

REPORT

**CIVIC QUARTER
PROGRAMME**

**Corn Exchange and
Guildhall**

**Cambridge City Council
August 2025**

Carter Jonas

CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2. SCOPING THE PROPOSAL AND THE STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE (SOC)	6
3. STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE	6
4. ECONOMIC CASE	12
5. COMMERCIAL CASE - REDACTED	14
6. FINANCIAL CASE – FUNDING A SUSTAINABLE CIVIC AND CULTURAL FUTURE	14
7. MANAGEMENT CASE – A ROBUST PLAN FOR DELIVERY AND OVERSIGHT	15
8. CONCLUSION	17

Appendix 1: UK Council-Led Flexible Office Conversions

Appendix 2 – Cashflows years 1-5 & NPV model - REDACTED

Appendix 3: Corn Exchange Sponsorship and Naming Rights strategy option - REDACTED

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Cambridge Civic Quarter programme is focused on redeveloping two heritage assets—the Corn Exchange and the Guildhall—into modern civic and cultural venues.

The strategic case demonstrates the need for investment by aligning the project with Cambridge's net zero ambitions, cultural strategy and long-term civic needs. It highlights the historical importance of the Corn Exchange and Guildhall and identifies preferred options: a mixed use model for the Guildhall and a revitalised programming model for the Corn Exchange.

The economic case assesses financial benefits such as operating savings and revenue uplift alongside social benefits like improved public realm, civic renewal and user wellbeing. These non-financial benefits are framed as critical success factors and will inform outcome measures and evaluation.

The commercial case translates the strategic and economic analyses into viable delivery models. For the Corn Exchange, investment will unlock a revitalised content and operational strategy, repositioning the venue as a vibrant, commercially resilient cultural hub.

The refreshed approach widens programming (family entertainment, spoken word, contemporary events and esports), improves customer experience and hospitality offerings, enhances accessibility and inclusivity, and strengthens community and educational use.

Three operating models were appraised —continuing the current inhouse dry-hire approach, inhouse programming with a revenue share model, and an outsourced operator—and benchmarked them against sector comparators. Although the revised programming model offers higher returns, the preferred option at this stage is a cautious inhouse model that retains operational control and minimises risk.

For the Guildhall, the commercial case proposes a mixed use model combining civic and cultural uses on lower floors with council workspace and flexible commercial offices above. The plan assumes around 40,200 sq. ft. of commercial floor space, with around 13,500 sq. ft. managed desk / co-working spaces on the ground and second floor, around 18,900 sq. ft. leased offices in two suites on the third and fourth floors, and the basement providing leisure / wellness facilities, run by an external operator, or additional managed office space across approximately 7,900 sq. ft.

Current vs projected revenues	Y0 (current)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Guildhall	(£1,238,386)	(£1,888)	£833,040	£908,868	£914,178	£979,785
Corn Exchange	£675,968	£88,556	£977,384	£1,988,439	£2,620,431	£2,634,174

A reconfigured event hall and improved hospitality and accessibility aim to generate new revenue streams, complement the Corn Exchange and spread risk across multiple market segments. Market analysis indicates that demand in Cambridge is shifting towards high quality, flexible office space and mixed use venues, supporting the rationale for this model.

