STATION FIELDS

Green Infrastructure Strategy | December 2021

AXIS
LAND PARTNERSHIPS

Landscape led Placemaking at Station Fields

This report is a response from Axis Land Partnerships ('Axis') and the landowners to the call for additional evidence to support our submission to the Greater Cambridge First Proposals Plan (Regulation 18). Axis is a land promotion and development company with a proven track record of working collaboratively to deliver sustainable development.

Axis are promoting land north-west of Royston Road for allocation as a new village of c. 1500 homes, alongside a travel hub and bypass, employment land, community facilities and open space. The site, known as Station Fields, Foxton has an important role to play in securing a robust and deliverable supply of homes over the plan period

The vision submitted by Axis in 2020 as a response to both the call for sites, and Issues and Options Consultation, set out how this strategically important site can uniquely deliver against the Council's Big Themes: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Green Space, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion and Great Places.

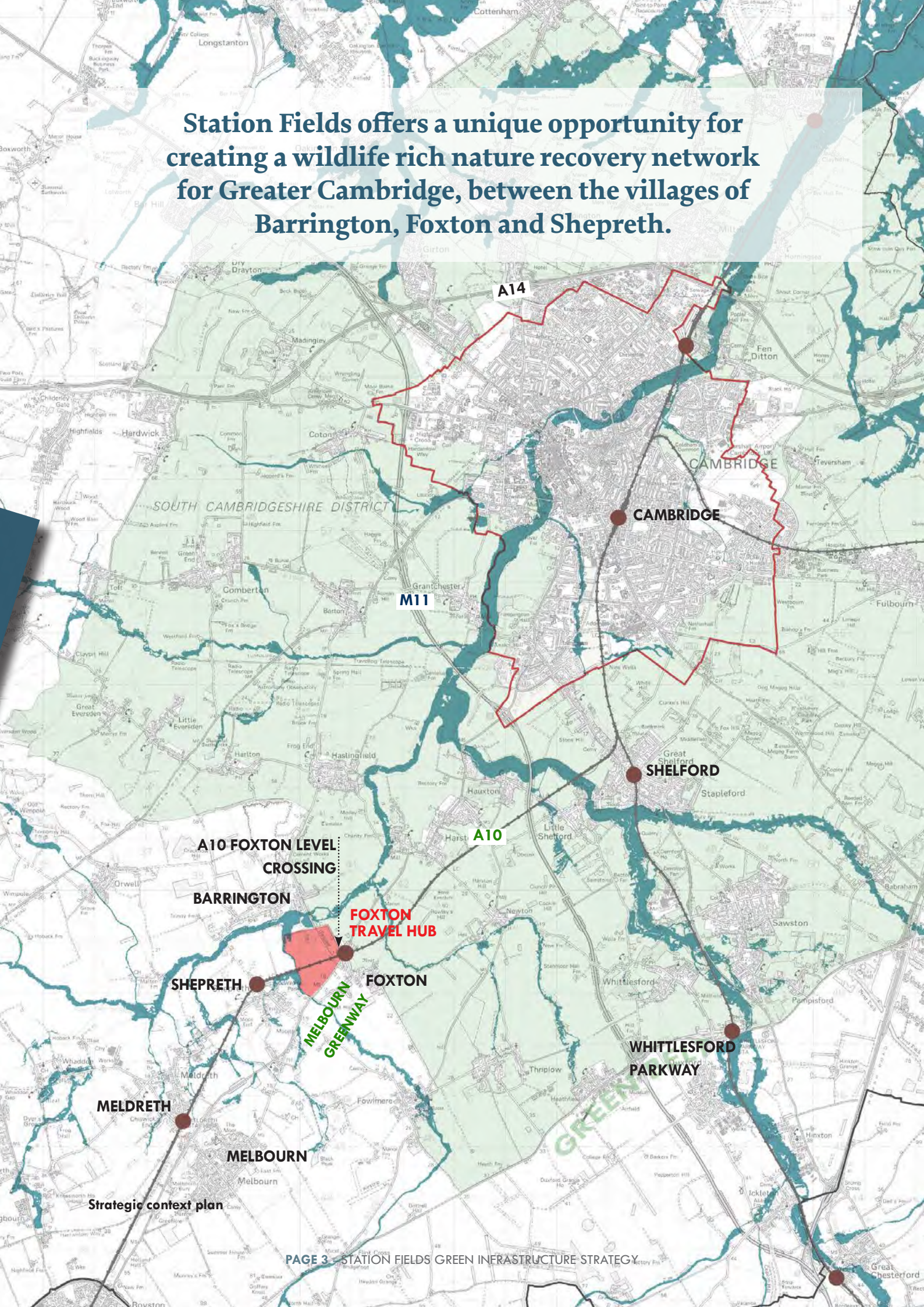
Our response to the GCP travel hub consultation established how the site could make a significant contribution to the regions transport infrastructure through the provision of a holistically planned travel hub that will act as a catalyst for low carbon living.

This document now sets out how the vision can deliver significant benefits to Cambridgeshire through its landscape setting. Our vision has been inspired by a landscape-led approach to design that seeks to maximise opportunities for both nature and people to thrive as well as identifying benefits the development would bring for the wider community of Foxton, Shepreth and Barrington.

To support promotion of the site, and in addition to this document, further details are being submitted to the Councils latest Housing Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) call for sites. Representations are also being made to the First Proposal Plan highlighting how Station Fields performs well against sustainability appraisal scoring (both at the spatial strategy and site level), and how the site supports the Councils housing trajectory.

CONTENT:

Station Fields offers a unique opportunity for creating a wildlife rich nature recovery network for Greater Cambridge, between the villages of Barrington, Foxton and Shepreth.



Strategic context plan

Planning Context

Station Fields is a sustainable location for growth outside of the Cambridge Green belt. Its strategic position has been recognised by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, making it a preferred location for infrastructure investment that builds on fast rail connections to Cambridge and London.

The site, submitted as part of the 2020 Call for Sites in Greater Cambridge delivers:

Homes and jobs for Greater Cambridge

The emerging proposals provide for up to 1,500 homes in a village setting, sympathetic to the surrounding villages and inspired by their unique landscape characteristics. They can be delivered at pace, with immediate access by road and rail and no major constraints to development.

Over 2ha of employment space is proposed within the mixed-use heart of the new village around the station and mobility hub. Further engagement can continue to define how the emerging proposals can complement and deliver strategic economic growth.

Infrastructure

Station Fields is positioned at an interchange between rail, road and regional walking/ cycling routes, including the Melbourn Greenway. A new cycle greenway to Barrington and a proposed travel hub could bring local investment.

The aspirations for the cluster of villages should capitalise on this strategic location and act as a catalyst for low carbon living. Development at Station Fields provides an opportunity to draw together these disparate projects into a coherent vision of a community with a sense of place.

Development would also enable further investment in a by-pass, realigning the A10 to deliver multiple local and regional benefits: reducing congestion, improving air quality, increasing pedestrian and cycle connectivity and enhancing safety around the station.

The critical mass of 1,500 new homes would support existing facilities within the 3 neighbouring villages alongside new community facilities.

Call for Green Sites

The Call for Green Sites in 2020, asked for suggestions of land to 'grow and enhance the green space network'.

The process was intended to provide support for the exploration of Green Infrastructure (GI) opportunities within Greater Cambridge and potential sites for green space and wildlife habitats. It is also intended to facilitate strategic planning for the green space network, connecting existing green spaces including opportunities crossing the boundary of Greater Cambridge.

The responses received include sites not within the ownership of those putting them forward and therefore there is no certainty over the deliverability of the submissions and their ability to deliver the aspirations of the GI Plan

The submitted sites have subsequently been assessed as part of the GI evidence base study and whilst there does appear to be some minor overlap between the submission sites the two strategies are currently not aligned.

By linking GI delivery with growth sites, there are significant levers to deliver on the Strategic Initiatives, and deliver on the ambitious nature recovery targets. The evidence base also recognises the need for developer contributions, both on and off site, to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain against the 20% recommended target.

At Station Fields, the landowner is able to guarantee early deliverability of the GI. The GI Plan sets out an aspiration for 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which is feasible within the red line boundary at Station Fields.

Nature Recovery through new Green Infrastructure

The Site at Station Fields is capable of delivering a range of green infrastructure improvements, where the landowner is able to guarantee early delivery of the GI. Station Fields has the potential to contribute towards a number of the Strategic Initiatives identified by the Greater Cambridge opportunities mapping as part of the Local Plan evidence base.

This extends to open space provision including publicly accessible open space, biodiversity net gain (20%) and sustainable drainage.

The countryside park and wild meadows to the west of the site would create pollinator corridors and increase flood resilience along the Cam.

The protection and expansion of woodland belts and hedgerows could expand tree canopy cover across the site and there are significant opportunities for urban greening, community gardening and even co-farming, connecting communities across an enriched landscape.

