



Foxton Locks
Masterplan Report
July 2009



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Please note, this report represents the views and conclusions of the authors and is not necessarily representative of the view of the funders or Partnership.

Foxton Locks
Masterplan Strategy
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Introduction

Rumney Design, Britton McGrath Associates and Rambolls were appointed on behalf of British Waterways to provide a Masterplan strategy for the emerging Foxton Locks proposals.

Foxton Locks is a quintessentially English treasure. It has evolved from an industrial artery via its "monument at risk" status to achieve, through sheer grit and determination of the Foxton Locks Partnership, significant success in the portfolio of visitor attractions in the East Midlands.

British Waterways have the opportunity to build on this success with the rebuilding of the Inclined Plane Boat Lift which would create a truly unique visitor attraction of national and international significance.

This project also opens up the opportunity to expand the breadth of the offering at the site, broadening its appeal, enhancing its accessibility to a wider audience, optimising its commercial potential and driving additional contributions to the local and regional economy.

British Waterways, on behalf of the Foxton Locks Partnership, completed the first phase of restoration and interpretation in June 2008 at a cost of £2.9m, with generous assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the East Midlands Development Agency, Leicestershire County Council and others. British Waterways is now considering whether it is economically viable to restore the boat lift to full working order.

The emerging Masterplan contained within this report envisages the reinstatement of the inclined plane boat lift and is intended to establish Foxton Locks as a national and international tourist destination.

The project identifies the optimum mix of initiatives that will maximise the potential of the site; ensure that the project is feasible financially; engage with the local residents to gain their insight and support; quantify the contribution that the site could make to the region and to plan the optimum method by which this initiative should be realised.

The strategy outlines a number of key initiatives, that have informed the emerging masterplan.

The selection of these initiatives was based on discussions with British Waterways, Harborough District Council, and numerous site visits, and were presented and discussed at various team meetings and a public consultation exercise discussed in detail within this report.

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The Process

Foxton Locks possesses an inclined plane boat lift which has been nominated as one of Leicestershire's favourite attractions and one of East Midlands' seven man made wonders. The site is considered to be one of the significant visitors assets within Leicestershire. However, it has the potential to offer much more to tourists and visitors to the site in terms of additionality. In terms of its improved offer, it needs to be seen in the context of the other tourist destinations within the wider Leicestershire hinterland, as demonstrated on the diagram adjacent. A typical tourist weekend could potentially include a visit to Twycross Zoo, a trip to Market Bosworth and an overnight stay at Foxton.

Water-based tourism is a theme that has resonance with both Leicestershire and Rutland. The Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal represents a water based tourism resource within the Leicestershire tourism market. From Northamptonshire and into Leicester where the canal joins with the River Soar, the Leicester Line is a quiet section of canal that passes through rolling hills and beautiful countryside. Included within this section of the waterway is the landmark attraction of Foxton Locks, which is the highest point of the Grand Union Canal.

Ideas Workshop

To try and unlock the sites potential, a brainstorming session was facilitated by Britton McGrath and Rummey Design for the Foxton Locks Partnership, on 12th February 2009, to discuss issues and opportunities relating to the future development of the site.

Feedback from the ideas workshop..

Some of the issues that were raised at the brainstorming session by some of the key stakeholders were:

The restoration of the inclined plane.

Accessibility

Sustainability

The need for a new visitor centre

The site should be a valuable educational and learning resource

The creation of more of a 'wow' factor.

Provide a more integrated, customer focused approach to establishing Foxton Locks as a key visitor destination.

Make the place easier for visitors to use and open up important links, both within the site and to surrounding destinations.

