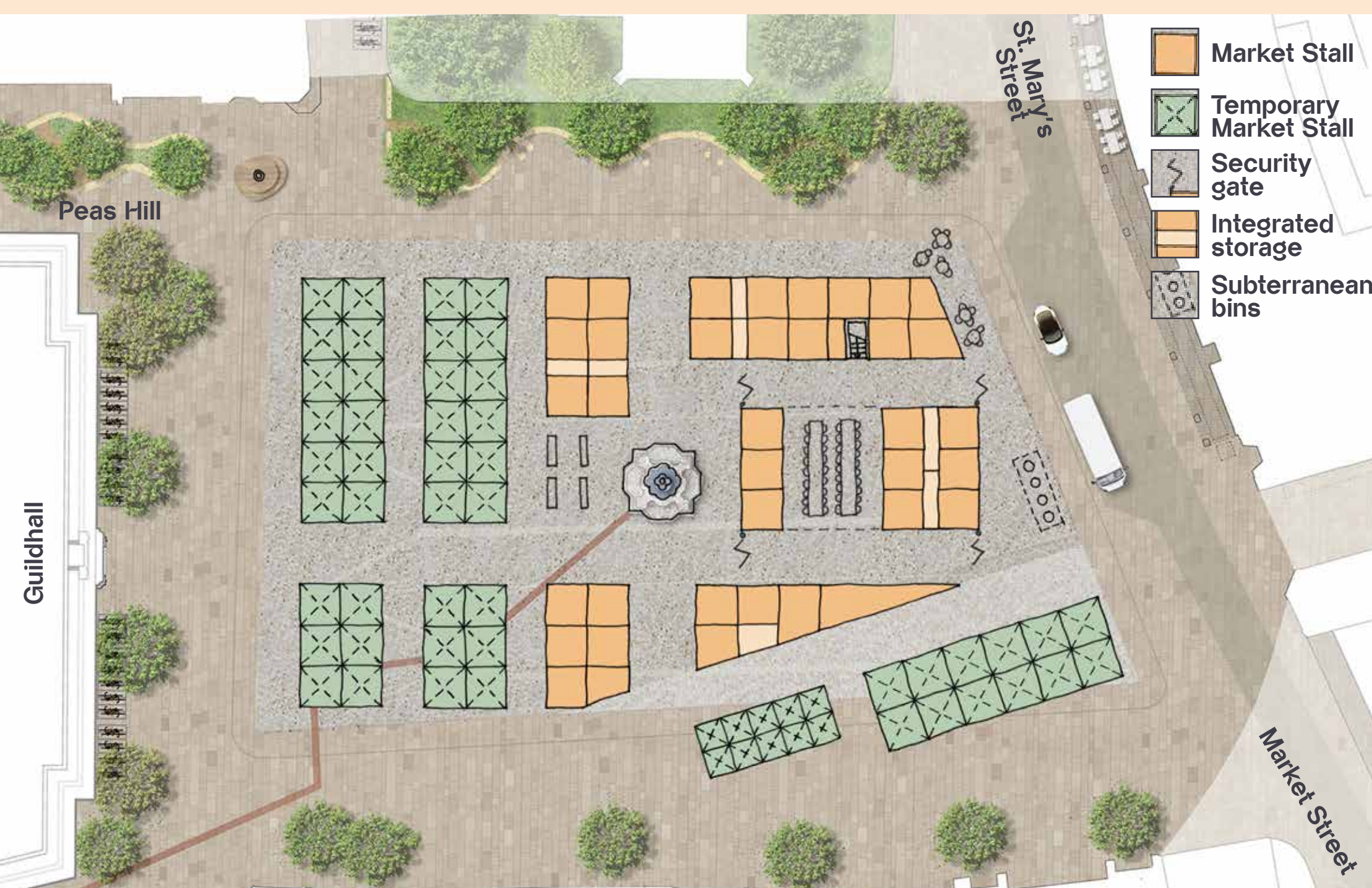
- more council staff to run the market
- significantly more seating including a covered seating area on the market
- much improved lighting will improve safety, working in parallel with clear sight lines and secure covered seating
- underground waste storage removing visual clutter

Event proposals

A range of complementary events are proposed to take place in the market square, the events have been chosen to work alongside the market activity and will not be

taking place at the expense of the market, these could include:

- low level animation with music, fitness uses and children's activities
- community events, with local groups, schools, colleges etc. invited to make use of the space
- outdoor screens, showing sporting events and films through the summer
- experiential pop-ups - brand launches or product demonstrations