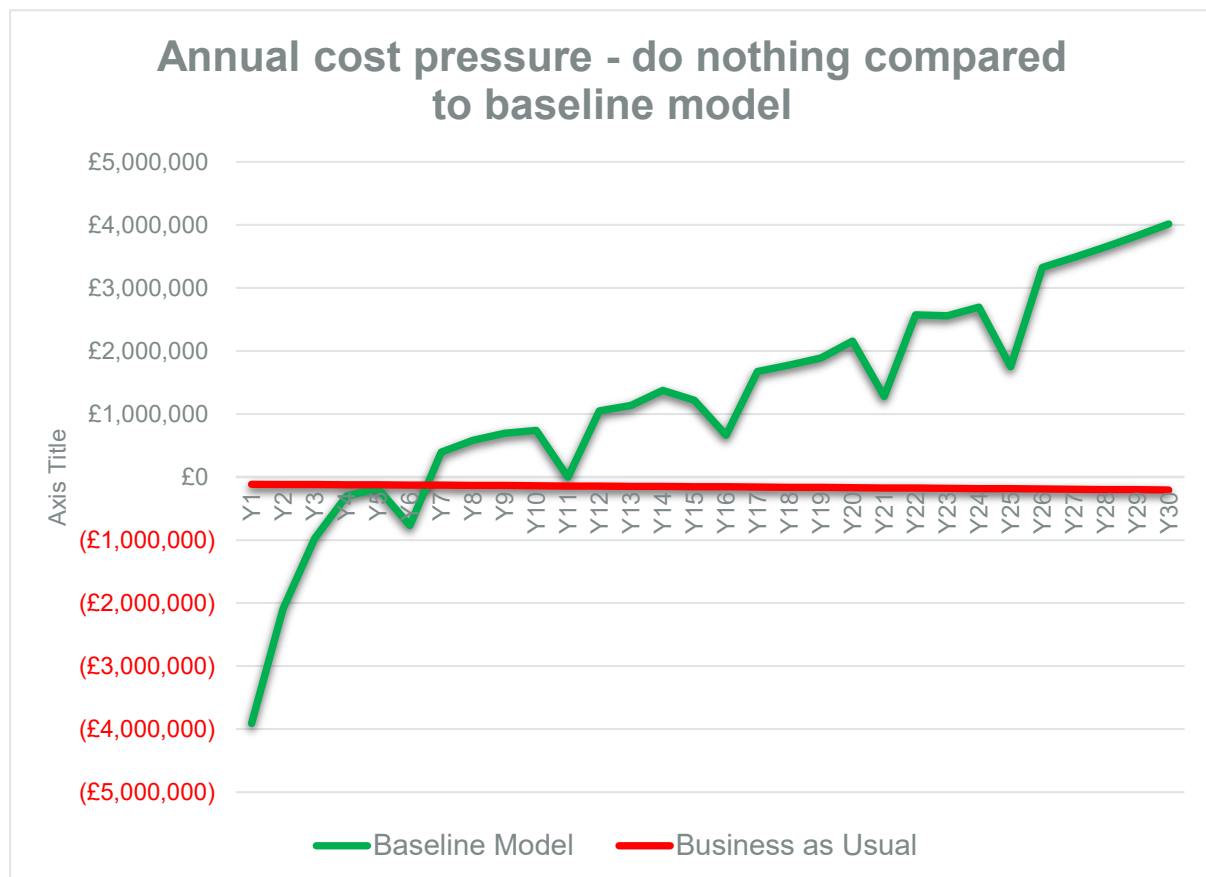
The financial case confirms the affordability of the programme by detailing funding sources, capital phasing, revenue forecasts and borrowing costs. It shows that, while each asset has its own distinct business case, the Guildhall is funded by a mix of grants, reserves, capital and borrowing, the Corn Exchange is financed through borrowing alone, whilst the Market Square is financed through both a ring fenced CPCA grant with the remainder through borrowing.

The management case outlines robust governance and delivery arrangements, including a two stage procurement strategy, stakeholder engagement, risk management and phased implementation, ensuring that the council has the structures and partners needed to deliver the programme successfully.

Financial modelling of a range of potential scenarios based on our commercial advice for the Guildhall and Corn exchange have been developed and tested in this phase of the Business Case development. In this report the baseline models have been assessed alongside that for the Market Square to update the financial model.

The combined financial case shows that the Corn Exchange redevelopment appears commercially viable under an inhouse operating model, while the Market Square public realm improvements and Guildhall mixed use scheme require careful management of costs and funding sources to ensure affordability.

By year 5, the baseline financial modelling shows the redevelopment of the Civic Quarter will result in an annual cost of £187k, compared to a 'do nothing' scenario of £125k. By year 7 it moves into surplus , producing revenue income of £740k per annum by year 10.



The above graph illustrates the projected combined net financial position of the Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Market Square, incorporating the upfront capital expenditure required for the project. The current models indicate that the proposed scheme will outperform the existing situation, on an annual cost pressure basis, within 7 years.

The commercial NPV at year 30 for the consolidated model is estimated to be £7.7m (see appendix 2).

