

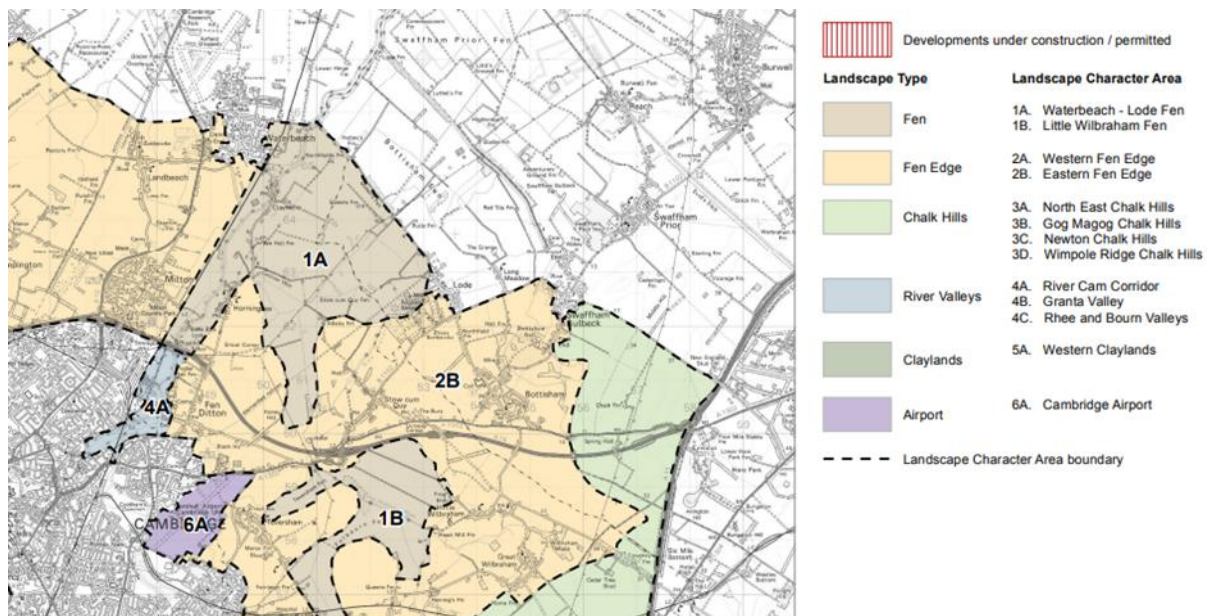
Landscape

This factsheet provides a background to the activities we have been completing to understand landscape and visual amenity value within the site, how we are assessing the potential landscape and visual amenity effects of the new facility, and how design features may be incorporated to integrate the facility into the landscape and embed features that contribute to the landscape.

Key Landscape features in the area

Landscape character

The landscape character of the area around the proposed facility was assessed as part of the Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study (LDA Design, 2015). This identified a number of distinct landscape character areas (LCA) (unique areas with a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape) - shown on the below map.



Source: Extract from the Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study, LDA Design 2015 Available at:
https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/6596/a-cambridge-inner-green-belt-boundary-study_-main-report.pdf

The site selected for the new facility lies within the Eastern Fen Edge LCA. Other LCA near to the facility are the River Cam Corridor LCA, Waterbeach-Lode Fen LCA and the north-eastern urban area of Cambridge. Although nearby, Little Wilbraham Fen LCA is not likely to be affected by the scheme as it is separated from the scheme by the A14.

Key visual receptors

Key visual receptors have been identified through initial site survey but these will be further discussed with stakeholders through ongoing consultation. The facility will be most visible from the north, south and west. Potential receptors to changes in visual amenity and changed views include:

- Users of Horningsea Road and Horningsea Greenway
- Residents and users of Low Fen Drove Way
- Residents at Biggin Abbey and users of the PRoW west of Horningsea Road and along the Cam (PRoW IDs 85/6 and 85/8)
- Residents on High Ditch Road

Without mitigation to reduce visual impact, the facility may also be visible from Quy Mill, but more distant views from Stow cum Quy and Quy Fen in the north-east and east are expected to be mainly screened by intervening woodland.

Illustrated visualisations of key viewpoints from both Horningsea and Fen Ditton can be found in the **Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet**.

Potential impacts on the landscape and visual amenities in the area

The landscape and potential visual impacts of the new facility will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and inform the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and Environmental Statement (ES). This assessment will consider the construction phase and the operational phase in year 1 and also at year 15 of operation (when screen planting is assumed to have matured). The assessment will be based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact assessment published in 2013 by the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).