Sketch plan showing the market, at maximum size



Artists impression looking towards Rose Crescent

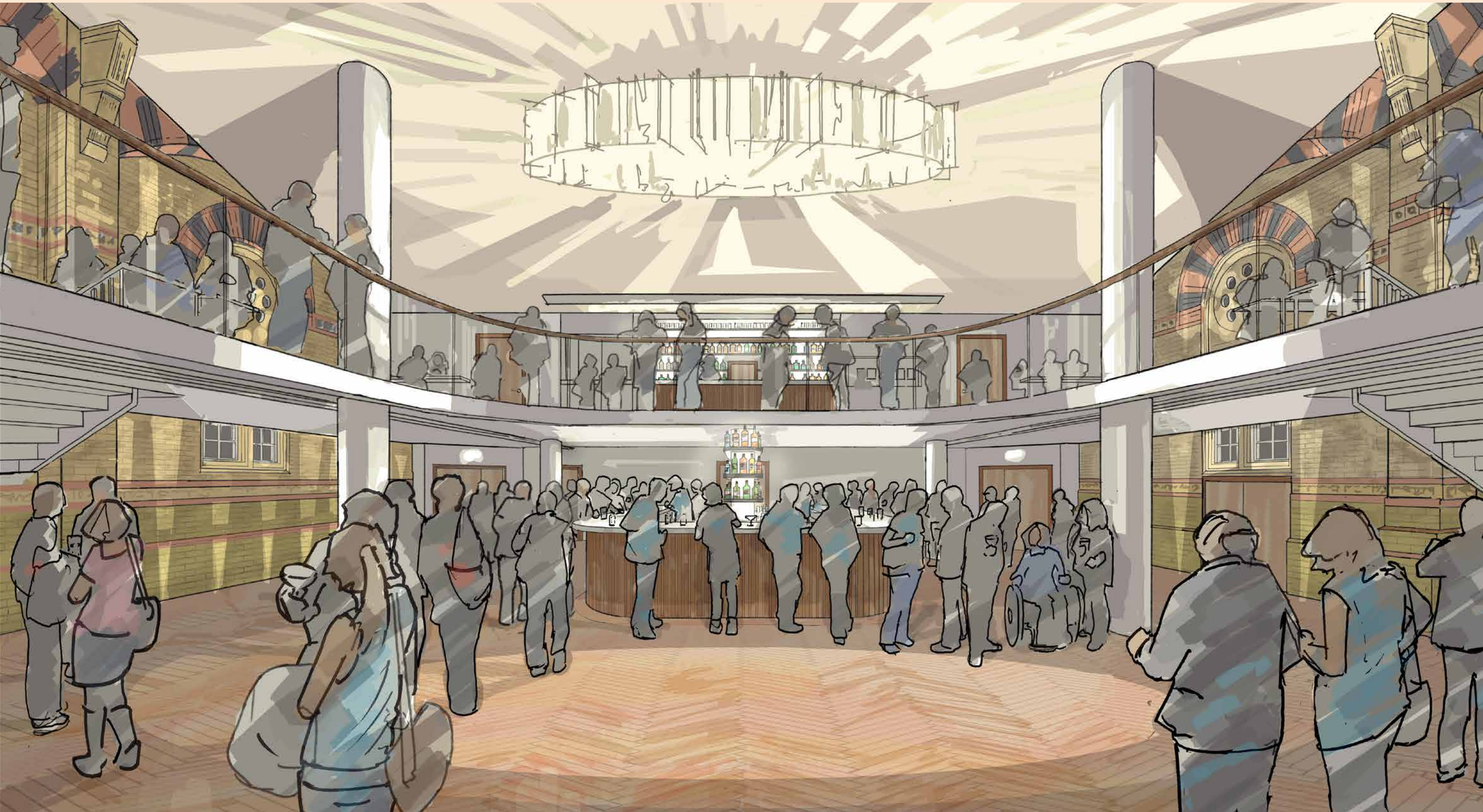
Please tell us what you think of our designs



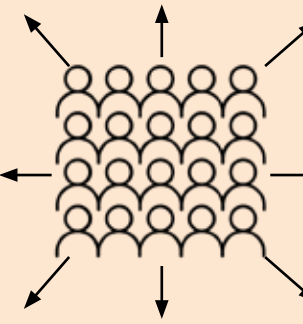
Cambridge Civic Quarter Corn Exchange

Celebrating 150 years of the Corn Exchange

The Corn Exchange is the East of England's biggest performance venue and a vital part of Cambridge's cultural life. Our planned upgrades will help it thrive by bringing in even more top events, boosting the city's reputation, and making the venue more welcoming and enjoyable for everyone.



More food and drink offerings: Introducing more concessions and bar areas to provide quicker service to and wider variety of food and drink options, enhancing the overall visitor experience.



Increased capacity: Increasing capacity to accommodate more attendees, allowing for larger events and wider variety.



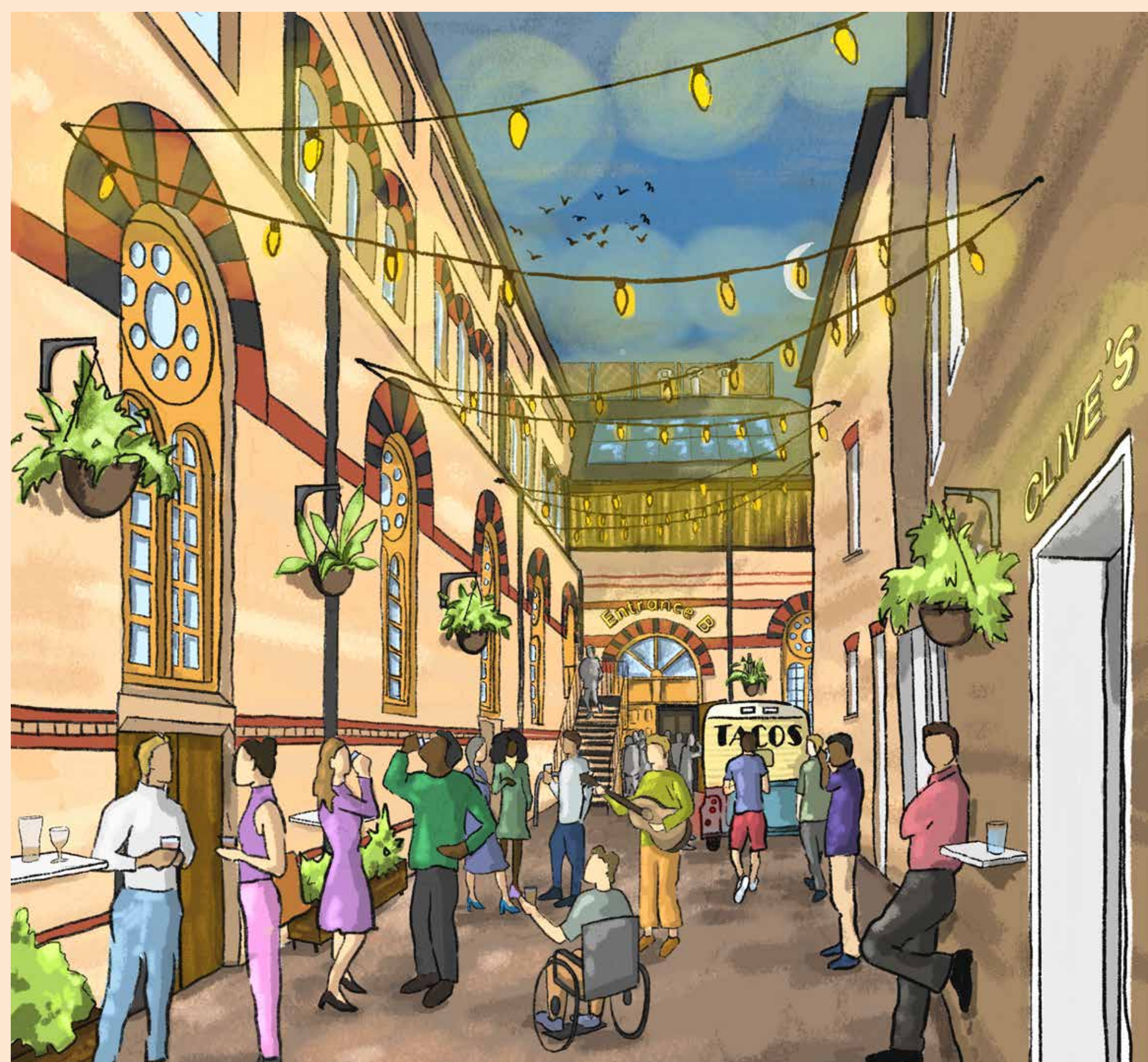
Energy efficiency: Roof insulation, photovoltaic panels, and reduced energy consumption. These upgrades will lower operational costs and minimise the environmental footprint.