1.1 Business Case Development

This report presents the preliminary Business Plan with early financial analysis and commercial recommendations. At this stage in the Business Plan development, the Strategic and Economic cases have been defined through iterations of consultation and design stages. This has identified a preferred option for the Guildhall that includes a mix of civic and commercial office space, the option of a Hotel having been reviewed and discounted.

The Commercial case in this report develops the option further, preparing the project for market testing and engagement to test the assumptions used in the financial modelling, and therefore the likely success or otherwise of the proposed scheme. For the Guildhall, the detailed Guildhall Commercial Strategy includes:

- Up to 1,500 m² of flexible office space over upper floors
- Phased lease-up with blended rental/licensing structure
- Peas Hill entrance with tenant separation
- Civic/public integration in shared areas
- Commercial advice from Carter Jonas

For the Corn Exchange, three operational variants were produced for comparative purposes via high level commercial appraisals:

1. In-House Operation – Existing Programming Strategy - Predominantly dry-hire events.
2. In-House Operation – Revised Programming Strategy - A mix of split-risk programming agreements, based on an 80/20 revenue share model with promoters.
3. Outsourced Operation – Commercial Operator Model - Transfer of operating risk to a third-party operator under a fixed-rent agreement

Of these operational variants, Option 1 – based on the existing programming strategy, has been adopted as the preferred option. This model was the lowest risk and gave the greatest operational control. The modelling and assumptions are discussed further in the Commercial section of this report.

Model	Financial Return	Risk	Operational Control
In-House (current style)	Lowest return	Lowest risk, but limited growth	High
In-House (revised)	Moderate–high return	Medium (shared risk)	High
Outsourced Operator	Fixed rental income	Low (transferred risk)	Low–medium

Following detailed commercial modelling and stakeholder engagement, the preferred operating model for the enhanced Cambridge Civic Quarter is the In-House Hire Model, maintaining a predominantly dry-hire programming strategy. This approach enables the Council to retain operational control and strategic alignment with civic and community objectives, while leveraging existing venue strengths and local market demand.

The model is financially viable, with revenue growth achievable through enhanced utilisation of space, improved F&B operations, targeted self-produced events, and the integration of Parson's Court. It allows the Council to actively manage risk, develop new audiences, and evolve its programming approach without surrendering long-term control or compromising civic use.

Success will depend on improved performance monitoring, robust marketing, and investment in commercial capability within the Cultural Services team. While this model entails more operational complexity than outsourcing, it offers long-term resilience, flexibility, and alignment with the Council's place-making agenda.

2. SCOPING THE PROPOSAL AND THE STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE (SOC)

The starting point for the preparation of the Outline Business Case is to identify the shortlisted options that Council has identified from the design development and consultation as proposed in the Report to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 21st November 2024.

The proposals are driven by six strategic priorities:

- Net Zero & Climate Resilience – transforming heritage assets into exemplars of low-carbon retrofitting.
- Civic Renewal – revitalising the Guildhall as a hub for civic services, community engagement, and democratic accessibility.
- Cultural Activation – enhancing the Corn Exchange as a high-quality venue and introducing a new cultural attraction in the Guildhall.
- Economic Efficiency – reducing operating costs by consolidating estate use and unlocking commercial opportunities.
- Public Realm Transformation – creating a more inclusive, biodiverse, and accessible Market Square and civic space.
- Inclusive Growth – promoting community wealth building and equitable access to space, culture, and economic opportunity.

3. STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE

The Strategic Outline Case should provide a clear understanding of

- Spending Objectives,
- the Existing Arrangements and related Business Needs,
- potential Scope / Service Requirements, and
- the potential Benefits, Risks, Constraints and Dependencies.

3.1. Spending Objectives

- Enhance the Civic Quarter as a Vibrant Destination
 - Create a focal point in central Cambridge that residents can be proud of and that reflects the city's 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 to make it a more accessible, attractive, welcoming, exciting, and safe place to visit, shop, and gather.
- Modernise and Improve Key Facilities
 - 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 to increase the council's income to support the delivery of frontline council services.
- Achieve Environmental Sustainability
 - Make the council's heritage buildings net zero and improve biodiversity and water efficiency across the site.
- Improve Accessibility and Public Realm
 - Improve accessibility and create a welcoming new civic heart open to the public.
- Ensure Financial Sustainability
 - Save the council money by reducing running costs and creating opportunities for additional income.