This document explains how Station Fields can contribute towards the Strategic Initiatives identified by the Green Infrastructure policy direction.

Strategic Context: The Cam Valley

The development of Cambridgeshire and the Cam River valley has been shaped by the geology and landscape of the region. The site sits within a belt of East Anglian chalk that gives the River Cam it's special quality – the river feeding the mills in places such as Barrington and bringing wealth and prosperity to Cambridge and its surrounding villages.

Both the River Cam and the nearby River Shep, are chalk streams, providing important riverine habitats due to their unique physical characteristics, which allow the slow passage of water through calcareous rock from ground water aquifers. The River Cam is part of the Greater Cambridge chalk stream project and has been assessed as being important for water vole and otter presence, alongside brown trout, and a range of course fish.

Cambridgeshire is a farmed landscape, drained by a network of streams and ditches that feed the River Cam and run through the city and out to the fens. This landscape is prone to seasonal flooding and green infrastructure that supports new development can play a significant role, storing and dispersing water upstream to help manage flood risk.

Where remnants of the natural landscape remain, they form critical but isolated habitats for wildlife within a wider patchwork of intensively farmed land. The transformation of Station Fields creates an opportunity to connect and enhance these important natural systems and deliver significant benefit to Cambridgeshire through the enhancement of important chalk stream habitats, flood alleviation and recreation through its landscape.

The proposals for Station Fields have been shaped by an appreciation of the place itself and the landscape setting. Our landscape vision is an exploration of opportunities that deliver sensitive, good growth that results in benefits to wider Cambridgeshire and the neighbouring communities.

History

The development site lies within the gap of flat, open agricultural fields between the villages of Shepreth, Barrington and Foxton.

Each village developed its own character, but each was intrinsically linked to the landscape, connected by water, small-scale agriculture and food production. They each provide inspiration for the development of Station Fields:

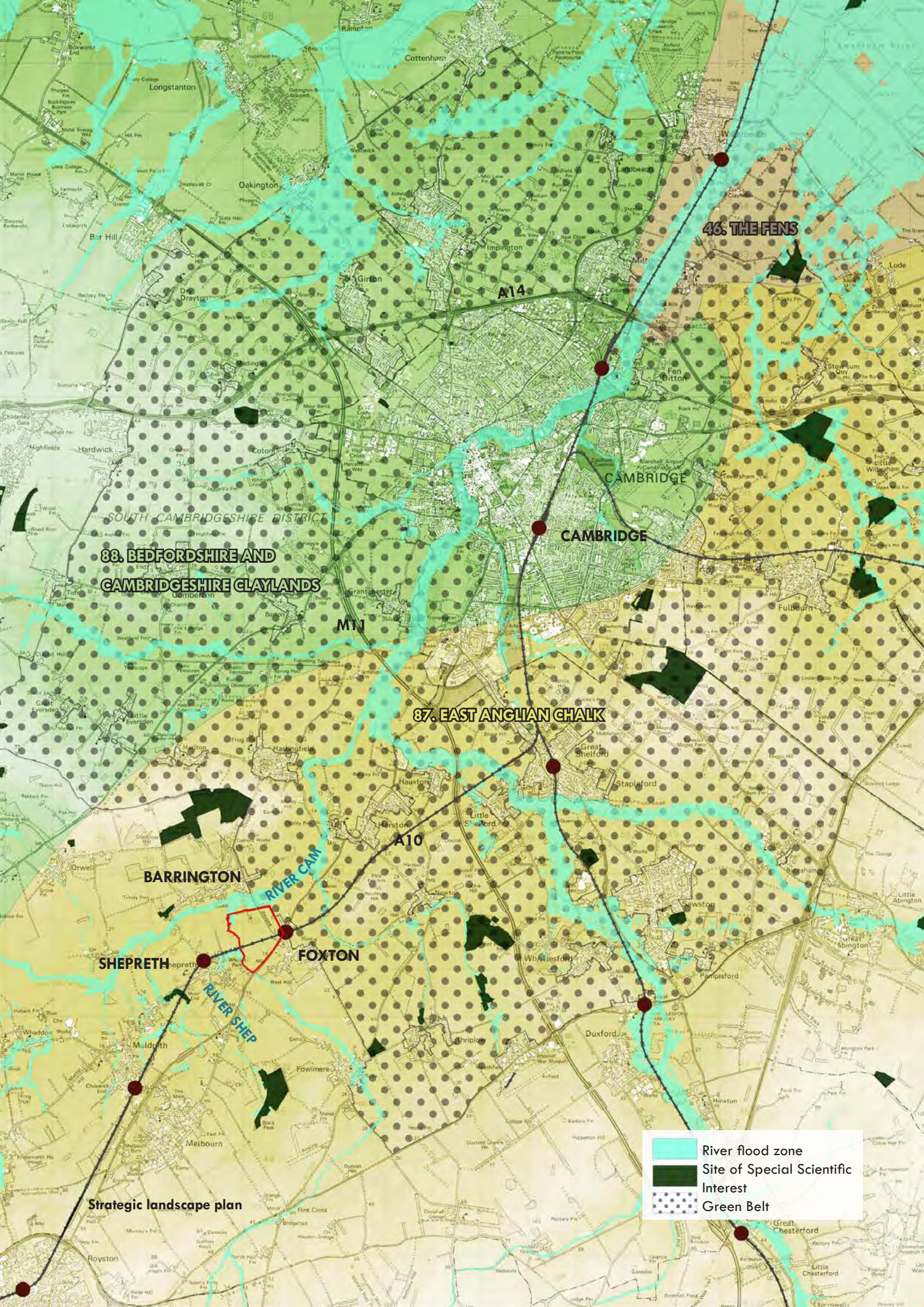
- The long village green of Barrington, dotted with ponds and the focus for village life
- The streams that meander through Shepreth, harnessed for clean water and power by the community
- And the meadows that come into the heart of Foxton, bringing nature onto the doorstep

These villages grew organically within an agricultural landscape, intrinsically linked to the orchards and meadows that were critical to bio-diversity but have been largely replaced by industrialised farming.

The village cluster

In the current South Cambridgeshire Local Plan the settlement hierarchy classifications of Foxton, Barrington and Shepreth means there is little scope for development and as such provision of any meaningful services to futureproof the villages for generations to come.

With its location in the centre of these 3 villages, Station Fields is perfectly located and connected to provide rural jobs, natural open space, housing and services that will compliment the existing communities of Foxton, Barrington and Shepreth, whilst protecting their individual identities and supporting them as attractive places to live for years to come.



Strategic landscape plan

Local Context: Opportunities & Considerations

Connectivity and Facilities

The fields between the existing villages are intensively farmed and public access is limited. The footpath south from Barrington splits to the east and west connecting the River Cam to Shepreth and Foxton.

Each village has a cricket pitch at its heart and Foxton has, over time added tennis courts, a playground and a skate park. Barrington has two playgrounds set within the substantial village green that is the setting for village life – the pub, the village shop and church all front onto this spectacular public space. Shepreth has limited facilities beyond an open field and playground.

The proposed network of open spaces that create the framework for development at Station Fields can become a new focus for community life, forging safe, car free new greenway links between the new and existing developments, providing access to wilder open space.