Acoustics and AV: Improving sound quality and new AV systems for events, ensuring that performances and events meet higher standards for audiences and performers alike.



Accessibility: Making all areas accessible and more welcoming. Enhanced seating arrangements and facilities will ensure everyone can enjoy the venue.



Artists impression of Parson's Court, transformed into a lively, bustling social space

Please tell us what you think of our designs



Cambridge Civic Quarter

The Guildhall

New life for a historic landmark

Our proposals modernise the Guildhall to make it a central hub for local democracy, while acting as the front door for residents accessing council services. Revitalising the Guildhall will help us to preserve a piece of Cambridge's heritage while reducing running costs and providing space for commercial occupiers, to increase the council's income to support frontline services.



Civic function

The revitalised Guildhall will offer a much improved civic function.

The Council Chamber is proposed as a fully flexible space to make it accessible and inclusive, for use by all in the community.

The large and small halls will have sensitive modern interventions, delivering high quality multi-functional spaces.

Customer service centre

A new customer service centre will be provided on the ground floor of the Guildhall.

This will be accompanied by a Changing Places toilet - a specialised, larger accessible toilet designed for people with disabilities who need additional space, equipment and assistance.

Additional public facilities

A beautiful welcoming café will form the heart of the Guildhall with a range of seating.

There will also be publicly accessible toilets, a breast feeding room, a reflection/prayer room, and publicly bookable meeting rooms.