Interpretation about the sites cultural and social history

Show place for historic boats

Child friendly eating places

Discovery trails

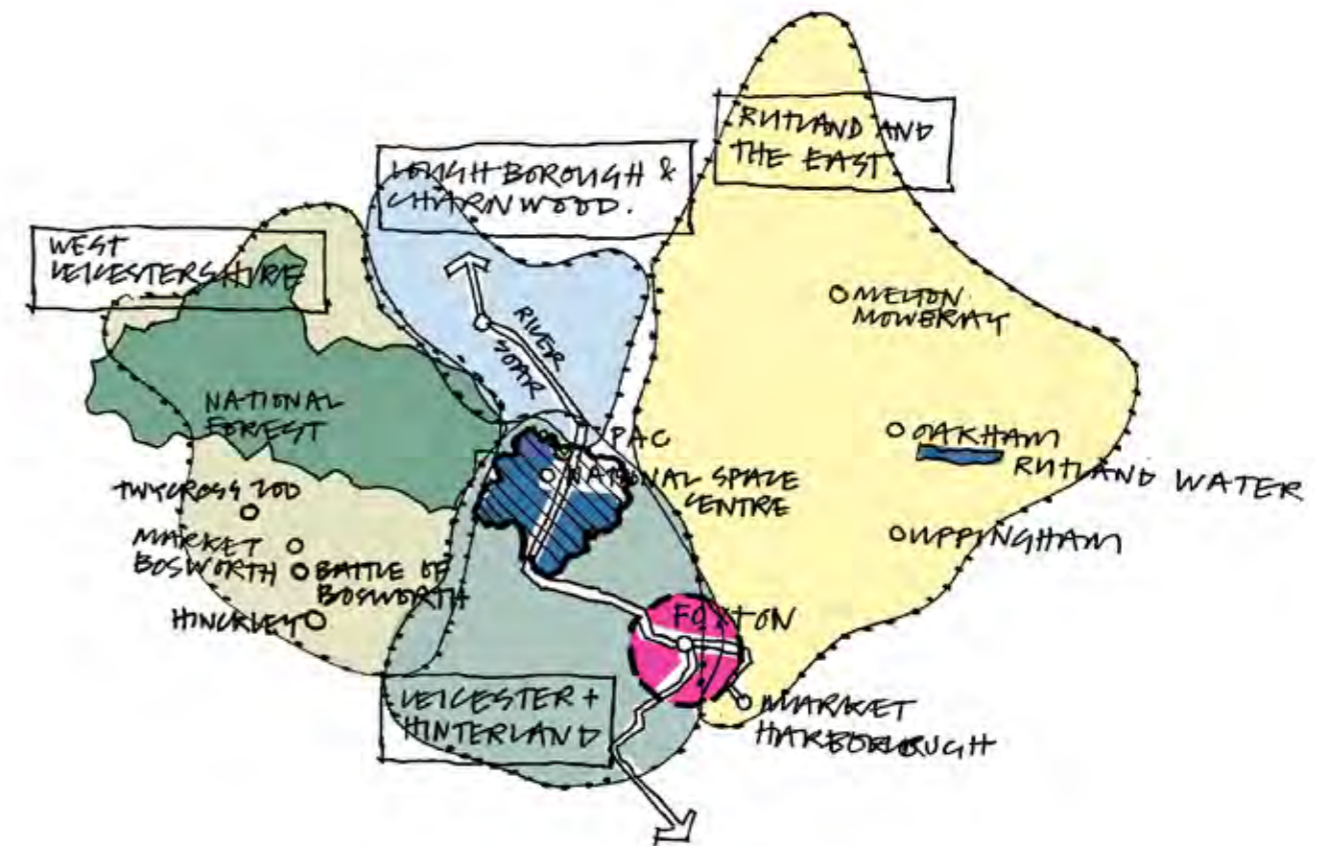
Car park capacity is a problem on sunny days

Quality base for short breaks

Boat Rides

Overnight stays to extend visitors dwell time

Walking, bird watching, trails and photography



Foxton Locks and neighbouring visitor attractions

.....A typical tourist weekend could include a visit to Twycross Zoo, a trip to Market Bosworth and an overnight stay at Foxton, with a couple of hours at the National Space Centre on the Sunday.....



Next Steps

Following the brainstorming workshop, a strategy for the development of a cohesive masterplan was undertaken. This followed a period of site analysis looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the potential offer.

At present the age profile of visitors to the site is that typically 66% are over 35 years old. The majority of these are local visitors with overseas visitors being negligible. Waterways enthusiasts are typical visitors and expenditure on site is low.

The site already attracts over 200 000 visitors per annum, with at present a high proportion arriving by car.

The developing masterplan will therefore need to redress the balance regarding the disparity in the age of visitors to the site, appeal to a wider local and overseas tourist market, increase the spend potential on site and offer alternative means of transport to site.