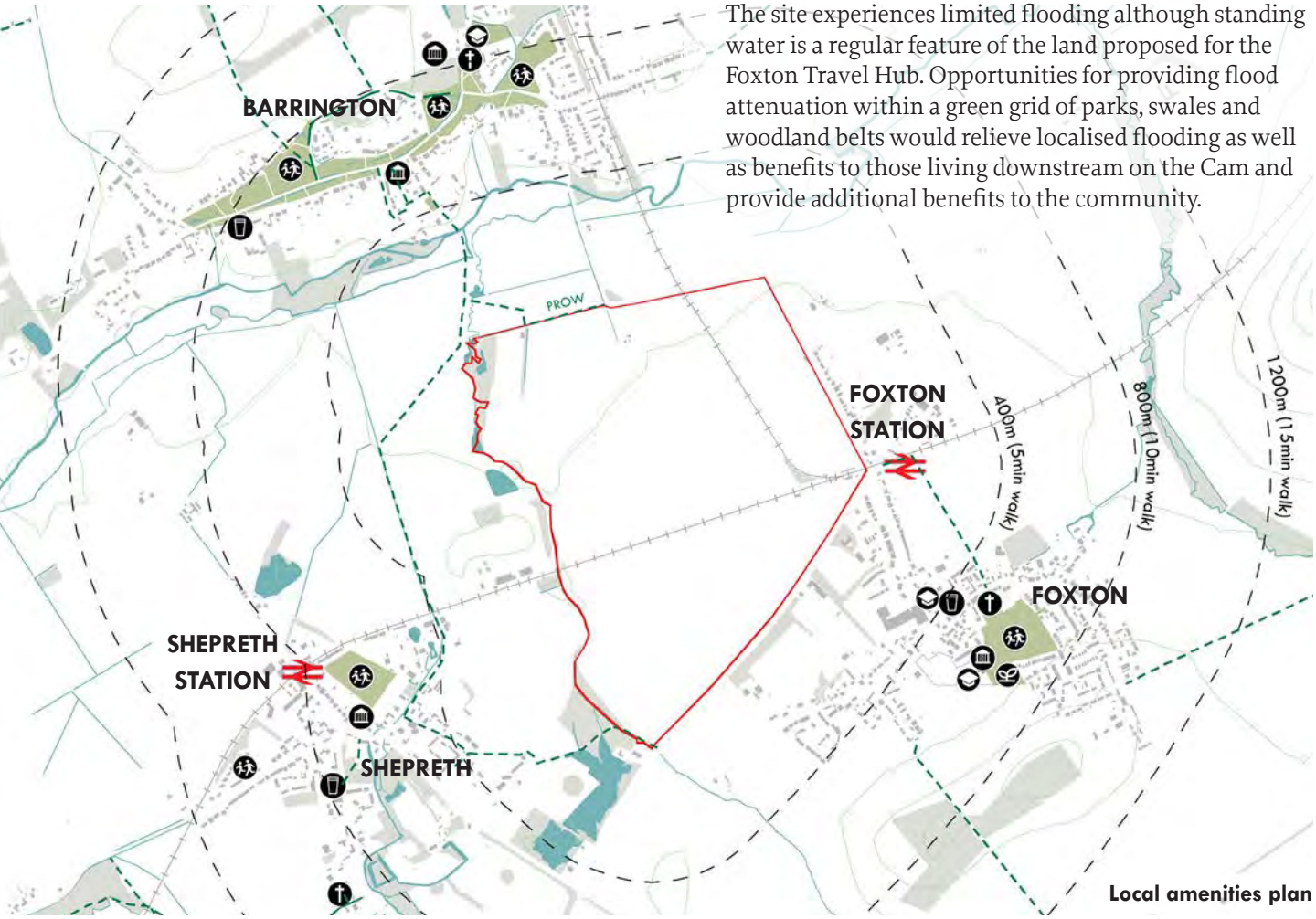
Hydrology

The section of the River Cam to the north of the site splits in two, with a faster, deeper river corridor being located close to Barrington, and a smaller, shallower tributary being located further south, closer to the site. The wider, faster river has many veteran pollarded willows along its bank, with pedestrian bridges crossing the river offering views down its length.

The entire length of the Cam here is largely degraded due to past dredging and a lack of course sediment supply. The river has been realigned for milling, creating a perched channel and levees, disconnecting the river from its floodplain in places.

The River Shep lies to the west and feeds the Cam. It is joined by a series of drainage ditches and meandering streams that mark the western boundary of the site and supply water to a series of ponds and natural lakes.

The site experiences limited flooding although standing water is a regular feature of the land proposed for the Foxton Travel Hub. Opportunities for providing flood attenuation within a green grid of parks, swales and woodland belts would relieve localised flooding as well as benefits to those living downstream on the Cam and provide additional benefits to the community.



Local amenities plan

Woodland

The site is predominantly open with a concentration of woodland shelter belts to the west. TPO trees are planted along the boundaries, along the Royston Road to the south near Foxton, Station Road to the east and the riverine landscape of the west close to Shepreth Lakes.

The woodland shelter belts that surround the cluster of ponds and natural lakes to the west extend the riverine woodland planting along the Cam to the north. Trees can play a powerful role in this flat landscape, these small pockets of woodland visually connect across long views to the north. Opportunities exist to extend these woodland blocks along the boundaries, and through additional planting providing enhanced green infrastructure.

Ecology

The underlying solid geology of the site is dominated by Upper Cretaceous Chalk, a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west to north-east across southern England. The overlying soils were deposited by river or ice, are nutrient poor, and described as freely draining lime-rich and loamy. The rolling downland of the region, mostly under cereal production, contains remnant chalk grasslands.

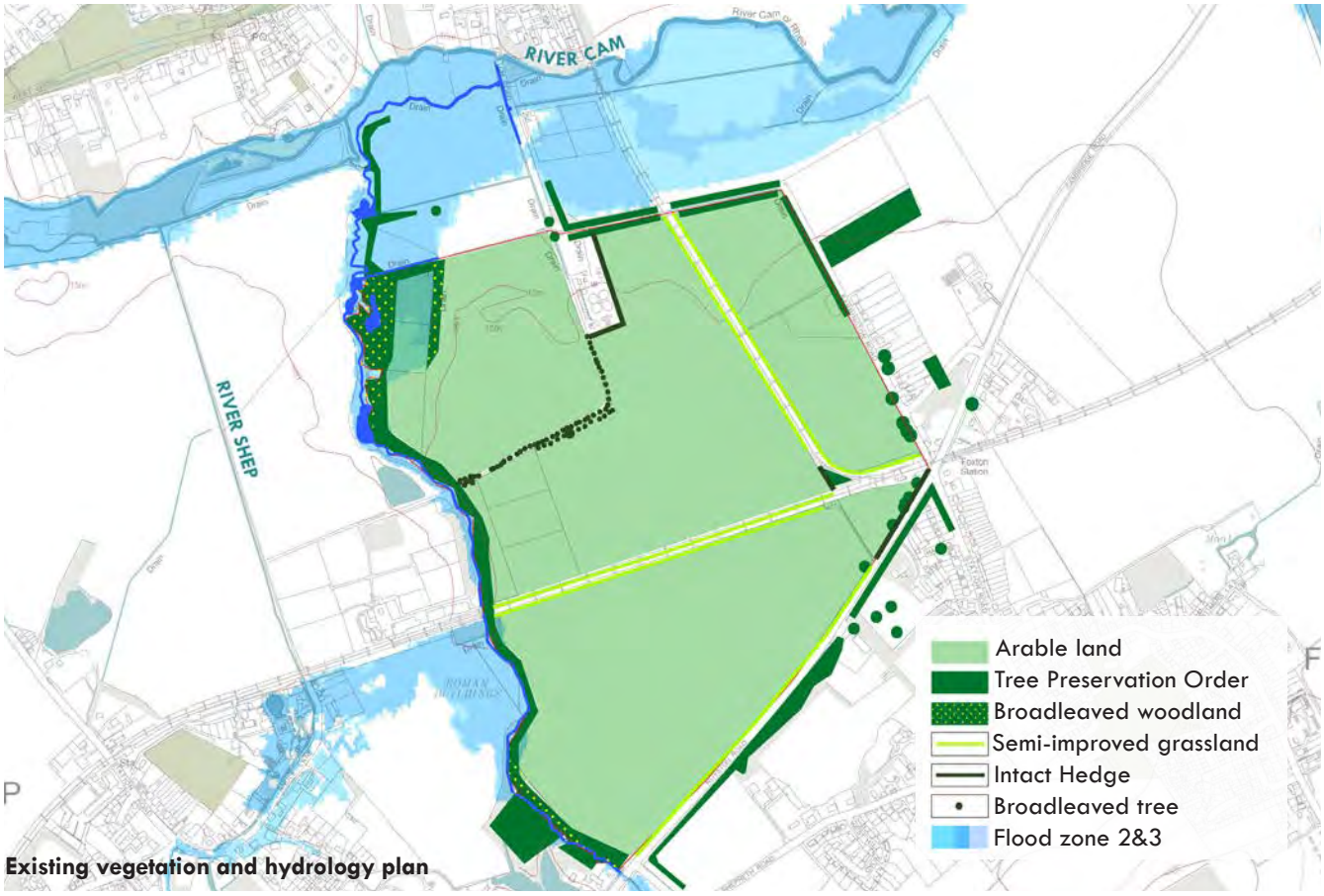
A 2 km desk study undertaken as part of the ecological appraisal concludes that the area contains a total of three designated SSSI's including one biological SSSI and two Geological Conservation Review sites. In addition there are three County Wildlife Sites (CWS) and two protected road verges (PRV) within 2 km of the survey Site. The SSSI's are Barrington Chalk Pit, Barrington Pit and L-moor, Shepreth. The CWS's are Hoffer Brook Pollard Willows, River Rhee and Shepreth RSV.

The preliminary ecological appraisal concludes that there are no designated sites of wildlife value within the sites boundary and that constraints are limited to the existing small areas of deciduous woodland, ponds, scrub and hedgerows.

The enhancement, management and creation of flower rich native grassland, native hedgerows and wet woodland responds to the aspirations of the county Biodiversity Action Plan and to the aspiration to double the area of nature rich land in the county.

The Site offers prime opportunities for "Increasing Biodiversity & Green Spaces" on land that is currently predominately intensive arable farmland with very few ecological constraints.

A more detailed discussion on Biodiversity Net Gain and Developing with Nature is set out later in this report.