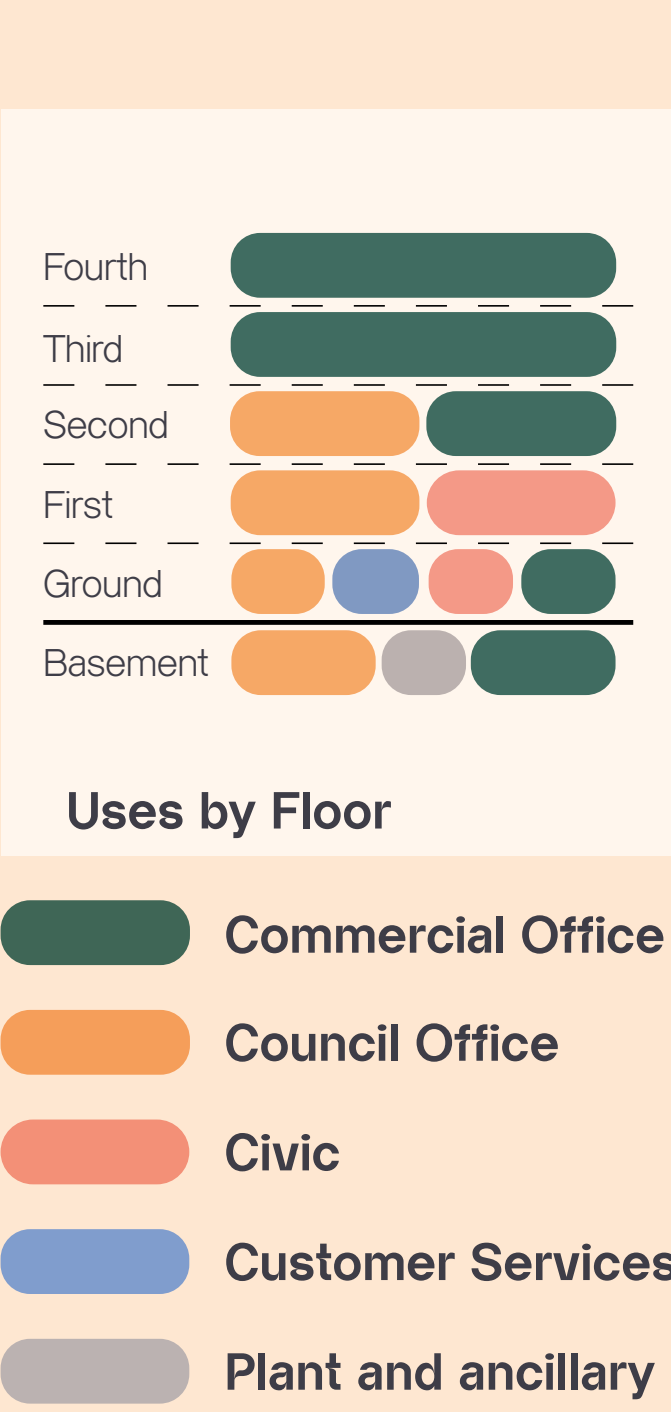
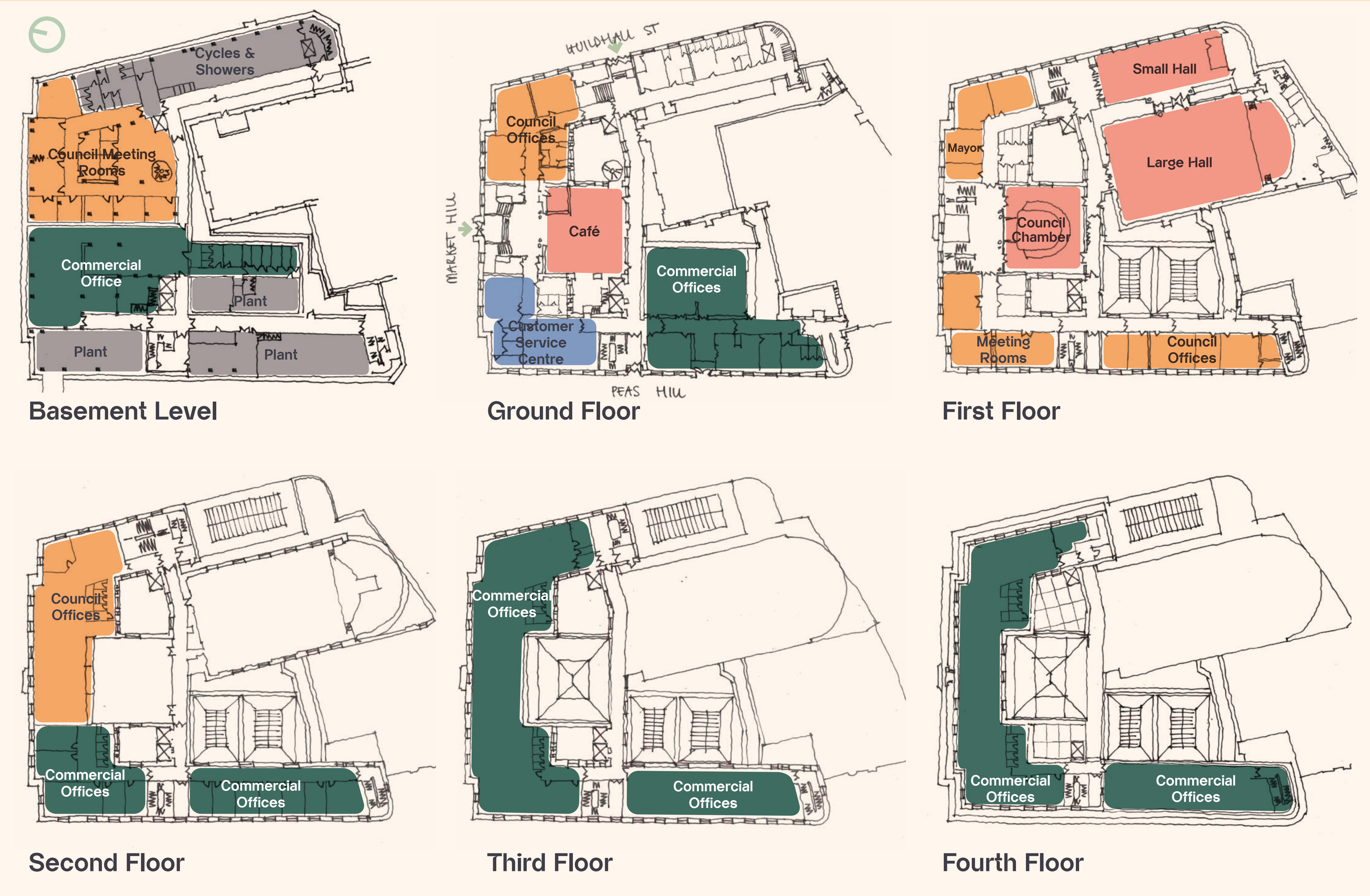


Examples of refurbished heritage spaces much like those in the Guildhall

Please tell us what you think of our designs

Providing space to generate income for the council

We are providing space for commercial occupiers to increase the council’s income, helping support the running of frontline services. With the customer service centre and publicly accessible café situated on the Ground Floor, council offices and civic functions at Basement, Ground, First and Second floor. Commercial offices are then proposed to occupy the other parts of the Guildhall.