The report focusses on the commercial case for investment in the Corn Exchange and the Guildhall. The Market Square is referred to where it is needed to describe the Financial Case for the Civic Quarter development as a whole.

3.2 Existing Arrangements

Guildhall

- Function: Serves as the primary civic and administrative hub for Cambridge City Council.
- Facilities: Houses council offices, committee rooms, and civic halls.
- Current Issues:
 - Underutilisation of space, particularly in the basement and upper floors.
 - Accessibility challenges due to outdated infrastructure.
 - High operational costs and energy inefficiency.
 - Limited public engagement spaces.

Corn Exchange

- Function: Operates as a cultural venue hosting concerts, exhibitions, and events.
- Facilities: Includes an auditorium, backstage areas, and limited front-of-house amenities.
- Current Issues:
 - Aging infrastructure leading to increased maintenance costs.
 - Limited accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges.
 - Inadequate backstage facilities affecting event logistics.
 - Energy inefficiency due to outdated systems.

3.3 Business Needs

The improvements and changes required to meet the Spending Objectives are identified as *Business Needs*.

Guildhall

- Space Optimisation: Reconfigure internal layouts to maximise usable space, including converting underused areas into flexible workspaces.
- Accessibility Improvements: Upgrade facilities to meet modern accessibility standards, ensuring inclusivity for all users.
- Energy Efficiency: Implement energy-saving measures to reduce operational costs and meet sustainability goals.
- Public Engagement: Create welcoming public spaces to encourage community interaction and civic participation.

Corn Exchange

- Infrastructure Upgrades: Modernise facilities to enhance the visitor experience and accommodate a wider range of events.
- Accessibility Enhancements: Install lifts and ramps to ensure full accessibility throughout the venue.

- Backstage Improvements: Expand and modernise backstage areas to improve logistics for performers and staff.
- Energy Efficiency: Upgrade heating, ventilation, and lighting systems to reduce energy consumption.

3.4 Potential Business Scope and Key Service Requirements

The Potential Business Scope and Key Service Requirements for each of the spaces identified in the report can be set out as follows:

Guildhall

Potential Business Scope

- Full refurbishment of the Guildhall to provide high-quality, net zero, flexible office space.
- Reconfiguration of internal layouts to accommodate a mix of long-lease and managed workspace.
- Restoration of civic rooms and public-access areas, preserving heritage features while improving functionality.
- Integration of office and civic uses, including potential lettable meeting and conferencing rooms.
- Introduction of energy-saving measures, including solar PV, LED lighting, and air-source heat pumps.

Key Service Requirements

Design and Technical Services:

- Office space planning with Grade A workplace standards.
- Heritage-led architectural design, inclusive of listed building constraints.
- Building services engineering with emphasis on sustainability.

Construction and Fit Out:

- Internal strip-out and full refit to CAT A/B.
- Accessibility improvements (e.g. lifts, ramps, signage).
- Thermal and energy efficiency upgrades.

Facilities and Property Management:

- Management of multi-tenanted flexible workspace.
- Lease/licence administration for private sector tenants.
- Ongoing FM provision and lifecycle maintenance.

Commercial and Operating Model Development:

- Workspace operator or council-led management model.
- Hybrid income model: lease/licence plus event-based hires.
- Marketing to professional services, tech, and creative sectors.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Occupancy rates, tenant satisfaction, and net revenue tracking.
- Carbon footprint and building performance reporting.
- Heritage condition and public access compliance.

Corn Exchange

Potential Business Scope

- Upgrade of performance venue infrastructure, , experience, and revenue potential including an increase in the annual number of visitors.
- Modernisation of backstage, technical, and performer facilities.
- Diversification of programming: concerts, conferences, comedy, community events. Specifically, EDI productions, Popular Adaptions and Revivals, environmentally conscious themes and embracing technological advances.
- Enhanced front-of-house and public spaces, including food and drink facilities.
- Operational model to reduce council subsidy and target break-even/surplus from Year 3.