Existing vegetation and hydrology plan

Place-making influences

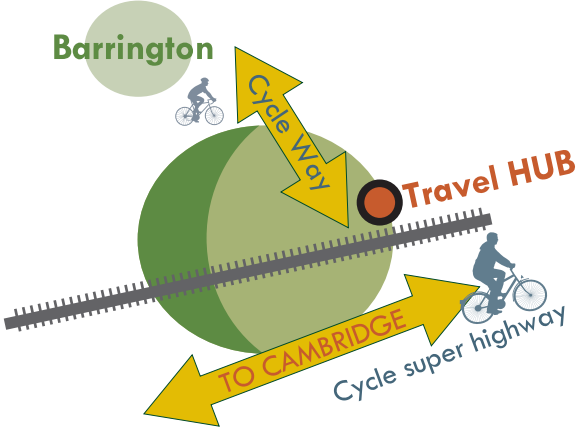
Inspired by the landscape setting, these key influences would define the landscape strategy and help to meet our vision

Protect the setting of the three villages and wrap the new community in the landscape

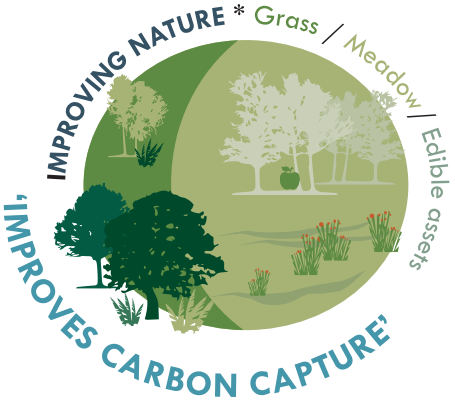
Protect and enhance the woodland shelter belts

Extend the Cam River nature corridor into the site

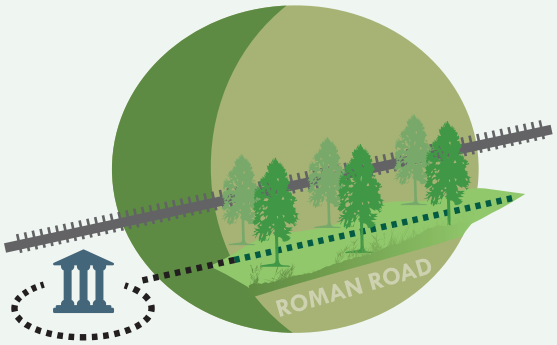
Sustainable connections through the landscape to Foxton Station and beyond



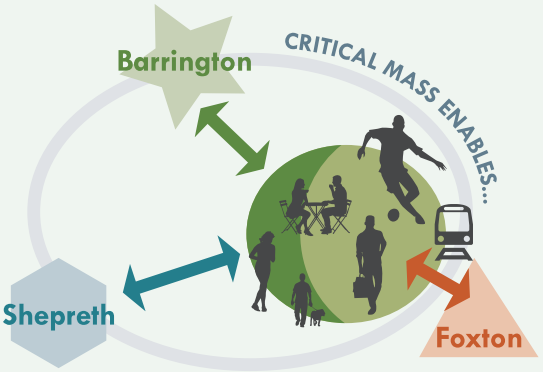
Improve nature to capture carbon



Bring the Roman Villa and road to life



Enhance the cluster of villages - adding to their vitality with complimentary services and facilities



Viewpoint B-View from the Roman Road linear park looking west

Concept Landscape Plan

A10

The community hub may include a new primary school subject to further consultation

Foxton Station

An integrated Travel Hub brings together commercial and community uses with cycling, the station and parking

Foxton

Key

- Residential (high/med/low density)
- Mixed-use (Education / Commercial)
- Travel Hub
- Community Hub
- Existing PROW's
- Proposed Footpaths
- Proposed Cycleway
- Existing Ponds
- Proposed Attenuation / SuDS
- Existing Woodlands
- Proposed Woodlands
- Proposed Countryside Park
- Proposed Sports Pitches
- LAP
- LEAP
- NEAP
- Neighbourhood Skate Park
- Proposed Allotments
- Proposed Wet Woodland
- Proposed Pollarded Willows

The site delivers...

Circa 1,500 Homes

Potential for a one F.E. Primary School

Mobility Hub

Allotments in each neighbourhood

A new A10 bypass

Safe pedestrian and cycle rail crossings

OUR VISION: STATION FIELDS WILL BE A PLACE THAT WILL

1 Be defined by its landscape

We shall be guided by our landscape context and the opportunity to increase biodiversity and landscape value for the wider community of South Cambridgeshire.

The extent of land under the same ownership enables us to protect and enhance the landscape setting of Barrington, Foxton and Shepreth whilst creating neighbourhoods that are defined by their landscape setting – creating social spaces at the heart of the development and wilder habitats on it's edge that wraps the site in natural spaces.

2 Connect Communities

Our green spaces would provide natural movement corridors that encourage sustainable travel across the local area. A well-designed network of safe, direct and beautiful green walking and cycling routes shall enable car-free connectivity to Foxton Station and a new travel hub.

New homes would create a critical mass of people that enables viable new services, leisure facilities and jobs in Station Fields, which would be beneficial for existing communities.

3 Connect people to nature

We would create 25.48ha of countryside park and 54.71ha of new informal open space and SuDS to increase biodiversity and ecological gain. New wet woodlands and wild spaces shall create a network of valued habitats that connect people to nature. We would promote access to nature and the wider countryside including the River Rhee County Wildlife site, by returning arable land to its past use and opening up areas of natural grassland and wildflower meadows, within the site, whilst taking advantage of the existing wildlife corridors along the watercourses.

Improve local health and well-being

4

Healthy lifestyles shall be engendered by designing a place that responds to local needs – creating walking, running and cycle loops across the site and providing sports facilities, allotments and children's play facilities that would support integration with neighbouring communities.

Station Fields would be a restorative landscape – somewhere to escape to and connect with nature, offering local people spaces where they can relax and enjoy the natural environment.

Inspire and educate residents and visitors

5

Nature shall be used to inspire existing and future residents. We work hand in hand with the community to support local decision making, facilitating leadership, and community ownership of high quality assets. We would welcome this stewardship being secured at early stages as part of the planning process.

Our open spaces shall protect and enhance unique historic assets like the Roman Villa Scheduled Ancient Monument, enabling us to share and promote the history of the landscape.

Improve local climate resilience in changing times

6

Station Fields' green corridors and countryside park would reduce flood risk along the River Cam corridor by providing swales, ponds and wet woodlands that protect homes and farmland.

The scale of the landscape setting would enable a patchwork of allotments and orchards that promotes stewardship and community involvement.

Developing with Nature

Station Fields is at present almost wholly farmed intensively providing little space and little food for wildlife.

The richest areas are at its western end with a wooded stream corridor, ponds and grassland. Elsewhere there are only thin ribbons of grass, shrubs and trees running alongside the roads and railway lines. With the proposal for half of the land to be open space the opportunity will be taken to provide great gains for biodiversity.

The aspirations of the wildlife conservation organisations for developments to achieve a 20% net gain in biodiversity can be delivered at Station Fields within the red line boundary along with a contribution to the county wide aspiration to double nature in Cambridgeshire.

The wildlife richest area to the west can be improved with restoration of the stream corridor. That stream has in the past been deepened and straightened and its channel is disconnected with its floodplain. Providing a more diverse channel with pools and shallow riffles, gravel bottoms and dappled shade from an open, wet woodland corridor will make what is good so much better.

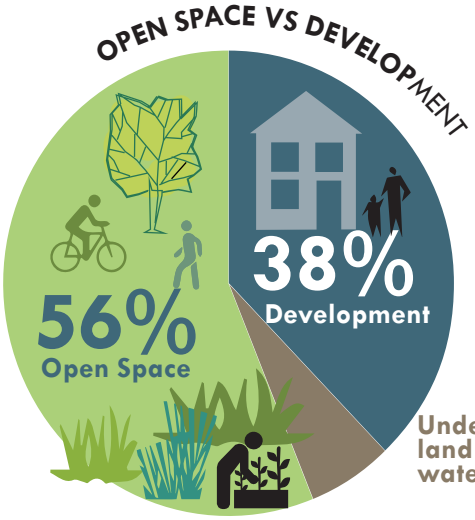
The stream flows north to join the River Cam, itself an important wildlife corridor and chalk stream, and so restoring the stream at Station Fields will contribute to improving the conditions across the water catchment including by slowing the flows downstream and trapping nutrients and silt.

The large arable fields provide little for wildlife. As part of the open space and green infrastructure for the Station Fields development they can be vibrant meadows, buzzing with bees, a blaze of colour through a succession of flowers from cowslips to wild carrot all to the background of the song of thrushes and warblers.

