Land north and south of A428, Croxton (HELAA site 40288)

There are settlements in the rural area that are underperforming relative to the village context and locational advantages.

Croxton is one of those settlements where the existing village is severed, split by the existing A428 which currently separates the employment area from homes and other commercial premises. It is a small village that sits within a key transport corridor. Its character will permanently change when the A428 is realigned, diverting the through traffic onto the new dual carriageway. There is a clear and unique opportunity to utilise the area that will be bound between the old and new A428 to create an expanded and better integrated settlement which could take on the form of a new garden village building on the established core.

The HELAA concluded that development in this location (site 40288) would have significant landscape and visual impacts on the historic landscape to the south and general impacts on views from the north and east. It is not clear whether the HELAA has considered the site in the context of the A428 Improvement Scheme that will fundamentally alter the rural landscape in this location and specifically, permanently change the views form the north and east. There is a clear opportunity to take advantage of this committed infrastructure change in a positive way. The Plan should recognise the possibilities for increasing the C2C corridor to St Neots and maximising the modal shift options that the section of the de-trunked A428 can offer post 2025/26 between Croxton and Cambourne.

The historic parkland landscape to the south would be largely unchanged in visual terms, but the consequential improvements through the change to the existing A428 as a local road would serve to better connect the village and potentially allow its historic characteristics to be better managed. Currently the two parts of the village are severed and inward looking away from the existing A428.

The functionality of the village could be improved through additional development and its sustainability credentials could be significantly enhanced through the inclusion of specific services and local amenities including school provision and expanding the existing employment opportunities currently on offer in the two existing commercial locations.

It is in the unique position of being able to support and complement the wider multi-modal strategies that are being considered for this corridor, capitalising on the opportunities to change the role of the current A428 carriageway once the new dual carriageway has been delivered.

The landscape impacts are not insurmountable; nor is the perceived negative impact on the landscape particularly different to the conclusions drawn in the HELAA for the majority of the 19 site options put forward in the First Proposals.

The HELAA should properly reflect planned infrastructure changes within its site assessments including at Site 40288.