Key Service Requirements

Design and Technical Services:

- Acoustic and stage lighting/AV design.
- Audience and performer accessibility improvements.
- Back-of-house spatial redesign and compliance works.

Construction and Fit Out:

- Refurbishment of auditorium, lobbies, WCs, green rooms.
- Ventilation, heating and acoustic control systems installation.
- Bar and concession infrastructure upgrade.

Facilities and Venue Management:

- Improved systems within event scheduling and box office functions.
- Technical operations (lighting, rigging, AV).
- Catering and cleaning contracts.

Commercial and Operating Model Development:

- Enhanced ticketing and yield management strategy.
- Commercial hire packages for conferences and private events.
- Food & Beverage partnership model.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Audience growth, event numbers, and gross profit.
- User satisfaction and cultural engagement KPIs.
- Revenue and cost per event benchmarking.

A summary of the potential benefits, risks, constraints and dependencies for the Guildhall and Corn Exchange are set out below:

Guildhall

Risk	Constraint	Dependency
Heritage constraints may delay approvals or restrict design.	Existing layout limits structural flexibility.	Must align with wider Civic Quarter programme phasing.
Construction in a live environment risks operational disruption.	Listed status restricts major interventions.	Council staff relocation is needed before works begin.
Commercial uptake may be slower than modelled.	Logistics and plant access are physically constrained.	Requires early contractor involvement for cost control.
Capital cost inflation could impact budget and scope.		
Political or funding shifts may delay or change priorities.		

Corn Exchange

Risk	Constraint	Dependency
Construction could disrupt venue programming and income.	Listed building status limits intervention scope.	Phasing must avoid peak operational periods.
Backstage area limitations may restrict improvements.	Tight site footprint constrains reconfiguration.	Income relies on effective venue management model.
Technical equipment costs could exceed initial budgets.	Shared services with Guildhall require coordination.	Utilities upgrades must be coordinated across sites.

3.5 Summary

The Strategic Outline Case for the Civic Quarter focuses on transforming the Guildhall and Corn Exchange into modern, accessible, and financially sustainable civic assets. The spending objectives centre on enhancing Cambridge's cultural and civic identity, improving environmental performance, and reducing the council's operational costs while unlocking commercial opportunities. The Guildhall, currently underutilised and energy-inefficient, requires a full refurbishment to deliver flexible, net zero office space that supports both public functions and commercial tenancies. Similarly, the Corn Exchange, which serves as a major

cultural venue, faces challenges around accessibility, backstage capacity, and infrastructure age, all of which limit its commercial potential and user experience.

To meet these objectives, the *business needs* call for significant upgrades in accessibility, energy efficiency, and operational capability in both buildings. The proposed scope includes comprehensive reconfiguration and fit-out of the Guildhall to Grade A office standards, with managed workspace and retained civic areas, alongside a modernisation of the Corn Exchange to support a diversified programme of events and improved public amenities. Each site carries identifiable risks and constraints—primarily linked to heritage status, site access, and capital cost inflation—and is dependent on programme phasing, decant planning, and effective procurement. Together, these interventions form the core of an Outline Business Case that balances civic use, commercial viability, heritage stewardship and public value.

4. ECONOMIC CASE

The purpose of the Economic Case is to identify the proposal that delivers best public value, including wider social and environmental effects. In comparison to the ‘do minimum’ or Business as Usual (BaU) option, the potential Economic and Social Value benefits can be summarised as follows:

4.1 Quantified Economic Benefits (Indicative):

Metric	Indicative Output
Net revenue savings (Guildhall)	£1.2m per annum
Additional net income (Corn Exchange)	Increased net surplus over 5 years
Market operating margin (post-improvements)	Improved due to occupancy uplift
GVA contribution (Civic Quarter uplift)	TBC in full business plan
Job creation (direct & indirect, est.)	TBC – based on contractor inputs

The Economic Case demonstrates that the proposed investment in the Guildhall and Corn Exchange will deliver significant public value by addressing existing inefficiencies, enhancing service quality, and unlocking new sources of economic activity. The current use of both assets is sub-optimal. The Guildhall suffers from extensive underutilisation and poor energy performance, resulting in high running costs and limited public benefit. Similarly, the Corn Exchange operates below capacity due to outdated infrastructure and accessibility issues that restrict its programming potential. These inefficiencies impose direct costs on the Council and reduce the economic and social contribution these buildings could otherwise provide.