This haven for wildlife will also be a haven for us, with winding paths through the meadows providing places to relax and take in the restorative value of nature all around us. At night, when we have gone, the bees and butterflies flitting across the meadows will be replaced by badgers on the search for worms and bats hunting down beetles and moths. Turning ploughed land to meadows and trees will also lock up carbon in the soil and in the plants, contributing to moving toward a net zero society.

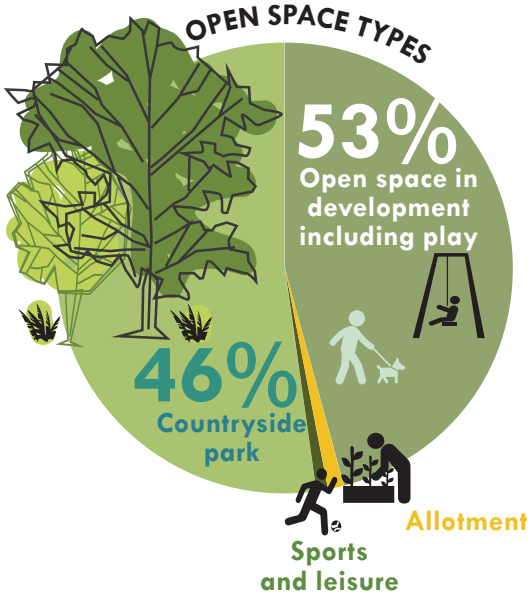
Station fields will provide a major net gain for biodiversity and for us. Homes for wildlife, locked up carbon, cleaner water, more nature.

Viewpoint A-View from countryside park looking north-east into the edge of the residential area



Undevelopable land (existing railway and water treatment plant)

6%



Responding to the Big Themes

The vision for Station Fields presents an exciting opportunity to deliver a sustainable community that delivers homes and much needed infrastructure to meet local and regional needs. This document has demonstrated that the site can also deliver high value landscape, space for people and wildlife to support the Green Infrastructure Strategy and strategic Initiatives.

The vision for Station Fields responds to the Greater Cambridge Plans Big Themes:

Climate Change

Station Fields can promote low-carbon lifestyles, and promote alternatives to private car use. The plan envisions a series of walkable neighbourhoods, that are interconnected through a series of green links that connect Station Fields with the surrounding villages.

The development of an integrated and sustainable Travel Hub is at the heart of the Axis vision for Station Fields. Whilst we have significant concerns over the current GCP proposals, we have responded to the public consultation with an ambitious plan to create an integrated travel hub at the heart of this cluster of villages.

Our alternative option demonstrates in one way how a travel hub can deliver more than just a car park, contributing to the key GCP objectives, whilst delivering benefits to the wider community.

Our proposal clearly demonstrates how local benefits can be delivered alongside the travel hub. The innovative model seeks to combine the element of transport interchange with enhanced public realm and facilities to create a vibrant and safe place for all.

This is one example of our approach to design - making efficient use of land and precious resources. Water and SuDS will define the identity and character of the place but perform a critical job for the Cam Valley and Cambridge, storing and slowing water in more extreme weather events.

Bio-diversity and Green Space

The site provides 54.71ha of open space and SuDS and a major new countryside park. The open spaces provide the structure of the development, putting nature on everyone's doorstep.

The site promotes access to nature and the wider countryside including the River Cam to the north of the site, by returning arable land to its past use and opening up areas of natural grassland and wildflower meadows, within the site, whilst taking advantage of the existing wildlife corridors along the watercourses.

With further engagement of the neighbouring villages we can restore this landscape to its natural state, with significant Biodiversity Net Gain, health and social value to residents.

Well-being & Social Inclusion

Station Fields capitalises on its proximity to Foxton Station, the planned Melbourn Greenway and Barrington cycleway by promoting walking and cycling.

There would be spaces for recreation, wild spaces for reflection and growing space to stimulate people's interest in healthy foods and local produce.

Residents would be able to use the walking and running loops that meander through the site and out into the wider restored landscape, offering opportunities for escapism. Local vernacular would be an inspiration for designing a network of connected and active public spaces, to foster a sense of community and reduce crime, including the 'Countryside Park', sports provision, children's play areas, and streets and local village greens, inspired by Barrington and Foxton.

Great Places

Station Fields preserves the historic and distinctive characters of Barrington, Foxton and Shepreth. Its unique character will be defined by its setting within an improved landscape. By providing new complimentary facilities it will support the vibrancy and vitality of the existing cluster of villages.

The travel and community hubs will provide an opportunity to create a vibrant place where people can meet friends and connect. The landscape that weaves through the site will put people in touch with nature, and create spaces for the community to come together.

Our approach to the site demonstrates how by thinking holistically about homes, jobs, infrastructure and nature we can create more sustainable communities and deliver on the ambitions of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Viewpoint C-View south along cycle path

AXIS
LAND PARTNERSHIPS

Eaton Court
Maylands Avenue
Hemel Hempstead
HP2 7TR

www.axislp.com

LDĀDESIGN

www.lda-design.co.uk

LDA Design Consulting Ltd
Registered No: 09312403
17 Minster Precincts, Peterborough PE1 1XX

Foxton Travel Hub

Consultation Response | September 2021

AXIS
LAND PARTNERSHIPS

Foxton Station

Contents

Part 1: Our Comments on the GCP Proposal

This report is a response from Axis Land Partnerships ('Axis') and the landowners to the consultation on the Foxton Travel Hub presented by the Greater Cambridge Partnership in September 2021.

Axis is a land promotion and development company with a proven track record of working collaboratively to deliver sustainable development.

Axis are promoting land north-west of Royston Road for allocation as a new village of c. 1500 homes, alongside a travel hub and level crossing bypass, employment land, community facilities and open space through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The travel hub proposed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) falls within the land being promoted by Axis in this regard.

The supporting vision submitted by Axis in response to both the call for sites, and Issues and Options Consultation, sets out how this strategically important site can deliver against the Council's Big Themes: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Green Space, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion and Great Places through a holistically planned travel hub and new community.

The vision is based on an appreciation of the significance of villages like Foxton, Barrington and Shepreth as an important part of the Greater Cambridge picture and sets out how a new rural community can be planned in a sensitive way whilst delivering tangible benefits to existing communities. Foxton's Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in August 2021, sets out the communities' aspirations for development including the provision of transport infrastructure.

Axis support the principle of a travel hub in this location however, this document sets out concerns with the proposals presented in the GCP consultation. The current proposals appear to take a narrow and short-term approach to both local and wider issues and as a result do not realise the potential of the site.

The first part of this report sets out Axis' concerns that the travel hub as proposed fails to deliver any of the objectives of GCP, any tangible benefits for Foxton, it fails to address significant highways safety issues and it represents a missed opportunity in the wider Greater Cambridge context.

The second part of this document sets out a potential alternative solution to the Travel Hub which Axis believes addresses these issues.

The Travel hub as proposed:

A. Doesn't deliver on the objectives of GCP.

B. Doesn't deliver for Foxton

C. Doesn't address highways safety concerns

D. Doesn't deliver for Greater Cambridge

A. Doesn't deliver on the objectives of GCP

GCP have previously set out their scheme objectives within the business case for this proposal. Their primary purpose is to ensure that the scheme meets the needs of Greater Cambridge and the objectives do not take account of local need or opportunities.

GCP has committed to working with a range of partners to explore opportunities for funding and delivery of schemes that support its vision. Collaboration is central to that vision and yet there has been no attempt to communicate with Axis or the landowners to deliver a more comprehensive scheme or to design a scheme that would meet local objectives including a bypass funded by private sector contributions that would enable the closure of the level crossing and reduce congestion on this part of the A10.

We do not believe that the scheme achieves the proposed key objectives:

- Maximise the potential for all journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes of transport – the proposed travel hub increases vehicular movement on the rural road network
- Improve overall connectivity and accessibility within Greater Cambridge to support economic growth – the scheme misses a significant opportunity to enable economic growth and the development of new community assets in a sustainable location
- To accommodate future growth in trips along the corridor to Cambridge and reduce traffic impact levels and congestion – only the removal of the level crossing will reduce congestion at Foxton and the proposed scheme blocks any future delivery of a bypass
- Contribute to the enhanced quality of life for those living and working within Greater Cambridge – the proposed scheme will increase congestion and therefore local noise and air pollution. It will also dramatically increase the number of people crossing a high-speed road creating significant risk to those using the facilities

A10 Cyclepath to Foxton

B. Doesn't deliver for Foxton

South Cambridgeshire contains over 100 villages which vary greatly in size. Many of them emerged along the historic road corridors and grew as the rail network developed. Each of the villages have a unique character that responds to their landscape setting. More people live in the villages that surround the city than in the city itself and the villages are therefore an important part of the Greater Cambridge identity, quality of life and its future success.

