

Examination of the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan

Questions for Foxton Parish Council (FPC)

1. Given the passage of time, have there been any material events since the Plan was drafted that might affect the policies and which would need to be recognised in any made Plan?

Yes, the proposed travel hub, preferred East West Rail alignment, the adoption of the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD in January 2020, and the biodiversity enhancement area in FOX/14.

The current timetable for the travel hub is that the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) will consult on their designs after the May 2021 elections, with a view to submitting a planning application in the autumn. FPC is working with GCP to influence the design in order to maximise the benefits for Foxton. The East West Rail has given Route E as their preferred alignment, which may come close to the northern boundary of Foxton parish.

<https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/ListsBlockMedia/af057165a3/Maps.pdf>

2. **Policy FOX/2** – “development is done with engagement and permissions of relevant organisations”: Is there adequate clarity over what would be required of developers? What engagement and permissions would be required and from whom?

The engagement and permissions would be handled by Greater Cambridge Planning (South Cambs District Council and Cambridge City Planning joint service) as part of the normal consultations when assessing a planning application

3. **Policy FOX/2** – “comply with sustainable design and construction standards”: What are the standards and where are they to be found?

These are set out in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, approved in January 2020. <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/greater-cambridge-sustainable-design-and-construction-spd>.

4. **Policy FOX/2** – Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD: Has this now been adopted? January 2020

5. **5.22** – paragraph 135 of the NPPF: Is this correct?
No, apologies, this is a typo and should read para 125.

6. **Figure 12**: Are *all* the features identified in the key (with the exception of the parish boundary) regarded as non-designated heritage assets (Policy FOX/4 refers)?

No. The non-designated heritage assets to which policy FOX/4 refers are the Common Stream, Chadwell Bank, Bran Ditch and the Roman Villa. The Ancient Way is speculative, and the crop marks are only indicative. Map key can be annotated to clarify this.

7. Policy FOX/5 – “Development on the eastern side which buffers the Green Belt”: Is the land to which reference is made adequately identified? Does this refer to land beyond but on the western boundary of the Green Belt where it adjoins the “Development Framework”?

Figure 14 shows the extent of the Green Belt in green block colour, and its western boundary with housing and roads. The extent of the Development Framework is shown as the blue line, which in some sections follows the same alignment as the orange line denoting the boundary of the Conservation Area. So, the policy refers to all the Green Belt along its boundary, not just the Green Belt abutting the blue line.

8. Policy FOX/5 – final bullet point – “may only be acceptable”: If demonstrable evidence is provided, would proposals be supported?

The demonstrable evidence would be through the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment. Development proposals will only be considered if landscaping, siting etc can be shown to mitigate the visual impact on this open landscape. This policy is to add further detail to complement Local Plan policy NH/8 which seeks to mitigate the impact of development.

Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt
1. Any development proposals within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.
2. Where development is permitted, landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any planting is adequately maintained, will be attached to any planning permission in order to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated.
3. Development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality.

9. The viewpoint to the east of Bleak House as shown on Figure 15 is in a position different from that shown on the Policies Map, Figure 30B. Which is correct?

Figure 30B is correct. Figure 15 will need to be updated.

10. Policy FOX/10: Is there clarity over the meaning of “homes intended for lifetime occupation”?

This refers to the Lifetime homes concept developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lifetime Homes Group in 1991. Lifetime Homes have sixteen design features that ensure a new house or flat will meet the needs of most households, as set out in the Buildings Regulations Standards M4(2).

11. Policy FOX/11: For sites adjoining (but outside) the Green Belt, is it appropriate to apply a test of very special circumstances?

This part of the policy seeks to complement Local Plan policy NH/8, on mitigating the impact of development for sites within or adjoining the Green Belt., particularly along the sensitive edges and from the viewpoints shown on figure 15.

12. Policy FOX/14: How are “Existing open spaces” to be defined or identified?

This policy specifically refers to recreational and informal open space, whereas policy FOX/7 covers the green spaces. Figure 23 shows the existing recreational

spaces covered by FOX/14. There is inevitably some overlap in terminology, for example the Recreation Ground is a designated Local Green Space, used for formal and informal recreation.

13. Policy FOX/14 – “not prejudice the delivery of the future provision”: Future provision of what?

Since this policy was written, the school has decided to create a small copse of native trees in the proposed biodiversity enhancement area, the trees to be planted by the children, using free trees provided by the Woodland Trust, through the county council. The site is within the school grounds, and the school had given in principle permission for it to be designated a biodiversity enhancement area in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, but at that stage did not want to be directly involved. Ground preparation took place in autumn 2020, but the planting was delayed by lockdown. So time has overtaken the second part of FOX/14.