Existing site photographs and context



1. Inclined plane



2. Dredging transfer site



3. Triangular field from the access road



4. Boatyard site



5. Morrisons' field from access road



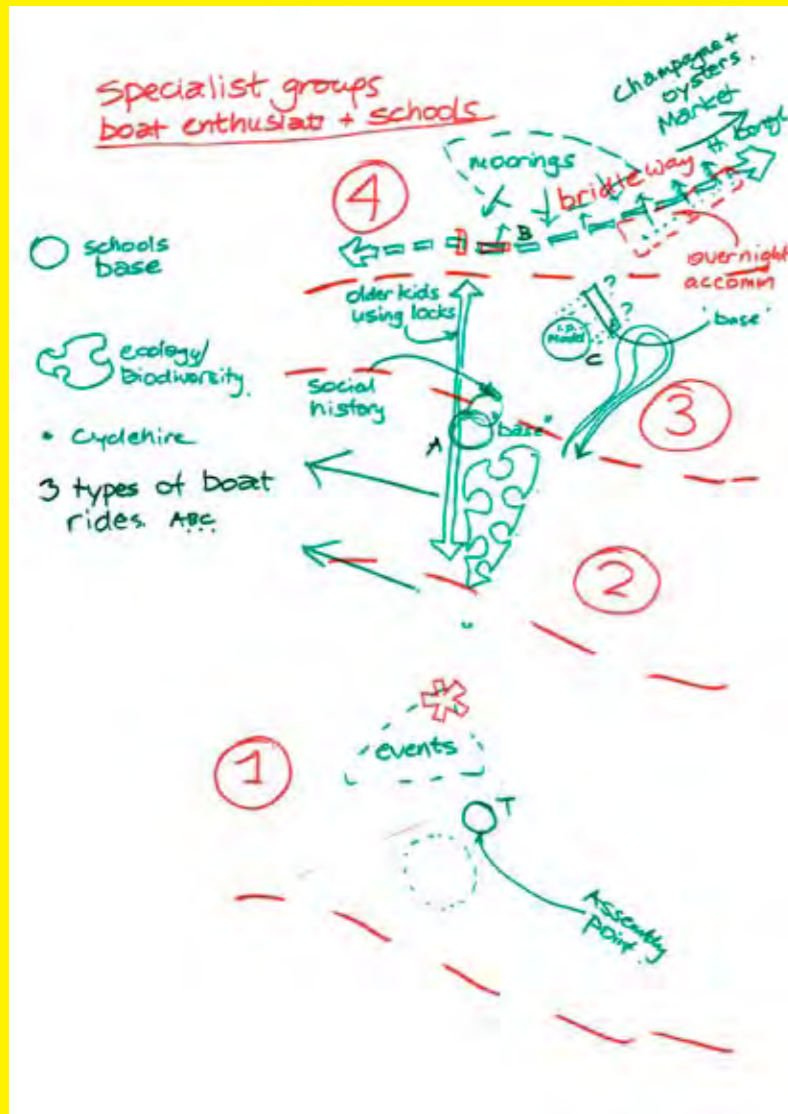
6. Ecology 'island' from Stop Lock

Foxton Locks_masterplan strategy



Photograph location plan

the ideas evolve, the site's user groups...



specialist groups...

The ideas workshop identified a number of key user groups. The specialist groups were seen as school groups, boat enthusiasts, ecological and environmental enthusiasts, cyclists, ramblers, and pub users. The site therefore needs to cater for these key interest groups and potentially neatly divides into four areas demonstrated on the above diagram. Area 1: the events/performance area, Area 2: the ecological zone and social history area, Area 3: The inclined Plane for the older children Area 4: the overnight accommodation area and boat moorings.



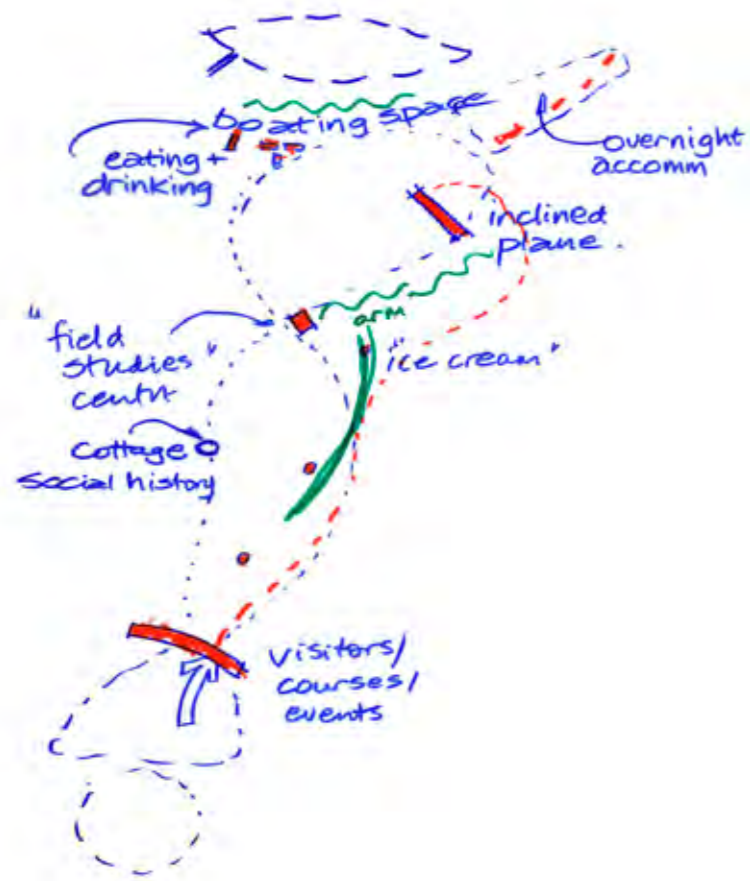
adults and senior citizens...