It is expected that there may be uninterrupted views of the facility during construction and operational phases from Horningsea Road, Low Fen Drove Way and the A14. There may be filtered views of the facility during construction and operational phases from Horningsea, Fen Ditton, Stow cum Quy, Quy Mill, the River Cam tow path and Bait's Bite Lock and the PRoW (PRoW ID 218/1) near Stow cum Quy, Quay Mill and Quy Fen. Many views from the villages and PRoW networks will be screened by garden vegetation and intervening buildings. The PRoW networks around the site can be viewed on the Cambridgeshire County Councils interactive map [here](#).

Opportunities for mitigation of impacts and enhancements

Landscape design

Below is the landscape design narrative which accompanies the landscape proposals visualised in the **Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet**.

The landscape design takes its inspiration from the local landscape character, and plays several key roles in the development including:

- Creating a strong identity for the site;
- Enhancing biodiversity and creating new wildlife habitats;
- Mitigating the visual impact of the development;
- Improving access to the countryside with new footpaths and accessible open space; and
- Connecting the site into the wider landscape and establishing new wildlife 'corridors'.

The landscape of this part of the 'Fenland Edge' is characterised by a generally flat topography, wide horizons, and a rectilinear pattern of drainage ditches and hedgerows dividing up large fields, with occasional tree belts and small blocks of woodland. Nearby man-made landforms include the rectilinear, defensive dykes such as Fleam Dyke and Devil's Dyke, and circular Iron Age hillforts such as the Wandlebury Ring and Belsar's Hill.

The site sits at the southern end of the National Trust's Wicken Fen Vision area and the proposed landscape and ecological enhancements will be carefully designed to align with the ambitions of this important and large-scale project to create an enhanced range of habitats. For more information on ecological opportunities refer to the Ecology Factsheet. The landscape proposals will also be coordinated with the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and the emerging Cambridge Nature Network plan developed by the local charity Cambridge Past Present and Future which aim to enhance access to nature and improve ecological connectivity across the region.

The landscape proposals are composed of three main elements: landform, tree and hedge planting and species-rich meadow, which will be combined into a striking, biodiverse and visually rich new landscape.

The facility will be surrounded by a new landform from raised embankments forming a circle around the facility, inspired by local hillforts. It is proposed to form this structure from the re-use of material excavated as part of the construction activities such as through tunnelling for new pipework. This new landform aims to screen all but the very tallest elements of the plant from most directions. The embankments could be sculpted into an elegant piece of land art, with grass footpath ramps carved into the mound and would also include series of openings to allow the circulation of air and access to the facility. A pathway is proposed to follow the top of the mound. This could allow visitors to enjoy the elevated position views across the wider landscape and views into the facility.

Tree stands of native woodland are proposed around the northern, western and southern sides of the site, which would introduce a new habitat and help to screen the works from viewpoints such as Horningsea and Fen Ditton villages. Non-motorised user routes mimicking the circular design would be created, providing an amenity for local residents and visitors. Along Low Fen Drove Way and the disused railway line the existing, patchy hedges would be planted and extended to provide a better continuous hedge line which would seek to enhance the County Wildlife Site (CWS) and create improved ecological connectivity. Along the CWS, the field margins could be managed to preserve the grassland.

Along the embankment, a species-rich 'calcareous loam meadow grassland' would be created, with mown paths and belts of tree planting. The existing hedgerow to the east of the facility will be gapped up, extended and augmented with native hedgerow trees. A new public footpath could follow the line of this enhanced hedgerow, connecting Low Fen Drove Way with the disused railway line. The grassland and hedgerow planting and management would be carefully considered to promote target bird species such as the turtle dove, skylark, barn owls etc.

In the fields beyond the immediate site to the south and east, there is an ambition to promote regenerative farming practices and re-wilding, in order to create further areas of species rich meadow grassland, scrub and, in the lower areas of the site to the south east, areas of wet pasture (subject to further soil investigations). Through agreement with local landowners additional hedges could be introduced here to subdivide the fields and create improved ecological connectivity.

The landscaping for the CWWTPR is being developed to screen the facility in a way that integrates it into the landscape and supports biodiversity gains. The timing of planting, which may include grassland, woodland, tree lines and hedgerows, could be planned in a way that advances the screening effects. Planting activities could extend beyond the facility on nearby land, but this would be subject to agreements with the landowners.

At this stage we propose to include:

- Provision of a new area of woodland of up to 25 hectares
- Provision of new extents of species rich grassland up to 35 hectares
- New lengths of hedgerows that may provide up to 9500 linear metres
- The creation of a new landscape feature formed from excavated material

Connectivity

Opportunities to improve the PRoW potentially through planning commitments are discussed in the **Phase Two Community Consultation leaflet**.

Should the proposals bring forward PRoW improvements these may also contribute to new positive aspects to the landscape character.