This proposal is situated on the edge of Foxton among a network of villages within the Chalklands to the south of Cambridge and therefore any proposals should be sensitive to the local context and needs. Through their Neighbourhood Plan, the community have stated their need for a travel hub to clearly demonstrate its benefits to the community of Foxton, by including integrated transport services and employment opportunities whilst minimising negative impacts on traffic and congestion, residential amenity, and the local environment. The proposals fail to provide any benefit to Foxton – in GCP's own list of key objectives there is no mention of the local community and what this scheme might do for them.

The proposals also do not resolve the transport and safety issues caused by the level crossing which was identified as a clear priority for the community during community consultation.

- The plan as shown is a large car park bolted onto the village that is out of scale and character, the proposals do not relate to surrounding uses and characteristics of the village.
- The scale of the car park prevents future placemaking potential around the station which is one of the key attributes of the village and key to an accessible and low carbon future.
- Surface parking at this scale is an inefficient use of important and valuable land.
- The increased congestion caused by significant additional vehicular movements, will make it harder for residents to get in and out of the village onto the A10.
- The proposed green infrastructure is of limited value in terms of its benefit to the community.

Railway stations have an important function at the heart of our villages, towns and cities. This is why Network Rail and a broad range of stakeholders have set out their aspirations for well-designed travel hubs that can support communities whilst providing a first-class experience for the travelling public.

The current proposals are no more than a Park & Rail facility, delivering little or no local benefit. We believe that more innovative thinking can provide a civic heart to the village whilst delivering the transport improvements sought by GCP.

Foxton Road level crossing

C. Doesn't address highways safety concerns

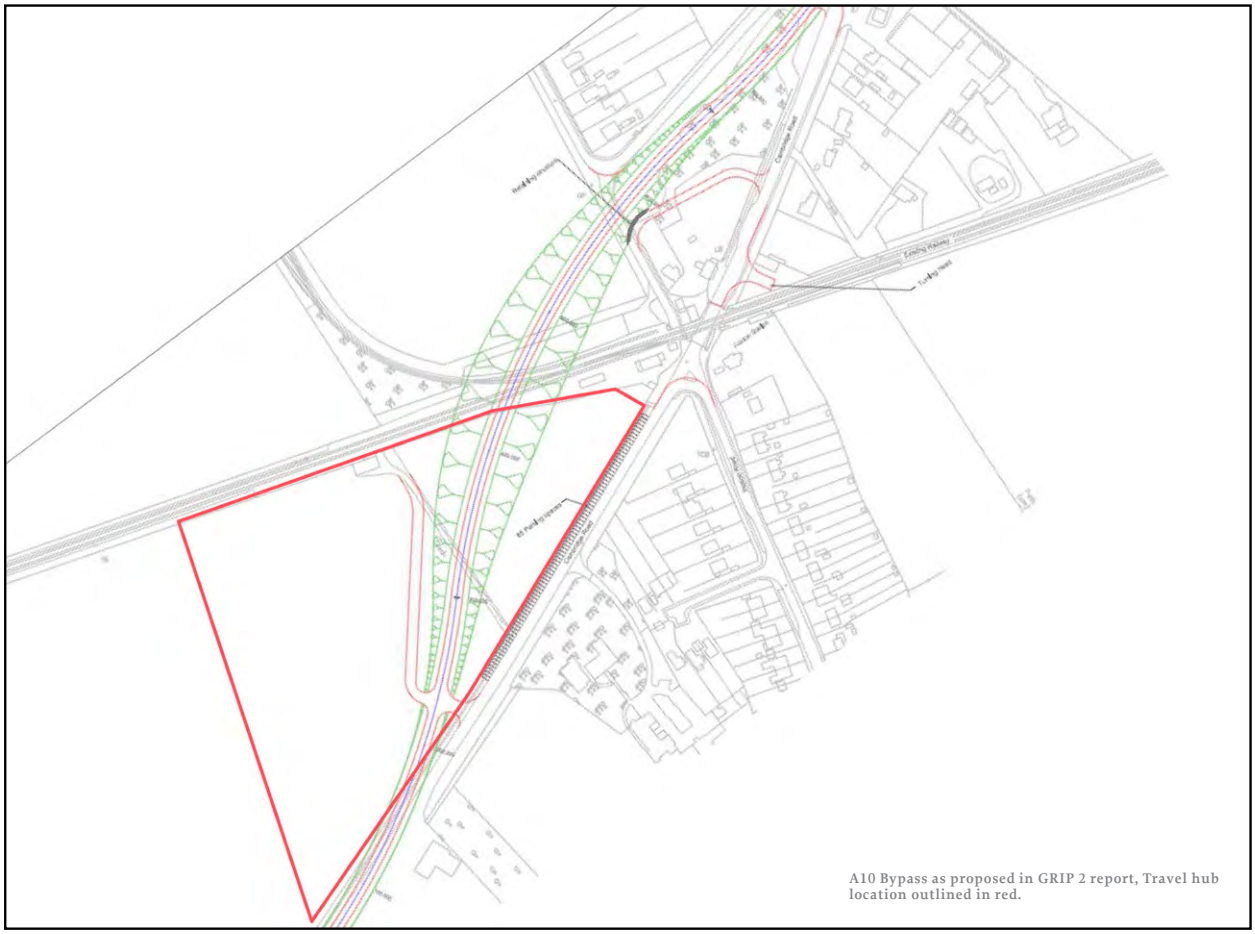
In May 2013 Network Rail published a GRIP-2 feasibility study to review options to close the existing railway level crossing at Foxton, Cambridgeshire, and provide a suitable replacement infrastructure to cross the railway safely. The report was driven by the safety/security risks of the level crossing and the resultant congestion.

The report concluded that the only feasible scheme to remove the level crossing and improve safety was to construct a bypass over the railway to the north of the station, landing on the site of the proposed GCP travel hub.

The GCP proposals do not deliver the A10 bypass allowing the closure of the level crossing. The location and scale of the proposed car park blocks any future delivery of a feasible scheme.

The GCP proposals are not clear on how highways safety concerns have been assessed and what alternatives have been considered to address them fully. The proposed non-signalised road crossings are a significant concern and will put people at serious risk of injury and death as they attempt to cross a busy road. The lack of a safe crossing point, together with plans to reduce the approach speed to the level crossing to 30mph, will likely lead to drivers stopping or slowing down to allow people across the road more safely which will in turn lead to wider congestion.

A signalised crossing would enable people to cross safely, especially for those with impaired mobility or young children. However, this option has not been proposed due to safety concerns of Network Rail, meaning a safe crossing solution is not feasible.



A10 Bypass as proposed in GRIP 2 report, Travel hub location outlined in red.

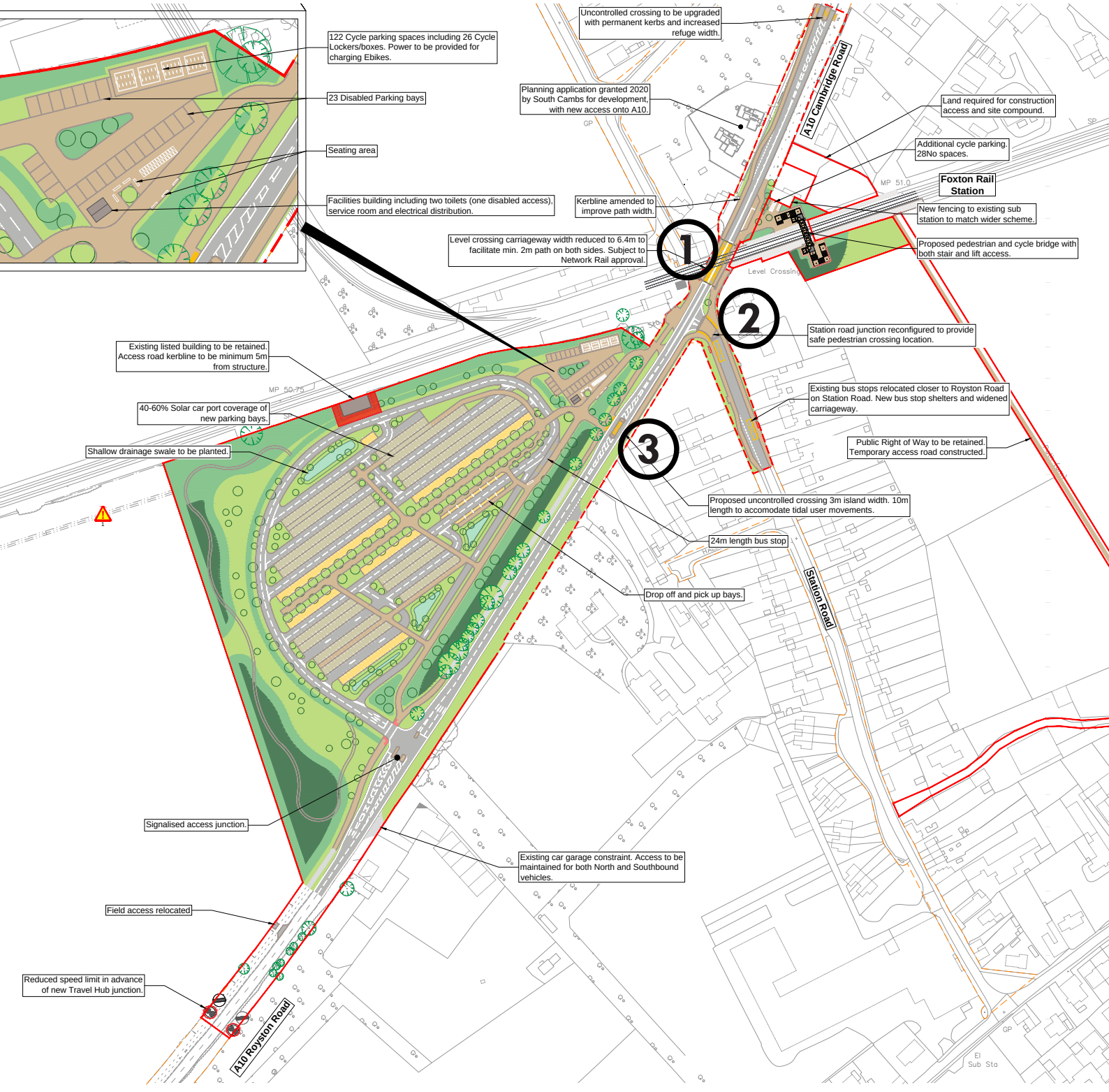
D. Doesn't deliver for Greater Cambridge

