



COUNTRYSIDE

Places People Love

Countryside Properties Response to Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan Policies FUL/01 'Protecting the Distinctiveness and Landscape Setting of Fulbourn' and FUL/02. 'Development outside the Development Framework'

Policy FUL/01 of the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan (SDNP) identifies key protected views from the village and important countryside frontages. Figure 9 (Visual relationship of the village with the countryside and Cambridge) in the SDNP shows the Station Road site as containing two key view corridors out of the village (1 in north-east corner from Station Road; and 2 from the Church of St Vigor's IV from the south). Figure 9 also identifies part of the southern boundary, fronting Langthorn Stile and Barleyfields as an 'Important Countryside Frontage' C7 (Northwards from Church Lane through Lanthorn Stile).

The field subject to the designation, known as the 'Station Road site' is flat arable field that is surrounded on three sides by housing development and bound to the north by a railway line with a thick screening of evergreen trees.

Policy FUL/01 is intended to define Important Countryside Frontages:

"In accordance with Local Plan Policy NH/13 where land with a strong countryside character provides a significant connection between the village and surrounding rural area or an important rural break between parts of the development framework. Planning permission for development will be refused if it would compromise these purposes."

Policy NH/13 of the adopted Local plan states that

"1. Important Countryside Frontages are defined where land with a strong countryside character either:

- a. Penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area; or
- b. Provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a development framework"

The site is an arable field, with perimeter trees mainly on the northern boundary with the railway line and garden boundaries backing on to the site on three sides. The site does not '*Penetrate or sweep into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area*' as it is surrounded by built form and either residential frontage or gardens and is enclosed by private boundary fences and hedgerow.

It is also difficult to suggest that the southern edge of the field '*Provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a development framework*', as the majority of the allocated frontage is taken up by hedgerows or fences, and is allocated within private land made up of Langthorn Stile and the rear gardens of homes within The Chantry.



COUNTRYSIDE

Places People Love

In this context, therefore, it would be difficult to argue the site is an important countryside frontage or has a strong countryside character to comply with policy NH/13. Such designation should be saved for sites which make a meaningful contribution to the special character and setting of the village.

In addition the Important Countryside Frontage designation has not been informed by any relevant landscape assessment. The SDNP refers to a key evidence paper '002 - Village Setting : Important Countryside Frontages' however this only contains a three paragraph justification for the allocation of the Important Countryside Frontage and does not offer any real assessment of the landscape character, merely stating that the field separates the gardens of Station Road and Aphorne Street. The document also states that the allocation would provide open views to the Countryside. It seems contradictory to suggest that land surround on three sides by residential development with an elevated railway line and heavy tree screening on the remaining edge can provide an open outlook into and from the village.

The Vision Document submitted by Countryside as part of the Call for Sites provides a landscape appraisal of the site. Accounting for the high degree of visual enclosure within the site, the impact of the development will be largely confined to effect on views from surrounding residential properties. The Vision document states that the Landscape Institute has published a draft methodology for assessing the impact of development on residential amenity (February 2018) and concludes that careful consideration should be given as to "whether or not the development is 'dominant', 'overwhelming'; and/or 'inescapably present' and as such causes the property to become 'widely regarded ', an 'undesirable place to live'". As such there is no robust justification for the designation of the site as a 'sensitive field' given its context being contained by urban form.

In terms of the key views out of the village, the outward view from the Church to the south is a narrow corridor view that can only be glimpsed. Nevertheless, as shown on the illustrative masterplan in the VD, should development come forward on the site there would be an opportunity to frame this corridor view with landscaping to draw the eye towards the site. The key view from the north-east corner of the site from Station Road is provided due to a break between the houses to the south and railway to the north. This view of the field is partially screened by existing vegetation but again, it provides a fleeting view for passer-by. The view is only appreciated by those travelling south along Station Road traveling from the Wilbrahams. The view is not visible from the main routes into and out of the village unlike the other sensitive field designations.

The illustrative masterplan has been sensitively designed to minimise localised impacts and fully integrate the urban form with the surroundings. There is also an opportunity to reserve land adjacent to the northern boundary of the site along the railway line, future proofing delivery of a railway station for Fulbourn. This could also provide a location for a pedestrian bridge over the railway line.

Therefore, the Important Countryside Frontage designation of the Land at Station Road site should be removed, as it is not considered to be a sensitive field for the purposes of benefiting the local community or character of the village. It would be better served by being allocated for housing in the SDNP which would give the local community the ability to play a significant role in shaping its appearance.

The SDNP has the ability to allocate the entirety of the Station Road site for residential development and shape it in a way that would bring significant community benefit to the local residents.