

Foxton Travel Hub Public Consultation
September – October 2019
Greater Cambridge Partnership
Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP

8 October 2019

Foxton Parish Council Response to the GCP Foxton Travel Hub Public Consultation

As part of an integrated transport strategy for South Cambridgeshire, Foxton Parish Council supports in principal the creation of a true travel hub at Foxton station but cannot support the proposals by GCP in their current form.

Foxton Parish Council has recently pledged to develop a climate change action plan on the basis that representing our community includes ensuring the needs of future generations can be met. By addressing climate change, we are also considering how to improve the lives of people in the village with clean air, healthier travel options, green spaces, energy efficient homes, better jobs, more money in local economies, so solving health and social issues at the same time.

On this basis, we support the GCP's work to reduce air pollution and congestion in the city of Cambridge and improvements to cycling infrastructure locally. However, we do not support this proposal as it stands because there is no evidence that this scheme will improve the lives of people in Foxton and some indication that it will reduce quality of life for people in the village and surrounding areas.

We are disappointed that the *Strategic Outline Business Case* (February, 2019) has a narrow focus on the economic and financial impact of the scheme by prioritising simple A to B commutes between home and work. For this reason the business case does not consider opportunities to improve health and wellbeing; the paragraph on quality of life concentrates on benefits for Cambridge residents and there is barely a mention of Foxton. The business case is driven almost entirely by the requirement to reduce traffic flow into Cambridge rather than de-carbonising travel and creating a future-proof integrated transport system across Greater Cambridgeshire. It does not offer any solutions for short journeys between villages to child-care, schools, visits to family and friends, and to local businesses and food and drink outlets. Nor does it offer any solutions to health and social issues such as lack of physical activity, loneliness, and isolation faced by people who do not have access to private vehicles. It is potentially bias against parents and particularly women, who are more likely to make more complex journeys between home, childcare/ school and work.

Our concerns

This is not a travel hub - it is simply a 750-space car park for station users designed to encourage additional traffic into the area with resulting increases in air, noise and light pollution and an increased level of carbon emissions which is NOT consistent with South Cambridgeshire District Council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

As the current model of 'park and ride' is to provide free parking, this car park is likely to encourage current Royston station users commuting from nearby villages to drive to Foxton to make use of the free parking, particularly given concerns that parking at Royston is expensive and not sufficient. The proposed parking facility would attract traffic from developments across the Cambridge southern and northern fringes to transfer to rail at Foxton for London. Whilst we welcome a reduction of traffic in Cambridge City Centre, policy, practices and pricing structures should aim to minimise

private car use across Greater Cambridgeshire, and should encourage private car users to drive to their closest public transport station. There is no information provided on how Foxton might be affected by through traffic which is already an identified concern for the village.

As the proposed scheme does not include plans to address various problems caused by the Foxton level crossing, and we are not aware of any proposals to address this problem, we are concerned that additional road traffic to the area will exacerbate existing problems caused by traffic waiting at the level crossing including air and noise pollution, delayed journey time and risk to life caused by delays emergency vehicles. Potentially, savings in journey time, could be reduced by waiting time to enter the car park, reducing the appeal to potential users. As access to station platforms is affected by level crossing closures, failure to address the level crossing will have a negative impact on passenger access to trains – passenger access between car park and platform could take up to 10 minutes or more by foot given the frequency of the level crossing gates down time.

The proposal seems contrary to GCP's aims to make it easier for people to travel on foot or by bicycle. Both of proposed sites are on the opposite side of the A10 to the station. The scheme does not offer any means by which Foxton residents or car park users can safely cross the A10 to access the station – the proposed splitter island is simply not sufficient. The crossings are uncontrolled, difficult and dangerous to make when traffic is travelling fast. People cycling have to negotiate the pedestrian gates, which is especially difficult for people with cargo bikes, trailers or with a walking disability. All in all, this is a deeply unsatisfactory arrangement for people walking and cycling.

Furthermore, given the increased footfall at Foxton station that would result, improved passenger facilities at the station would be essential. The proposals fail to address this issue.