The grey market (the retired generation) were identified as a key source of visitors to Foxton Locks. People of retirement age have a higher incidence of mobility and visual impairments than the general population, and therefore access and visual awareness issues need to be considered during the early stages of the Masterplan design.



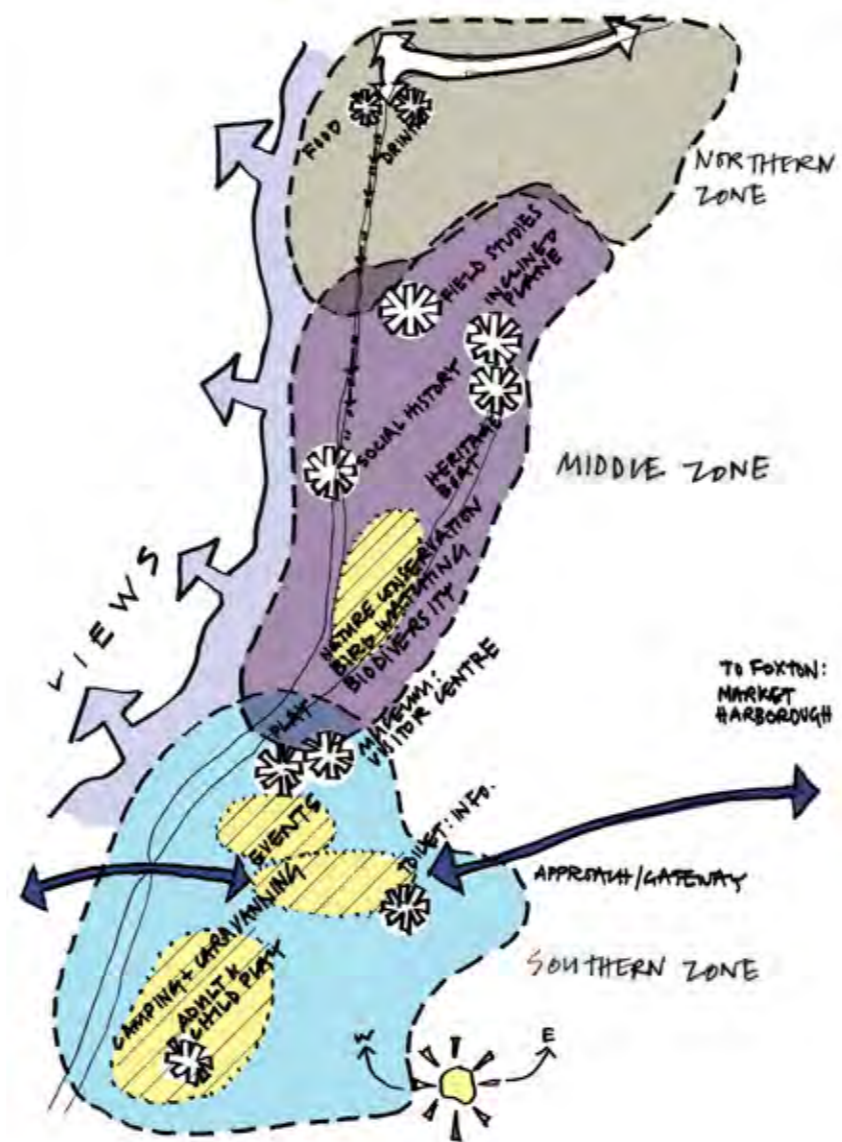
families with children...

It is recognised that this market is not adequately provided for, with a high proportion of visitors to site being over 35. Activities proposed include a floating history canal boat, ballooning, ice cream stalls, coffee stops, play spaces and pony trekking amongst others. These activities are spread around and provide key nodes of activity to 'draw' visitors around site.