14. Policy FOX/16: Is there any distinction to be drawn between “employment uses” and “commercial uses” as expressed in the policy?

The wording within the policy should read employment, not commercial.

15. Policy FOX/16 – second bullet point: What is the description in Appendix 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan with which conformity is expected?

To clarify, the words....’listed in the buildings of merit in’ need to be added before Appendix 1.

16. Do you have any comments on the objections of Cambridgeshire County Council (68590 to 68584)?

The parish council does not agree with the objections raised by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). They mirror the objections CCC raised under the Section 14 consultation, with the parish council response summarised in the Consultation Statement pages 60 and 61. Additional supporting information is as follows:

Para 5.48, FOX/5 and FOX/6: the sensitive urban edges and viewpoints derive from 2017 Landscape Character Assessment, a robust evidence base for the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan (FNP), prepared under the supervision and signed off by a member of the Landscape Institute specialising in such assessments. The 2018 Foxton Conservation Area Appraisal also references viewpoints as they relate to the Conservation Area.

Objection re page 43: the objector appears to have misread this sentence. It refers to the open green spaces **within** the village. Para 5.29 is a broad description of the different landscape characteristics within the parish. Para 7.17 acknowledges that delivery of the parish council’s ambitions is dependent on close liaison with land owners and other bodies.

Paras 5.48 and 7.17: The parish council considers it to be very important to reference in the FNP the community ambition to increase the amount of accessible natural greenspace close to the village, providing an ecological and landscape corridor, linked to the wider landscape. According to the analysis by Natural England in the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards 2011, the parish is deficient in accessible natural greenspace at several scales. This idea came from the evidence-

based Landscape Character Assessment process and FNP community consultation exercises. It also chimes with recent national policies for improving the natural environment and the health benefits of close access to greenspace. The parish council took the opportunity to bid to the Greater Cambridge emerging Local Plan process under the 'Call for Green Sites' exercise in 2020, to enhance the nature conservation and informal recreational value of this sloping field that links the village with Foxtan Woods. A response is awaited.

The county council has bid to the Greater Cambridge emerging Local Plan 'Call for Development sites' process for the same parcel of land, which is in their ownership and was let in 2020 to a new tenant on a short term agricultural tenancy. A few years ago, CCC drew up proposals for around 30 dwellings on the land just outside the development framework boundary, south of the High Street and Herod's Cottage. The parish council opposed the idea in informal consultations, as it is outside the development framework boundary and did not conform with Group Village planning policy.

The parish council is very keen to see the landowner maximise the opportunities that the new Environmental Management Grant Scheme will offer to improve the landscape, ecological, informal recreational and educational opportunities for this parcel of land, and the adjacent woodland. It is also ideally located as a biodiversity net gain site for the county council to use as net gain required by other development proposals they have around the county.

FOX/7: The parish council has been working cooperatively with CCC's land manager on the management of Foxtan Woods since 2018. CCC sought to involve the community in planting this local community woodland in 1995, as their response to the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines 1991 that they commissioned. The young beech woods, planted on the crest of the low ridge above the village, grew up unmanaged for over 20 years. The CCC input was limited to a twice yearly cut of the permissive paths within the growing woods. The parish council approached CCC in 2018 regarding the urgent need for beech thinning, and the community aspiration to be involved in more positive management and uses of this key landscape feature, well used and much loved by people in Foxtan.

Site meetings were held with representatives of different CCC departments and good progress was made, with a shared vision for what was needed. A Friends of Foxtan Woods group was set up and they prepared a draft management plan, which is still awaiting feedback from the county council. In 2019, CCC secured an umbrella Forestry Commission management grant for ten of their woods, including Foxtan, and a contract for the first stage of line thinning was let, but has not yet been actioned. In the meantime, the Friends Group organised two very successful volunteer hazel coppicing events in winter 2019/20, with plans for two more in 20/21 cancelled due to lockdown.

This information illustrates the efforts made locally to work with CCC to improve the management of their woods. The term 'important green space' accurately describes their value, and is not a formal designation. As the parish council supports the need for appropriate timber management, there is no case for this objection.

The parish council also approached CCC in 2019 to try and secure a short permissive footpath link across their land from the south east side of the village to

the eastern corner of the wood. This was refused due to the CCC bid for development under the 'Call for Sites'.

17. Do you have any comments on the objections of R2 Developments Limited (68617, 68620, 68621 and 68622)?

These objections are premature. The draft FNP was prepared under the umbrella of the current Local Plan, and cannot anticipate what may or may not be included in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, in relation to a possible Green Belt review, change in Group Village status or development sites.

The parish council does not agree with the evidence put forward by R2 Developments Ltd for the two sites they have submitted under the 'call for sites' process. The parish council has already submitted comments to Greater Cambridge Planning on the call for sites locations within the parish.