Please tell us what you think of our designs



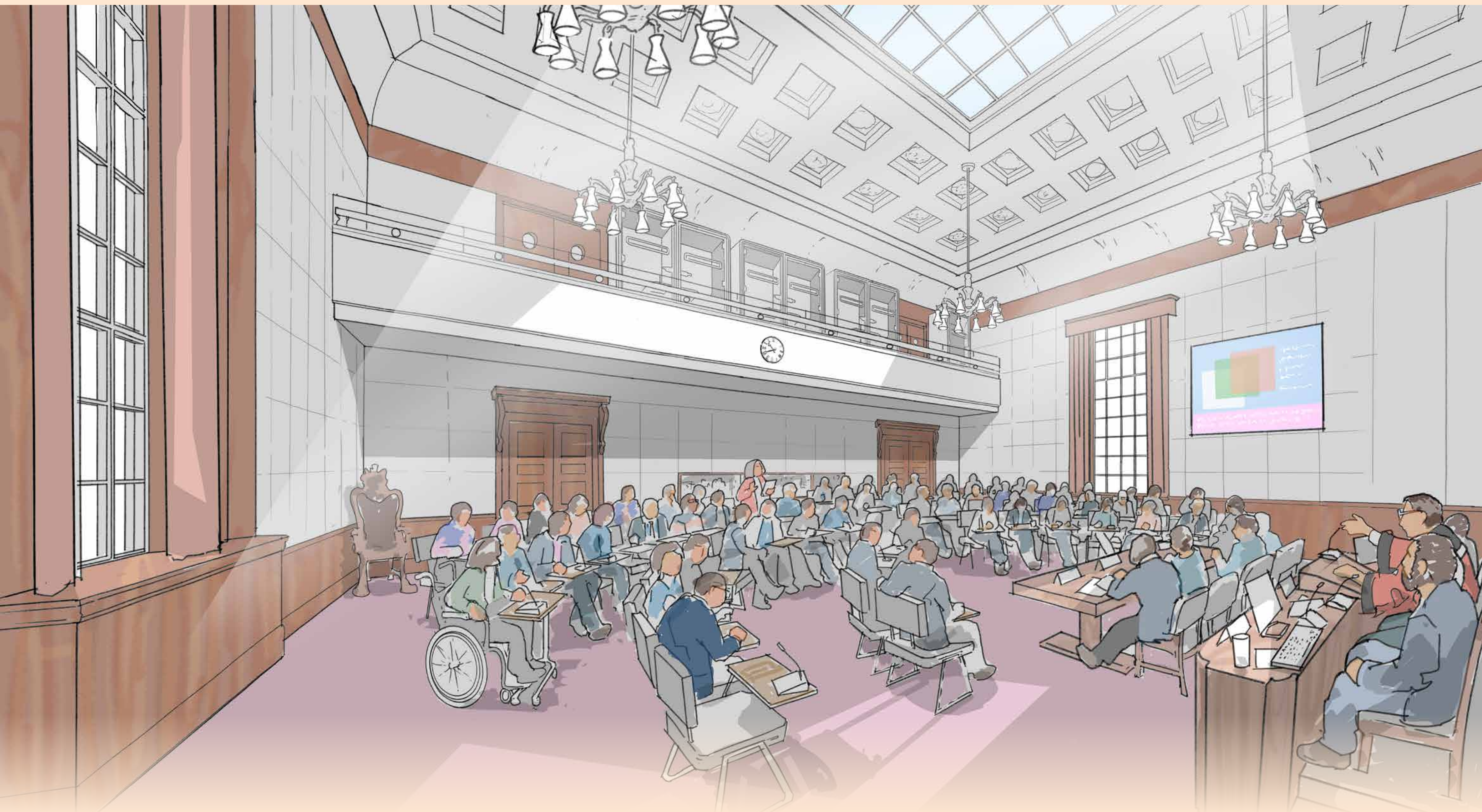
Cambridge Civic Quarter

The Guildhall

A more inclusive civic hub

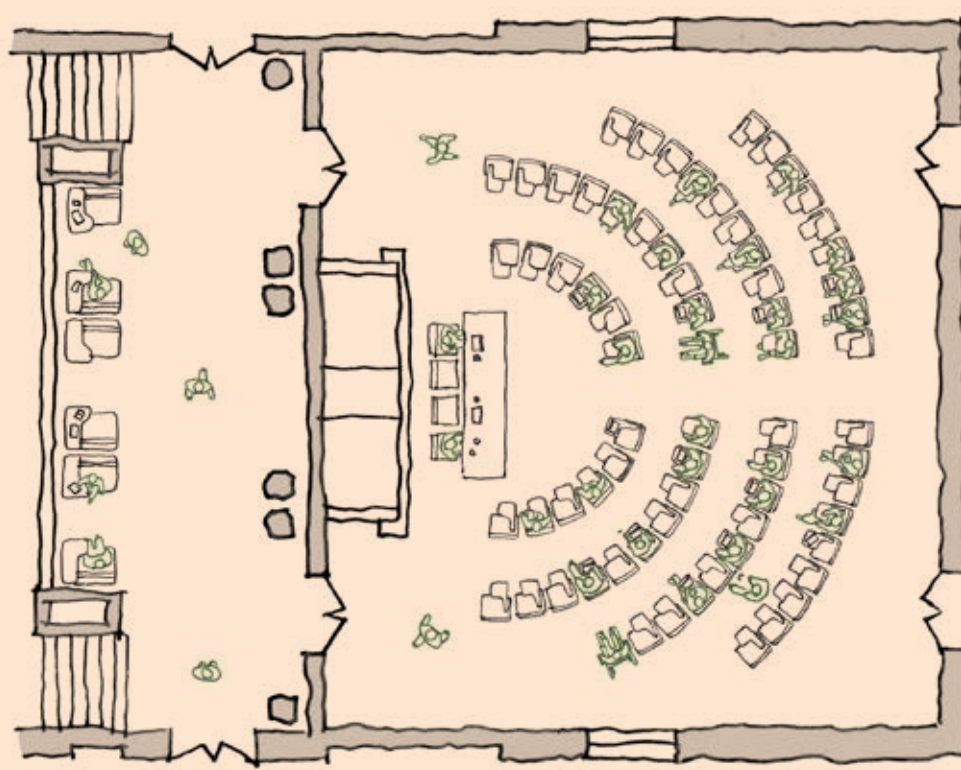
We are proposing a fully flexible solution for the Council Chamber. The current fixed furniture and stepped floor make the space difficult to access and inflexible, with wheelchair users forced to sit in gaps between furniture making participation in meetings difficult.