The proposed way forward involves the refurbishment and reconfiguration of both buildings to improve functionality, accessibility, and commercial viability. Economic benefits include a forecast increase in net revenue from the Guildhall from £0 in Year 1 to £980k by Year 5, and from the Corn Exchange from £89k in Year 1 to £2.63 million in Year 5.

These projections are supported by benchmark evidence and commercial assumptions verified by Carter Jonas, as outlined in section 5.1 of this report. Wider economic benefits include increased footfall in the city centre, a more resilient cultural economy, and improved productivity through better-quality workspace. The scheme also supports long-term fiscal

sustainability by reducing the Council's reliance on public subsidy to maintain its civic estate. Overall, the investment represents strong value for money and supports inclusive and sustainable growth in central Cambridge.

4.2 Non-Monetised Benefits:

In terms of non-monetised benefits, these could be categorised and measured as follows:

Benefit Category	Description	Measurement / Evidence
Improved Accessibility	Step-free access, lifts, and inclusive circulation will open up both venues to a broader range of users, including those with disabilities or mobility issues.	Equality Act compliance; access audits; diverse user surveys
Heritage Preservation	Refurbishment of listed buildings ensures continued use and conservation of heritage assets, avoiding neglect or decay.	Listed building condition assessments; conservation officer feedback
Civic Engagement and Participation	Better public-facing spaces at the Guildhall will improve community use, democratic engagement, and civic pride.	Civic event numbers; community feedback; public access hours
Cultural Value	Enhanced facilities at the Corn Exchange will allow a more diverse cultural programme, enriching the city's cultural identity.	Event diversity index; audience surveys; Arts Council benchmarks
Environmental Performance	Non-domestic retrofit to net zero standard will reduce emissions, water use, and waste, contributing to city-wide environmental goals.	EPC ratings; operational carbon tracking; council climate strategy targets
Place Quality and Urban Vitality	Refurbishment of the buildings will contribute to a more attractive and active Civic Quarter, increasing dwell time and local spend.	Footfall data; perceptions of safety and vibrancy; user satisfaction surveys
Staff and User Wellbeing	Better internal environments (lighting, ventilation, layout) will improve health and productivity of building users.	Staff satisfaction; absenteeism rates; WELL-type indicators

At this stage in the development of the Business Case, these Economic Case outputs are framed as Critical Success Factors (CSFs). As the Business Case develops, these CSFs have a role in defining the Outputs and Outcomes of the project, forming the basis for post project evaluation.

The non-monetised benefits set out above complement the monetised benefits by providing a broader assessment of public value, reinforcing the strategic fit and strengthening the investment rationale. Together, they inform the Commercial Case by demonstrating both the financial viability and wider desirability of the proposed intervention to potential occupiers, operators, and delivery partners.

5. COMMERCIAL CASE

REDACTED

6. FINANCIAL CASE – FUNDING A SUSTAINABLE CIVIC AND CULTURAL FUTURE

Cost of Capital and Affordability

The funding for the development is assumed to be a mix of Council reserves, anticipated capital receipts, grants from the CPCA, with the remainder likely financed through borrowing.

There is no provision in the baseline modelling for repaying either the grants or the Mandela House receipts.

The reserves are charged at a rate of 3% per annum, which represents the opportunity cost the council would have otherwise been able to earn through investments, equivalent to £690,000 per annum

Financing	Total finance	Guildhall	Corn Exchange	Market Square
£23m from General Fund reserve @3%	£23,000,000	£23,000,000		
£1.5m from restricted A14 mitigation@0%	£1,500,000	£1,500,000		
£6m from sale of Mandela House @0%	£6,000,000	£6,000,000		
£1.5m Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) grant for Market Square (subject to business case approval); 0% - Market	£1,500,000			£1,500,000
Remainder - external borrowing – £60.275m – @5.14% maturity plus MRP	£60,275,000	£21,660,000	£26,491,000	£12,124,000
Total financing	£92,275,000	£52,160,000	£26,491,000	£13,624,000

External borrowing of £60.275m would need to be sourced. Using this funding requires the Council to make a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) equal to 1/50th of the amount borrowed each year, as the loan is a maturity loan, with the principal due for repayment at the end of the term.