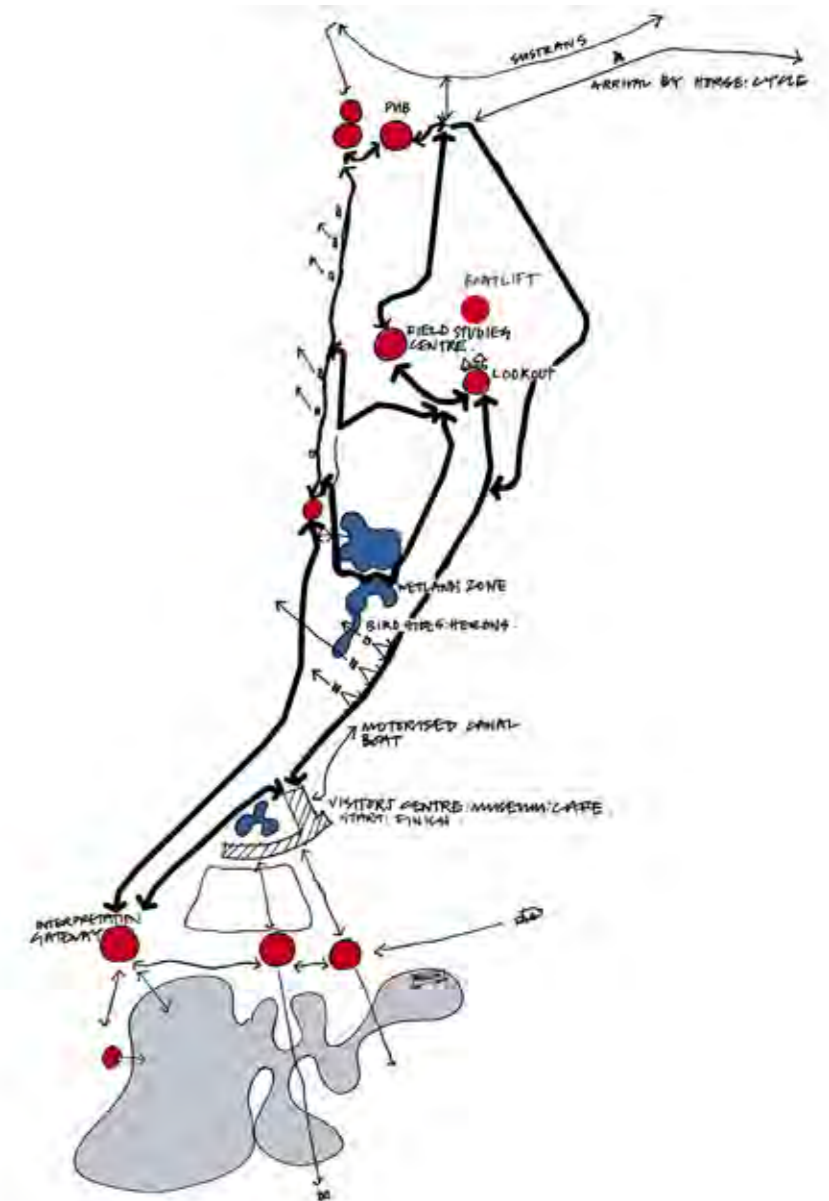
visitor movement....

A network of paths will encourage pedestrian circulation by providing links between the key visitor attractions within the site. This will ensure they experience all of the recreational, cultural, historic and ecological features on offer at Foxton Locks. This "figure of eight" layout will cross the canal at the top of the restored inclined plane and provide for a relatively easy walk around the site. Links also connect the site to the surrounding towns and countryside via the network of roads, public rights of way and Sustrans cycle routes.



zoning....

The Foxton Locks site divides itself neatly into three key zones, each with an individual purpose or character. The southern zone will act as a gateway, featuring a camp site, events and performance space, toilets and the rehoused museum. The middle zone will house the restored boat lift, heritage and learning areas, the ecology park, a moored heritage boat and the northern zone will provide refreshment opportunities as well as additional mooring facilities and cycle hire opportunities.



points of interest....

All of the zones will feature key points of interest that will act as honey pots for visitors, as demonstrated on the above diagram. These will provide draws that lead visitors around to the various attractions.

Component parts of the emerging Masterplan...restoration of the boat lift, visitor moorings, cycle track, eco lodges and overnight accommodation...



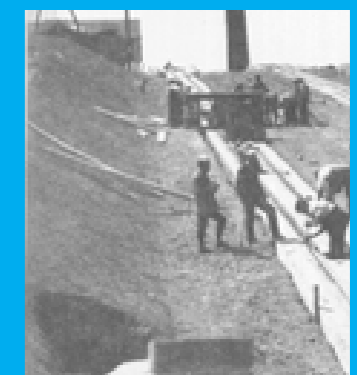
1 Inclined Plane boat lift

The restoration of Foxton's boat lift is the key project at the heart of these proposals.

The historic images below show the Victorian boat lift under construction and in use. It was opened in 1900 to help the canal compete against the railways for business. It has two caissons (water-filled tanks), each capable of carrying 2 narrowboats or a barge. The journey time of 12 minutes, for 2 boats up and 2 boats down, was much quicker than using the 10 locks. Very little water was lost from the caissons, as they carried the 'same' water up and down the slope, saving this precious resource and thus making them more attractive than traditional locks.

The lift worked well, but the similar locks at Watford Gap were never improved and the anticipated increase in traffic didn't appear. This made the lift uneconomic and, in 1911, it was mothballed and subsequently sold for scrap.

The desire is to restore this magnificent feat of Victorian engineering to working condition, to create a visitor attraction of national importance.



