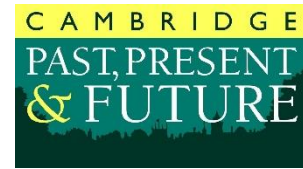


Richard Oakley  
Director



**Bedfordshire  
Cambridgeshire  
Northamptonshire**

10/11/2020

Dear Richard

### **Green Infrastructure & East Cambridge Development Plans**

We are grateful to Marshalls for engaging with us at an early stage of planning for the redevelopment of Cambridge Airport in relation to green infrastructure.

This is a major scheme that will transform the eastern edge of Cambridge and will require the protection, enhancement and creation of a significant amount of green infrastructure. Marshalls' relationship with Cambridge has benefitted the company and the city for over 100 years. Through the redevelopment of the airport Marshalls have an opportunity to leave a wonderful legacy for future generations by providing high quality, wildlife rich, accessible spaces close to where people live.

We hope that by engaging with you, and the local planning authority, we can encourage proposals to come forward that will seize this opportunity and avoid harm to biodiversity and heritage.

From the discussions that we have had, we have been able to explain our own visions for Wicken Fen/Cambridge Nature Network and how the Cambridge Airport development could help to achieve these. There are some key points on which all three NGOs agree and which we would like to communicate to you clearly at this stage:

#### **1. Impacts on Little Wilbraham SSSI**

This is a very sensitive site that is likely to be harmed by visitor pressure arising from proximity to the development. Visitor management solutions will need to be found in order to avoid or mitigate this harm. Our view is that this will require a mixture of diverting people to other green spaces, discouraging access to sensitive areas, active visitor management and expanding or buffering the SSSI.

#### **2. Need for a new "country park"**

Nearby countryside recreation facilities are already full at peak times and visitor pressure is increasing the costs of maintaining the natural and built heritage of these site. This includes Anglesey Abbey, Wicken Fen, Milton Country Park and Wandlebury Country Park. A major development of the scale proposed for eastern Cambridge will result in damage to these sites from visitor pressure. A new wildlife-rich "country park" will be required to meet the recreational needs of new residents and avoid harm to existing sites - and it would also deliver significant biodiversity net gain and health outcomes. We believe that the best location for this would be on the northern side of the A14 in order to divert people from the sensitive SSSI and where it can also act as a southern gateway to the Wicken Fen vision area. If necessary, it could also grow to serve other communities if, in future, the population of Cambridge continues to rise.

### **3. Green Corridor Opportunity**

We strongly support the concept of a significant green corridor linking from Coldham's Common to the Cambridge Fens – this would provide ecological connectivity to the north of the A14 and to the east towards the Wilbrahams. It would connect to the Cambridge Nature Network/ Wicken Fen Vision and the National Trust would be delighted if this could be one of the 20 green corridors that they have committed to create across the UK. The purpose of these green corridors is to provide high quality, wildlife rich, accessible spaces close to where people live.

Such a corridor would enable the movement of wildlife into and out of the city and provide easy access on foot or cycle. It would also be consistent with the historic built form of Cambridge, with fingers of countryside extending into the city.

This corridor would need to serve a variety of different user, ecological and landscape needs and we would recommend a zoning approach in order to maximise the benefits and minimise some of the conflicts.

### **4. Priority for Biodiversity Net Gain**

We feel that the priority for Biodiversity Net Gain should be to expand/buffer Little Wilbraham Fen SSSI. As well as achieving the best gain, this also has the potential to mitigate some of the impacts of the development.

### **5. Integrating green infrastructure and the built environment**

We strongly support the principle of integrating nature and buildings within the development, to achieve a development with 'nature at its heart' running through the whole tone and design of the development. Rather than a cliff edge of built infrastructure and then space for recreation and then space for nature. This would also have significant mental wellbeing benefits for the residents as well as potential commercial benefit for the development.

### **6. More resources will be needed**

There is an opportunity to provide a significant amount of new green infrastructure that can boost nature, meet the recreational needs of future generations and create a legacy for the city. We doubt that this can be achieved solely through developer contributions and therefore additional funding will be needed to fully realise the ambition. We would encourage you to explore opportunities for the development to lever in additional funding from the public, private or charitable sectors in order to achieve the best possible outcome.

We have, and wish to continue, engaging with you on a 'without prejudice' basis and, where appropriate, we are willing to provide our knowledge and expertise of green space management to help ensure that the best proposals come forward.

We look forward to seeing the latest proposals in due course.

Yours sincerely

James Littlewood, CEO, Cambridge Past, Present & Future  
Paul Forecast, Regional Director, National Trust  
Martin Baker, Conservation Manager, Wildlife Trust BCN