While the *Strategic Outline Business Case* (February, 2019) refers to the A10 cycle path, there is no recognition that travel to Foxton from A10 villages to the south via the cycle path requires crossing the A10 twice. This is of particular concern as our closest secondary school is located in Melbourn. And while the proposed cycle path from Barrington is welcome, we are concerned that, because the hauling of landfill to the quarry site could continue for 10-15 years, new residents in Barrington would establish unsustainable travel behaviours which would be difficult to change. We need safe cycle routes to a true travel hub from all surrounding villages constructed as an integrated part of the travel hub to ensure that users start using active travel options from the outset to ensure that we address the climate emergency and health crises.

Foxton's emerging Neighbourhood Plan has identified that protecting and enhancing our green space is a priority for people in the village and we are concerned about the impact that both of the proposed sites will have on the rural landscape given their location at gateways to the village. Given that Foxton has been found to have a less than the recommended amount of green space per populationⁱ even prior to recent developments, we are concerned that GCP is considering undeveloped farmland for infrastructure when there are other priorities.

Both proposed sites potentially conflict with the Transport Safeguarding Area under the current *Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031* and with the emerging *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan* which runs to 2050. The latter plan includes in its High Level Delivery Plan: 'Provision of a highway bridge or underpass to enable the closure of the level crossing on the A10 to the immediate south of Foxton Station, together with pedestrian improvements'. Both of the current car park locations could potentially conflict with the infrastructure of this project.

We request:

1. A strategic proposal for a true travel hub that includes a solution to the Foxton level crossing which also addresses issues faced by villages north and south of Foxton where residents cannot access the A10 without the gaps in traffic the level crossing offers. We request that in addition to the underpass or overpass options that consideration is also given to an A10 Hauxton - Harston Bypass as part of a joined up approach to traffic issues in the A10 corridor south of Cambridge.
2. We want to see how a true travel hub would look in conjunction with each of the potential options for addressing A10/level crossing issues (under-pass, over-pass and bypass, and how it would integrate with the proposed route from Southern Fringe towards Royston/Hitchin marked on the consultation map.
3. An assessment of air quality and noise in Foxton based on local measurements, along with forecast changes of noise, air and light with the proposed scheme options. Data from Harston is not an appropriate proxy because of the localised impact of traffic being held at the level crossing.
4. An assessment of changes in traffic movement likely to be caused by the scheme and how it is likely to affect Foxton. Consultation for Foxton's emerging Neighbourhood Plan identified traffic and speeding as a key concern of residents. This scheme could attract additional traffic through the village via Thriplow, Newton and Fowlmere as well as Barrington and Orwell as people avoid the A10 and use the A604 to access the car park.
5. Further information on how scheme performance be assessed and what will happen if it is not effective.

We support:

1. A true travel hub fit for the future that:
 - includes a small number of parking spaces primarily for disabled users;
 - is accessible by safe cycling routes from all the surrounding villages, including Barrington, Fowlmere, Thriplow, Melbourn and Newton (not only would this encourage active travel to the station, it would also enable neighbouring 'group villages' make best use of resources reducing the need to travel to city centres and contributing to local businesses);
 - has provision next to the station for demand-responsive buses and other shared transport services to pick up and drop off (these services would serve residents of surrounding villages, including Barrington, Fowlmere, Thriplow and Newton);
 - includes secure cycle parking (monitored by CCTV) adjacent to the station, not 400m away (as in the Northern option).
 - has a safe pedestrian/ cycle crossing of the A10 and railway line which is not reliant on level crossing closure and improved cycling and walking infrastructure throughout the village;
 - has a ticket pricing structure for trains, buses and parking that encourages walking, cycling and taking the bus to access the station, and discourages driving so as to promote more sustainable travel across Greater Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire.

- has charging points for electric cars and electric cycles.
 - includes renewable energy generation (such as photovoltaic panels) to meet all electricity consumption on-site
 - a net biodiversity gain for any infrastructure that is built (as set out in the Environment Bill 2018).
2. Parking restrictions with appropriate and effective enforcement in place to be introduced in Foxton to encourage use of the more sustainable modes of transport to the station that a true rural travel hub should provide.
 3. We would like to see creative and innovative exploration of what a travel hub could bring to Foxton and surrounding villages to increase quality of life without detracting from the heart of our village – in partnership with the community.

ⁱ <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/10290/recreation-open-space-study-2013.pdf>