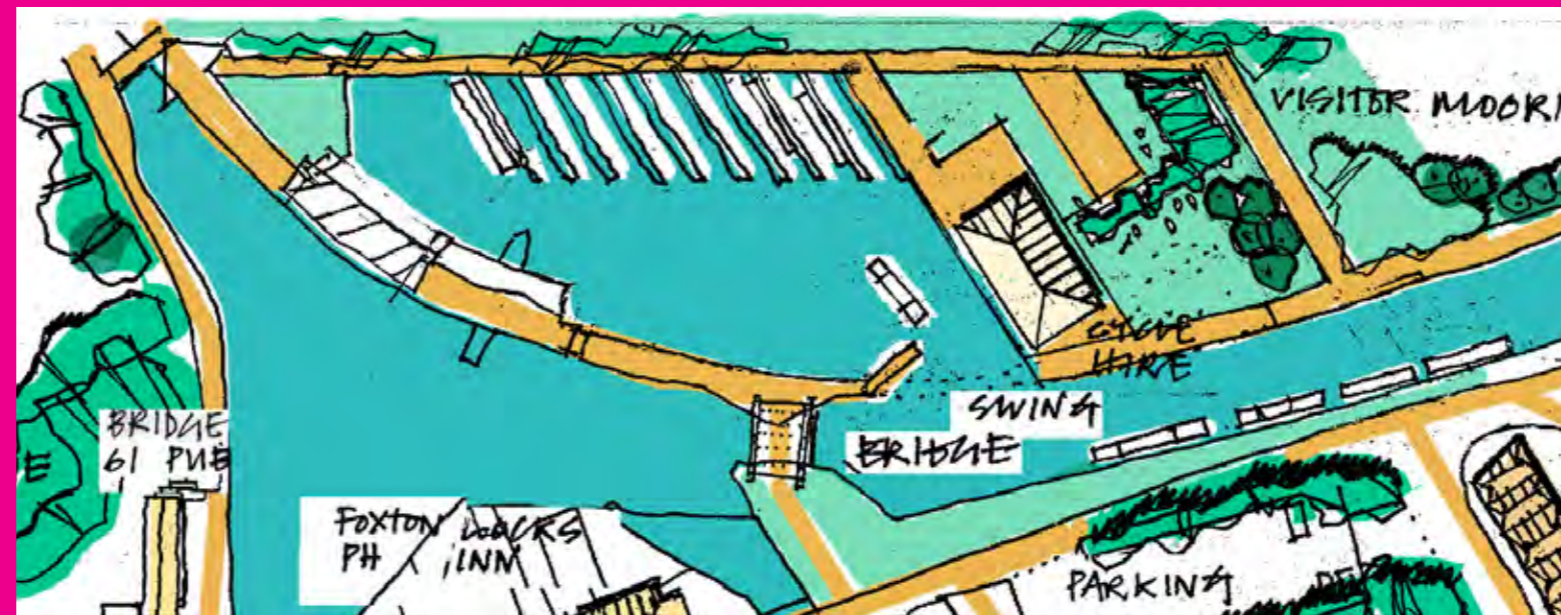
2 Visitor moorings and cycle hire facility



The creation of a mooring basin will provide boaters with an appropriate stop-off point to experience the range of visitor attractions on offer at Foxton Locks. The moorings will also be located close to a selection of establishments providing refreshments.

The promotion of cycling within the vicinity of Foxton Locks is a significant opportunity as the site is positioned along the Sustrans route no:6. In conjunction with the mooring basin will be a bike repair shop and cycle hire centre where families and their children can hire cycles for the day and utilise the Sustrans route, either towards Market Harborough or towards Leicester.

Similar models have been provided by the National Forest and have proved very successful.