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan (GCLP) is still at an early stage in its preparation, and the emerging spatial strategy presented in the recently published 'First Proposals' document 2021 (Regulation 18 Committee Stage Version) is yet to be consulted on. However, the First Proposals document sets out potential options for maximising the opportunities that have been identified under the 'Plan Themes' that underpin how homes, jobs and infrastructure are to be planned. The document states that 'We propose to direct development to where it has the least climate impact, where active and public transport is the natural choice, where green infrastructure can be delivered alongside new development, and where jobs, services and facilities can be located near to where people live'.

The First Proposals document sets a clear ambition for progressing a comprehensive and integrated approach to development. However, the current proposals for the Foxton Travel Hub fall short of this ambition, presenting a scheme that seeks to address transportation matters in isolation. The proposals are too narrowly focused and fail to maximise the opportunity to provide a comprehensive approach to development as promoted in the GCLP. The current proposals also do not sufficiently align with the understanding of what makes a 'great place' as set out in the First Proposals document, as somewhere that ensures that infrastructure is delivered coherently in a way that is integrated with place. They fail to consider how designing for climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation can be an opportunity to create distinctive and characterful developments, fail to ensure that services and infrastructure are developed alongside new housing and jobs, and miss the opportunity to create a well-used and active public place which helps to foster a sense of community.

The First Proposals document recognises that in Greater Cambridge emissions from transport is one of the largest contributors to climate change. Emerging policy I/ST Sustainable Transport and Connectivity seeks to address this issue by requiring new development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and promote sustainable travel appropriate to its location. It states that developments should be designed around the principles of walkable neighbourhoods and healthy towns to encourage active sustainable travel. Therefore, the investment made in Foxton from the Travel Hub proposals should support the sustainability of the existing settlement and recognise the wider opportunity to support sustainable development on land north-west of Royston Road.

A10 Foxton level crossing



GCP Travel Hub Proposals overlaid with Axis' Comments.

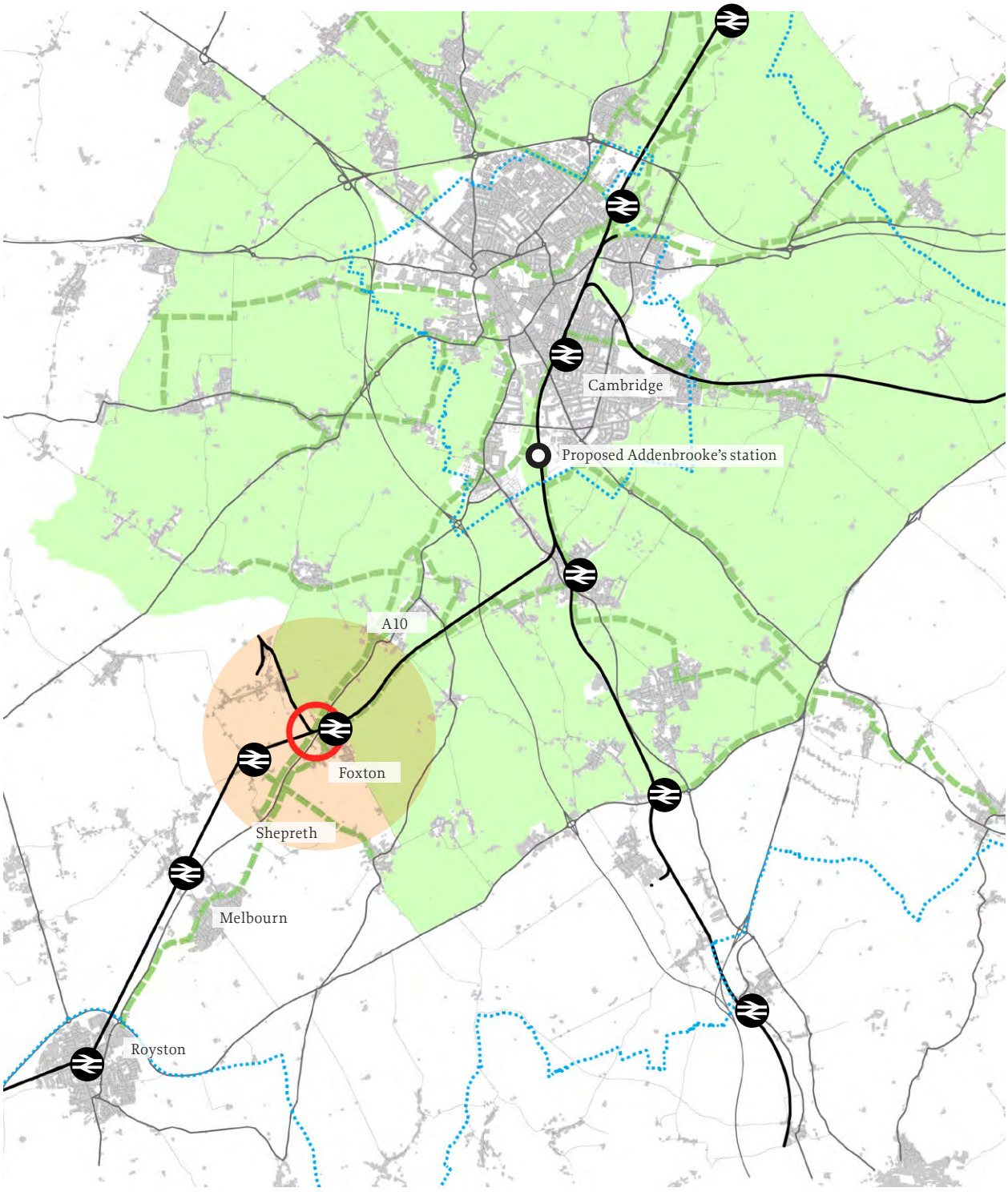
1 Level crossing remains in use for all modes of travel with greater level of use due to travel hub. Level crossing still likely to be preferred shortcut rather than safer bridge option.

2 Conflict at Station Road junction with vehicles joining stationary traffic and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing.

3 Uncontrolled crossing of the A10 conflict between cars waiting at signals and unsuitable for potential volumes of pedestrians.

Part 2: Our Response to the Wider Opportunity

A. A Strategic Location



Summary of strategic opportunities:

- The Travel Hub site sits at a strategic location where both the A10 road and regional rail network meet, making it an important site in the future of Greater Cambridge with potential for future growth.
- Vehicular access can be gained directly from the A10.
- Foxton Station is the penultimate stop before Cambridge station (approximately 9 minute journey to Cambridge Station).
- Train journey to Kings Cross London takes as little as 1 hour 15 minutes.
- Wide catchment area serving local communities including Foxton, Shepreth, Barrington as well as communities further afield.
- Located along the Melbourn Greenways project.
- Located outside the Green Belt.
- Situated close to the River Cam providing opportunity for significant green and blue infrastructure improvements for people and nature.
- Placemaking potential at a scale that fits with the rural qualities and village character of the area.

Aerial view: Foxton

B. Place Potential and Travel hubs

The aspiration and quality of this place should capitalise on the strategic location and act as a catalyst for low carbon living.

A travel hub facilitates the transition between sustainable and active transport networks. A well-planned travel hub can provide a much wider benefit to users and the local community by incorporating non-transport uses and public realm enhancements. The ambition is to create a real sense of place and vibrancy at the heart of the travel hub that delivers enhanced facilities.