There will be a need to balance heritage, flexibility and accessibility



Banquet, dinner or celebration

A flexible chamber would seat around 72 people for a range of events



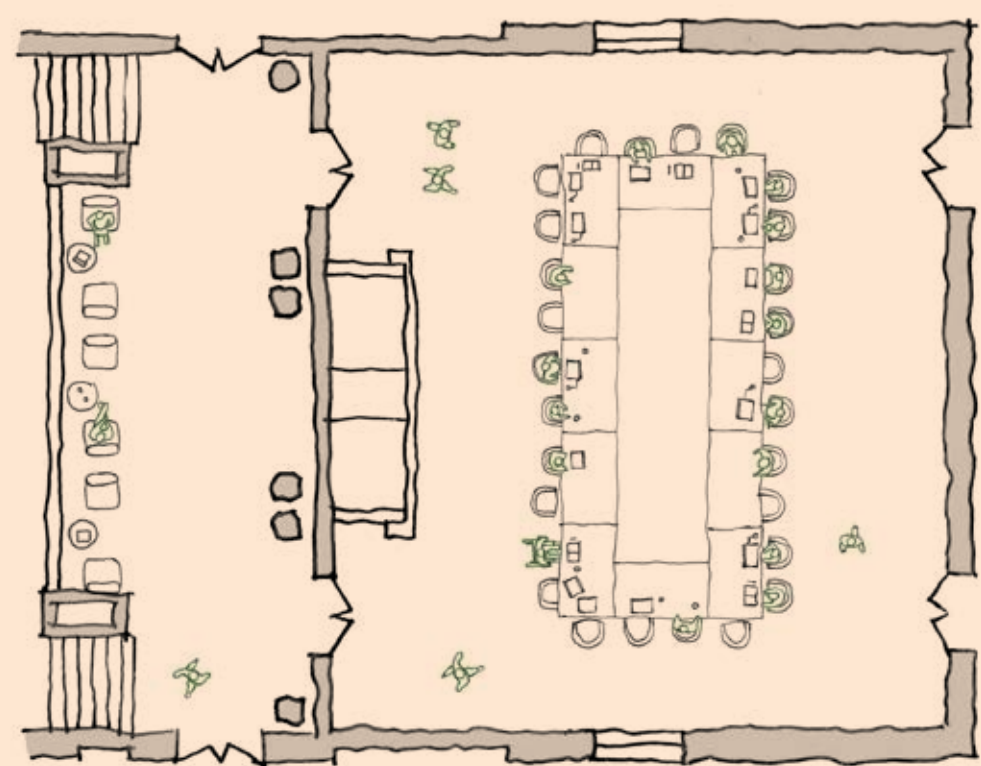
Unitary council meetings

A flexible chamber would allow a 70 seat Unitary Council to meet



Lecture

The chamber could provide a space for lectures seating upwards of 78 seats



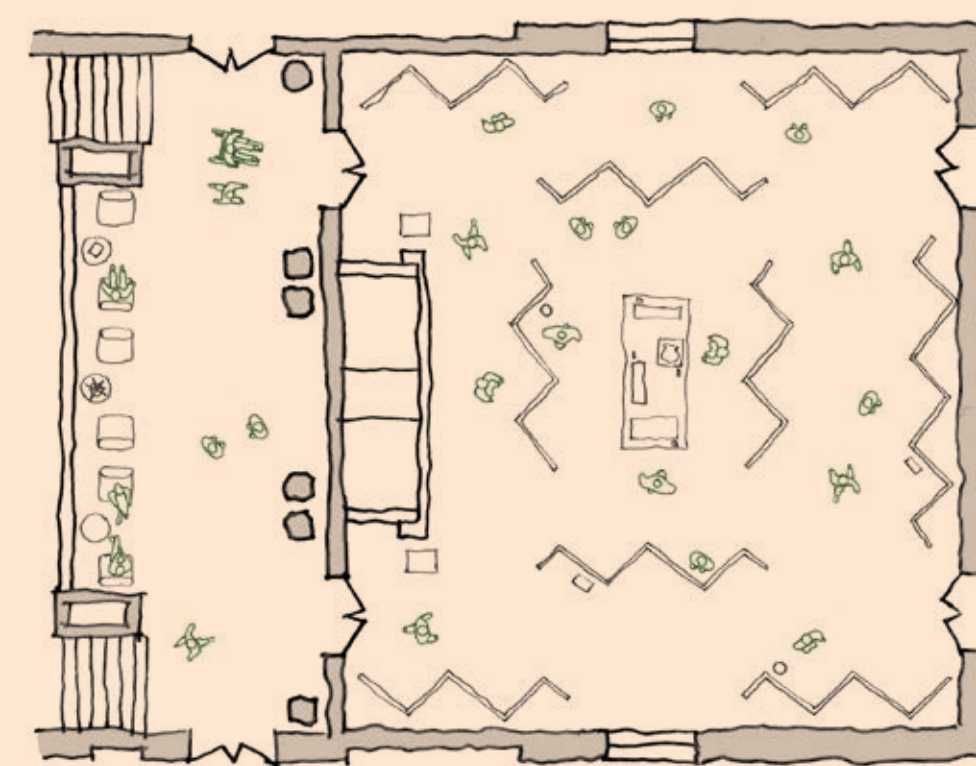
Committee in the round

Smaller committee meeting could be held in the round within the civic space



Workspace

When additional desks are required these could be set up in the chamber



Exhibition

To support a conference or as a standalone public or private event

Please tell us what you think of our designs



Cambridge Civic Quarter Sustainability