The structure of the loan will be as determined by the Council's treasury advisors, and for the baseline model has been set at a rate of 5.14% as advised by the S151 officer.

NPV Calculation

For this business case the commercial NPV has been calculated to include the cost of capital. This is achieving an NPV of £7.7m. Alternative methods of calculating the NPV would be to exclude the cost of capital or to include the initial build cost, however we have used this method in the circumstances to ensure the financial modelling is robust and inclusive of all operational costs. A full breakdown of the NPV calculation is shown in Appendix 2.

7.2.MANAGEMENT CASE – A ROBUST PLAN FOR DELIVERY AND OVERSIGHT

Overview

The Cambridge Civic Quarter is a complex, multi-asset programme delivered across a heritage-rich city centre. The management case sets out the governance, delivery, and risk mitigation strategy that underpins the successful implementation of the £92.275m investment. The approach is rooted in sound programme management principles and reflects lessons from comparable civic regeneration schemes.

Programme Governance

A robust governance structure has been established and will be maintained through delivery, including:

- Project Sponsor: Assistant Director, Development
- Programme Board: Senior officers from Property, Planning, Cultural Services, Markets, and Finance
- Design Team: Cartwright Pickard-led consortium, retained from RIBA Stage 2 through Stage 3
- Cost and Procurement Advisors: Calford Seaden (QS, procurement strategy, risk)
- Engagement Partner: ECF Communications (public/stakeholder engagement)
- Commercial Advisors: Carter Jonas and Blue Horizon Ventures (office, culture, F&B)

Two formal liaison groups have been established:

- Civic Quarter Liaison Group (Council + key stakeholders)
- Market Traders Liaison Group (traders, market team, and local businesses)

These structures will remain in place through design finalisation, planning, and construction phases.

Programme Timeline

Milestone	Date
<i>Cabinet approval for Stage 4</i>	<i>September 2025</i>
<i>Planning and Listed Building submission</i>	<i>October 2025</i>

Milestone	Date
<i>Planning and Listed Building Consent</i>	<i>March 2026</i>
<i>Contract sum approval</i>	<i>September 2026</i>
<i>Decant of Guildhall and Corn Exchange complete</i>	<i>November 2026</i>
<i>Decant of Market complete</i>	<i>January 2027</i>
<i>Start on Site</i>	<i>January 2027</i>
<i>Completion (assuming concurrent construction across all three sites)</i>	<i>November 2027 - January 2028 (Market)</i> <i>December 2028 (Guildhall and Corn Exchange)</i>

Delivery Approach

- Two-Stage Design & Build Procurement: A preferred contractor will be engaged early via a Pre-Contract Services Agreement (PCSA), enabling cost assurance and buildability input during design.
- Phased Delivery: Priority works (e.g. Corn Exchange roof, Market Square resurfacing) will be delivered first, while full fit-out and enhancements proceed subject to business case approvals and funding availability.
- Design Guardianship: The Council retains control over design quality via the retained Stage 3 design team.

Decant and Business Continuity

- Guildhall: Council staff retained at Mandela House during works; public-facing functions relocated.
- Corn Exchange: Period of closure factored into financial planning; interim use of alternative venues to be explored.
- Market Square: Trader-led decant plan developed; Option 2 (partial in-situ trading + nearby streets) preferred.

A support package for traders will include business continuity advice, enhanced signage, marketing, and financial compensation for relocation costs.

Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement is central to delivery success. Highlights include:

- 885+ responses in the first public consultation (2024)
- Engagement with Historic England, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Camcycle, and BID Cambridge
- Second consultation in Summer 2025 ahead of submission

- Trader and cultural tenant engagement (e.g. Museum of Cambridge) embedded in design evolution

Risk Management

The programme is underpinned by a comprehensive risk register, managed by the project team and regularly reviewed by Calford Seaden. Key risks include:

- Planning sensitivity due to listed buildings
- Inflationary pressure on materials and labour
- Market volatility affecting commercial uptake
- Public perception amid budget pressures

Mitigations include:

- Early contractor engagement
- Contingency budgeting
- Conservative commercial assumptions
- Communications strategy and dedicated liaison groups

8.CONCLUSION

The Cambridge Civic Quarter Business Case provides a clear and credible route to revitalising the city's core civic and cultural assets. Drawing on robust commercial modelling, stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector expertise, the proposals outlined in this report respond directly to the city's climate obligations, operational needs, and community aspirations.