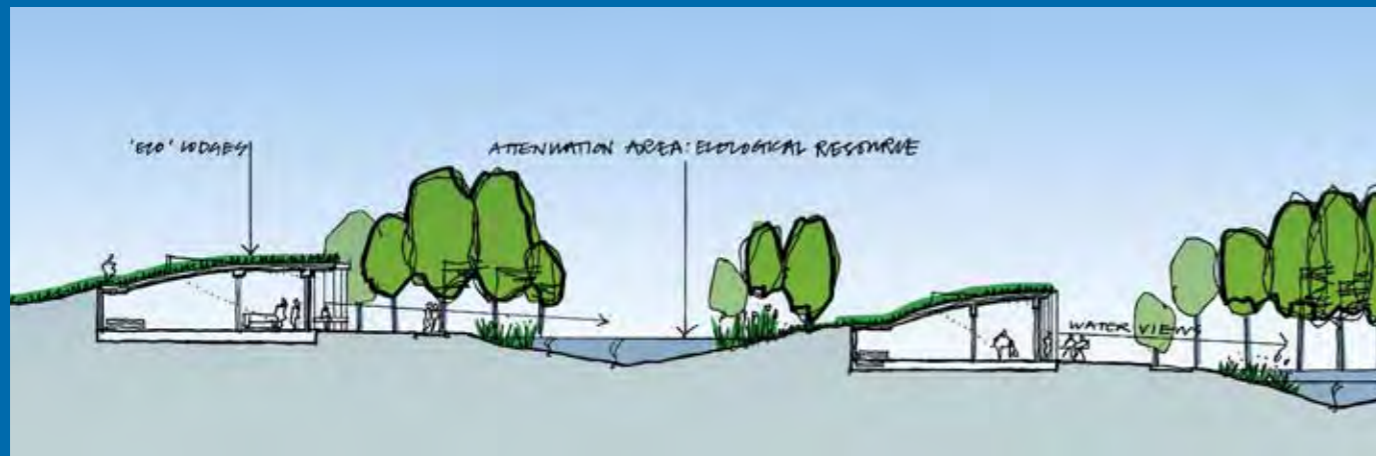


3 Eco Lodges

Eco lodges are proposed for the field adjacent to the access road, and will provide for stays of a few days in a tranquil, ecologically sensitive setting. The images adjacent show a proposal as well as eco lodges at other similar sites.

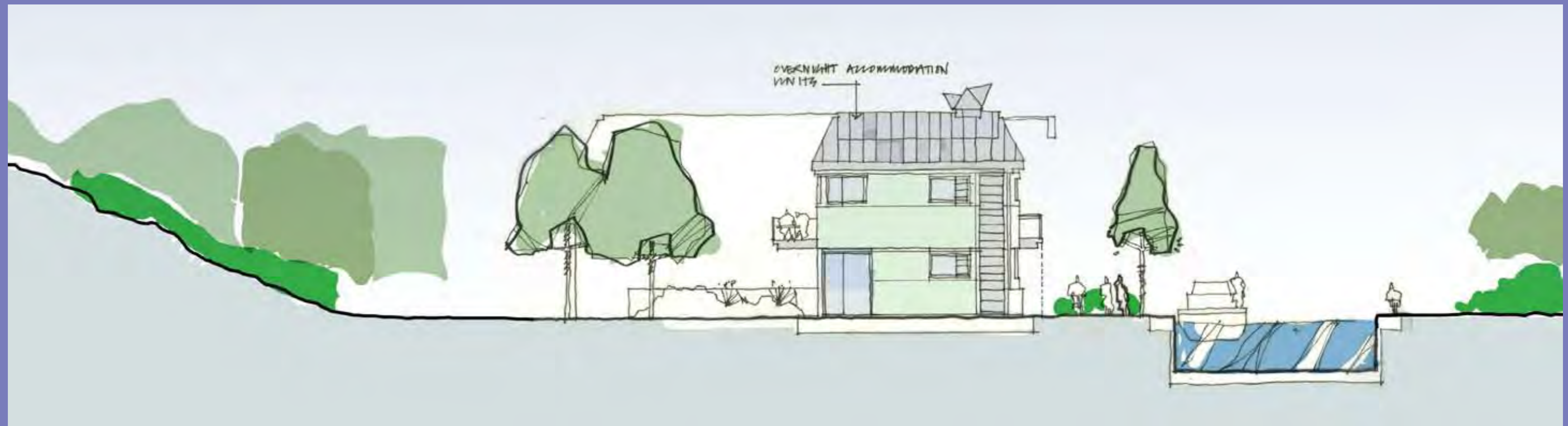
The units are intended to have minimal impact upon the surrounding environment and will utilise the latest thinking in renewables, be highly insulated and energy efficient, and feature grey water

treatment. The units will be prefabricated off site to limit construction periods on site.



4 Overnight Accommodation

A number of overnight accommodation units are proposed to be located on the site of the old boatyard. These could be similar to youth hostel units and designed to blend into the landscape, whilst echoing a canal type vernacular. Accommodation units of this type have been deemed to have been very successful elsewhere in the Leicestershire hinterland.