An exemplar project

Goals

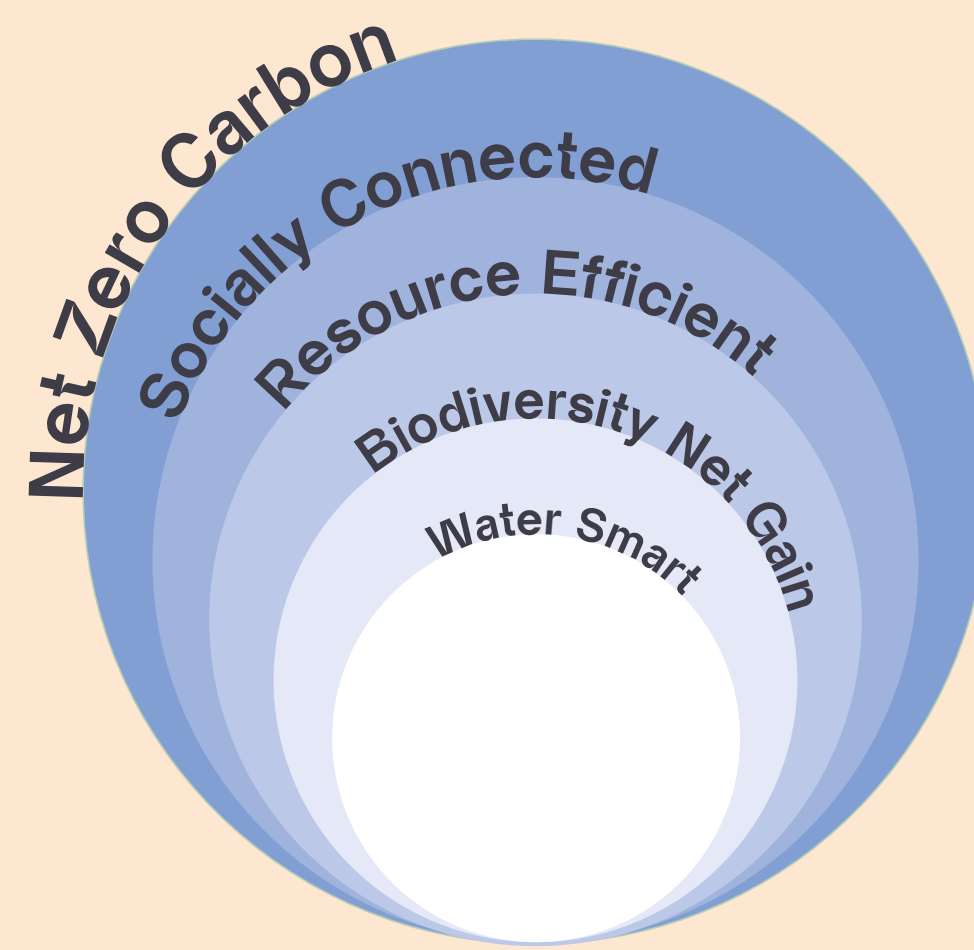
Our project is committed to sustainability, significantly reducing carbon emissions from the Civic Quarter.

The Guildhall is designed to achieve Net Zero Carbon in operation. We will reduce and monitor the embodied carbon of the materials used within construction, whilst providing a new Civic Quarter that promotes better well-being. We are targeting water neutrality across the site and increased biodiversity, targeting 20% net gain.

Key proposed initiatives

Biodiversity: Enhancing green spaces and promoting urban biodiversity, creating habitats for local wildlife and planting native species will support ecological health.

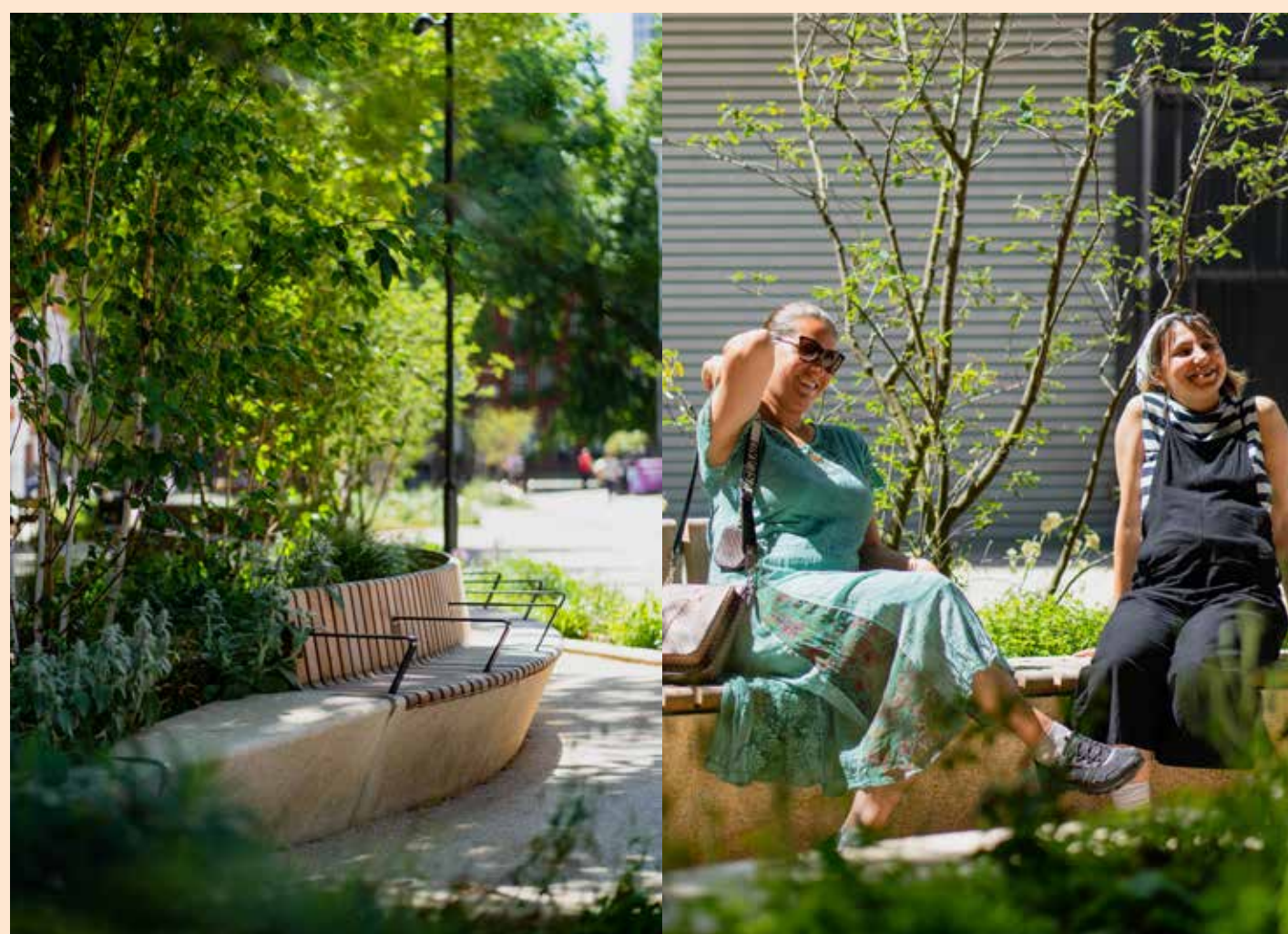
The proposals are designed to target 20% Biodiversity Net Gain.