The redevelopment of the Guildhall and Corn Exchange is not only affordable but commercially viable. As shown in Appendix 1, both venues are projected to generate significant income uplift over the medium term under conservative assumptions, with the Corn Exchange achieving operational surplus by Year 3 and the Guildhall office space generating net income above £1.6m per annum by Year 5.

This proposition is further underpinned by market insights and evidence-based commercial assumptions, including those provided by Carter Jonas and external benchmarking of UK-wide civic building conversions. Appendix 2 illustrates that Cambridge is not alone in adapting civic assets for flexible and cultural use. Comparable projects in Bromley, Holborn, Mansfield, and Lambeth demonstrate successful outcomes from blending heritage stewardship with workspace innovation.

Deliverability and programme governance are equally strong. The management case sets out an achievable delivery pathway, incorporating phased investment, stakeholder partnership, and a two-stage procurement approach designed to manage risk and cost.

With a proposed funding envelope of £92.275 million and a delivery programme beginning in 2027, the Civic Quarter can proceed as a landmark investment in Cambridge's shared future—aligning heritage with sustainability, community with commerce, and civic renewal with inclusive growth.

Should you have any questions regarding the above or require any supplementary evidence/information, please do not hesitate to make contact.



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APPENDIX 1

UK Council-Led Flexible Office Conversions

Examples of surplus council buildings converted into flexible commercial office space. These examples will be explored further during the development of the Business Case, with a view to determining their CSFs and the outputs and outcomes they achieved:

Building Name	Location	Original Use	Current Use	Key Features
Bromley Old Town Hall	Bromley, Greater London	Town Hall	Flexible workspace, hotel, event space	Grade II listed; restored interiors; managed by Clockwise; boutique hotel and event facilities.
Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Hall	Tunbridge Wells, Kent	Town Hall	Proposed co-working space	Council plan to convert surplus space into co-working hubs for start-ups and small businesses.
Holborn Town Hall	Holborn, London	Town Hall	Serviced offices	25,000+ sq ft of flexible office space; blends historical architecture with modern amenities.
Mansfield Old Town Hall	Mansfield, Nottinghamshire	Town Hall	Offices and retail space	Refurbished to support business growth and town centre regeneration.

Building Name	Location	Original Use	Current Use	Key Features
Epping Civic Offices	Epping, Essex	Civic Offices	Offices and community hub	Open-plan workspace and leased space for private firms; maximises revenue.
Bridlington Town Hall	Bridlington, East Yorkshire	Town Hall	Offices and community space	Modern meeting spaces and job-seeker support hub, maintaining civic use.
The Old Police Station	Heywood, Greater Manchester	Police Station	Business centre	Converted Edwardian station; retained period features; includes Wi-Fi, meeting rooms.
Lambeth Town Hall (Tripod)	Brixton, London	Town Hall	Flexible workspace for creatives	Part of £110m regeneration; designed for start-ups and creative enterprises.
Royal Standard Place (Standard Court)	Nottingham, Nottinghamshire	Former Hospital	Serviced offices and coworking	50,000 sq ft; includes private offices, coworking areas, wellness facilities.

APPENDIX 2 – CASHFLOWS YEARS 1-5 & NPV MODEL

REDACTED

APPENDIX 3 – MONGOOSE SPONSORSHIP AND NAMING RIGHTS STRATEGY & GAIN SHARE PROPOSAL

REDACTED

Version control	Author	Date	Changes
1.1	David Ousby	29/05/25	Revised 1 st Draft
3.1	D Ousby & C Middleton	10/08/2025	Revisions following client feedback
3.2	David Ousby, Callum Middleton & William Rooke	15/08/2025	Revisions following client feedback
3.3	David Ousby, Callum Middleton & William Rooke	29/08/2025	Revisions following client feedback
3.4	William Rooke	16/09/2025	Revisions following client feedback