The CoMoUk "Mobility Hubs Guidance" (November 2019) states that Mobility Hubs have three main characteristics:

1. *"Co-location of public and shared mobility modes*
2. *The redesign of space to reduce private car space and improve the surrounding public realm*
3. *A pillar or sign which identifies the space as mobility hub which is part of a wider network and ideally provides digital travel information."*

In addition to the proposed car park, Foxton travel hub might include some or all of the following features:

- Bus interchange;
- 24/7 delivery lockers;
- Cycle and scooter hire;
- EV parking bays;
- Co-working spaces & meeting rooms;
- Cycle workshop;
- Cafe & pop-up stalls;
- Public realm improvements (places to dwell, socialise, cycle paths;
- Digital ticketing systems.

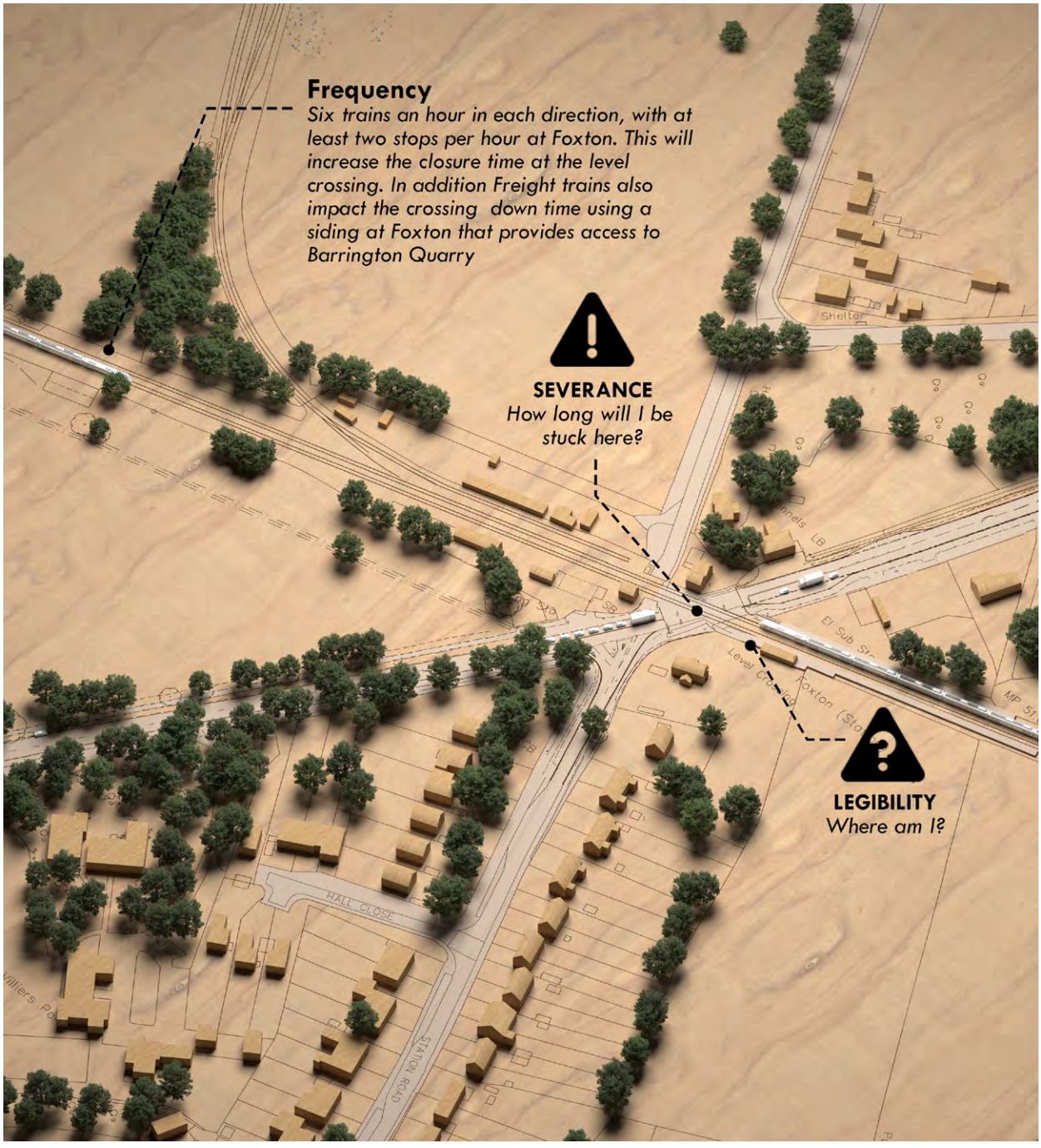
These elements should not be seen as easy add-ons but should be part of a comprehensive place-making approach.

C. A Comprehensive and Integrated Alternative

The plans on the following pages set out a considered and achievable potential alternative solution to the travel hub which address the concerns outlined in the first part of this response. The plans capitalise on the sites strategic location to deliver a wider range of positive outcomes for Greater Cambridge, Foxton and the surrounding villages.

The plans are shown as a sequence to demonstrate how a travel hub can be planned now without compromising future improvements and investment.

The visualisation below shows the current layout and highlights the severance caused by the railway and the lack of a coherent place around the station.



Existing condition


1
A10 to Cambridge
Rail line
6
Foxton Station
7
3
5
Station Road
4
Foxton Travel Hub
2
1
Foxton Village Centre
A10 to Royston

This first plan shows an alternative layout for the travel hub which:

1. Safeguards the alignment of the A10 level crossing bypass proposed in the GRIP 2 Feasibility Study Report (2013).
2. Provides a lightweight decked / multistorey car park which makes more efficient use of land and allows flexibility to expand or reduce in size without requiring additional land.
3. Incorporates wider functions of a travel hub including space for mobility service office, e- scooter and cycle hire and repair shop, EV charging, car club, delivery storage lockers and cafe. These facilities are provided around a public square which also provides the focus for additional commercial uses including small scale work spaces, work hubs and a nursery which can start to deliver a new sense of place close to the station to complement the existing employment spaces and village facilities.
4. Provides a new footpath connection and drainage channel linking to the Rhee Valley, Shepreth and the countryside. The footpath connection links into the public right of way to the east of Shepreth and forms part of an attractive loop.
5. Enables avenue planting on the approach to the village along the A10.
6. Station improvements including pedestrian and cycle bridge with stair and lift access.
7. Separate drop off and accessible / priority parking spaces closer to the station in a smaller surface level car park.


2
A10 to Cambridge
Rail line
Foxton Station
Foxton Travel Hub
Station Road
Foxton Village Centre
A10 to Royston
1
2
3
4
5

This second plan shows the same travel hub arrangement with the A10 level crossing bypass delivered at the same time or in a future phase. The plans include:

1. An overbridge or underpass as proposed in the GRIP 2 report.
2. Closure of the level crossing for all users.
3. Dedicated pedestrian and cycle routes between the travel hub and the station which require no crossing of the A10 or the railway.
4. Pedestrian and cycle access to the station from the north alongside the new bypass removing the need to use the level crossing.
5. Downgrading and street improvements to the current A10 and Station Road to provide space and priority for walking, cycling and buses. Potential to use Shepreth Road as the primary means of access to the A10 from Foxton allowing most traffic to be removed from Station Road.


3
A10 to Cambridge
Community Hub
2
1
Rail line
Foxton Station
5
3
Foxton Travel Hub
Station Road
Foxton Village Centre
4
A10 to Royston

This third plan shows the same alternative layout for the travel hub and A10 level crossing bypass, it also shows how the travel and commercial hub to the south of the rail line could expand in future including:

1. New areas of village expansion delivering the c.1500 new homes described in the vision document submitted by Axis through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.
2. A new community hub including facilities for both new and incoming residents.
3. Expanded commercial and travel hub providing further small scale work spaces.
4. Strategic areas of publically accessible green space along the edge of the village incorporating play, leisure as well as spaces for nature and managing water adjacent to the Rhee.
5. Potential further crossings of the rail line.

The areas shown as future village expansion are the same as those proposed in the vision documents submitted by Axis in response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process.

Summary

We support the principle of a travel hub in this location, we object to the current proposals as designed. It is clear that the proposals presented in the GCP consultation do not realise the full potential and importance of this site. The land use is inefficient and little consideration given to the impact of the proposal in regard to placemaking and wider community benefit. Ultimately, the proposed travel hub:

A. Doesn't deliver on the objectives of GCP.

B. Doesn't deliver for Foxton

C. Doesn't address highways safety concerns

D. Doesn't deliver for Greater Cambridge

Our alternative option demonstrates in one way how a travel hub can deliver more than just a car park, contributing to the key GCP objectives, whilst delivering benefits to the wider community.

Our iteration of our proposal clearly demonstrates how local benefits can be delivered alongside the travel hub. The innovative model seeks to combine the element of transport interchange with enhanced public realm and facilities to create a vibrant and safe place for all.

AXIS
LAND PARTNERSHIPS