Energy efficiency: By implementing Passivhaus/ EnerPHit principles we are drastically reducing energy use in the Civic Quarter.

The Guildhall is designed to achieve Net Zero Carbon in operation, reducing energy use by around 70%.

The Corn Exchange is aiming to reduce energy use by around 65%.



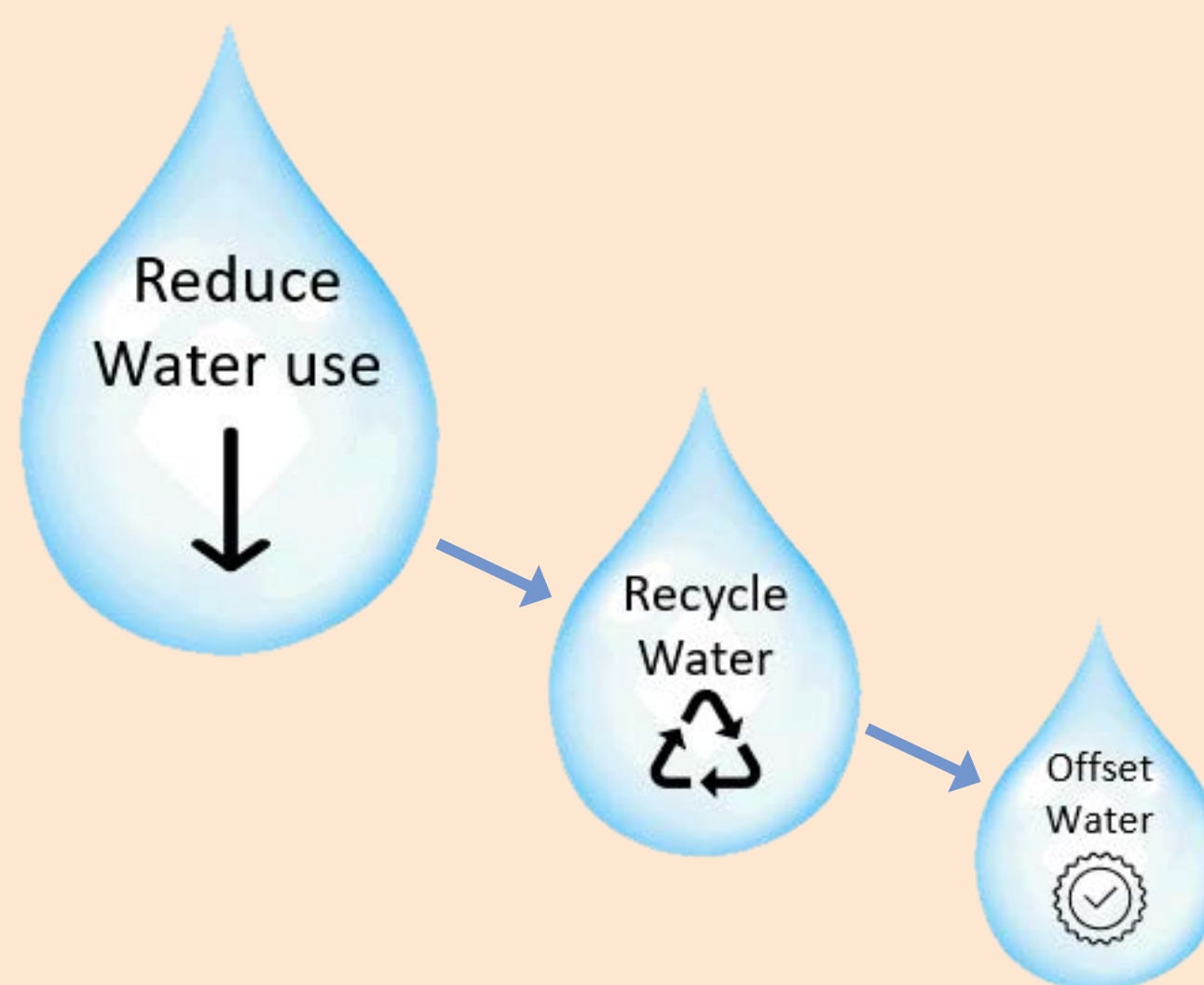
Better well-being: Incorporating green spaces with biodiverse planting, restorative seating areas and supportive and healthy indoor spaces.



Resource efficiency: Monitoring the materials used within the redevelopment of the site, and their embodied carbon impact. This will include using natural and reused materials that have a lower environmental impact.



Forward thinking: We will also future proof the Civic Quarter to ensure it can connect to the proposed District Heat Network.



Water management: Implementing smart water usage practices, such as ultra water efficient fittings, rainwater harvesting and methods to reduce surface water flooding.



Active travel: Improved transport measures to support walking and cycling.

Tell us what you think about the sustainable proposals

Engagement Boards

One Cambridge, fair for all



Next round of engagement

- Monday 12 May – Sunday 22 June.
- Engaging on the next stage of design including specifics on facilities, public realm and wayfinding, public, events and cultural programming.
- Mix of workshops, pop-ups, use of the Cambridge Urban Room, online and social media tools, and 1-2-1 stakeholder interviews.
- Additional social media promotion campaign with specific groups.

Next steps

- Launch of the programme on Monday with ongoing promotion
- Feedback provided to the project team on an ongoing basis, so that designs can be adjusted.
- Continued engagement with the market traders on the market square layout, and design for stalls.
- Summary of engagement published in the Autumn.
- Progress towards a planning submission in Autumn 2025.