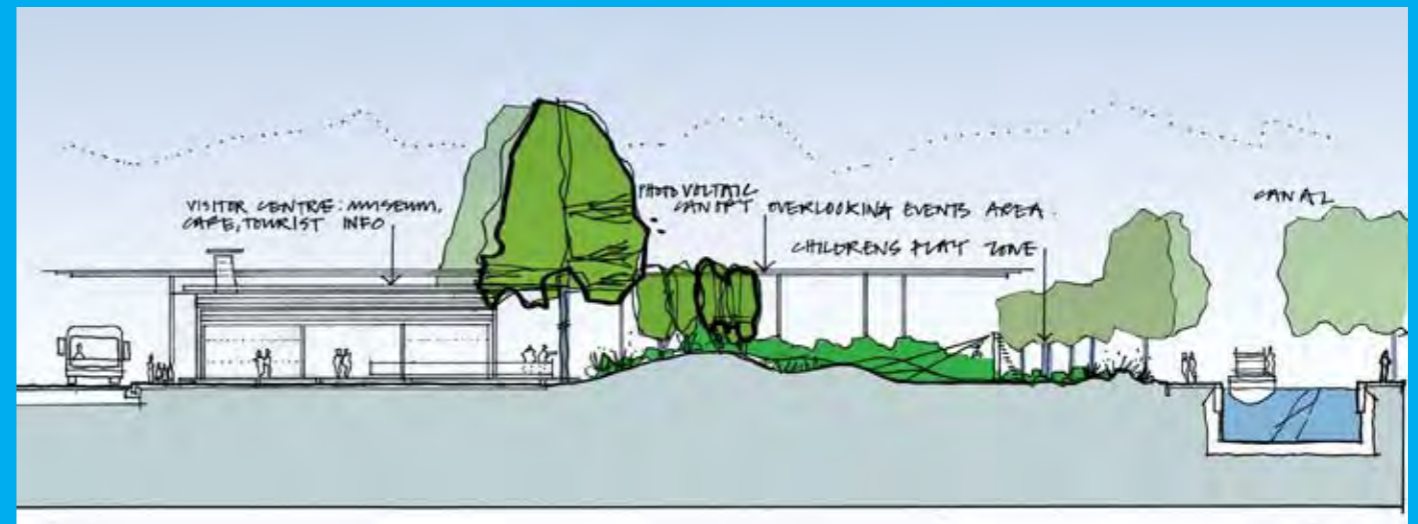




5 Visitor Centre and Play areas

The visitor centre is the key building within the Masterplan strategy, acting as an orientation device and a landmark for visitors to site and is located to maximise advantage of the views over the rolling hills looking north west. It will contain the relocated museum, cafe, toilets and a small shop. An outdoor seating area covered by a canopy will provide shelter on rainy days and will allow a reduction in the scale and impact of the building footprint. An exciting children's play area

will also be provided close by, examples of which are shown on the adjacent page. A typical section of what the visitor centre might look like is shown below, alongside some comparable images.



Play strategy

The play strategy is likely to be based around utilising natural ground forms and water as a learning experience.

It was agreed with by 65% of all respondents during the public consultation exercise. The water theme is important, and water play can be an educational resource, which may be based upon hydro-electric principles, amongst others. It will be similar to an outdoor Science Museum-type learning resource and will need to emphasise that learning is fun.

Play areas could be designed to stimulate the senses and encourage children to explore nature through imaginative play.

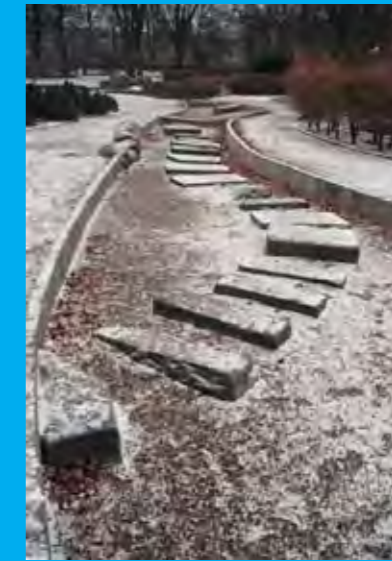
The sensory and water aspects of the garden would make it a place where

children of all abilities can experience and explore nature. In addition, nature related educational activities could be provided for children.

The normal conventions of children's play are likely to be rejected in the design of the play spaces, with the aim of providing a more creative, imaginative environment.

The design of the play area will reflect our belief that whilst safety is essential, children should be challenged in their play and encouraged to respond to different situations.

The following images represent the type of play forms that might be utilised....



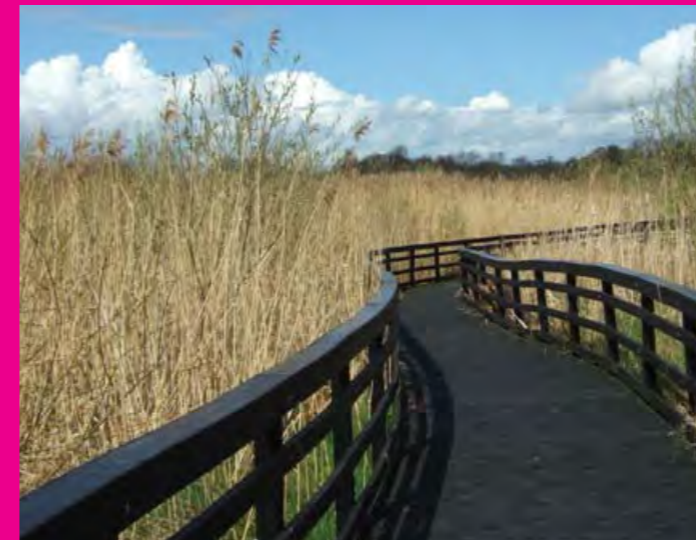
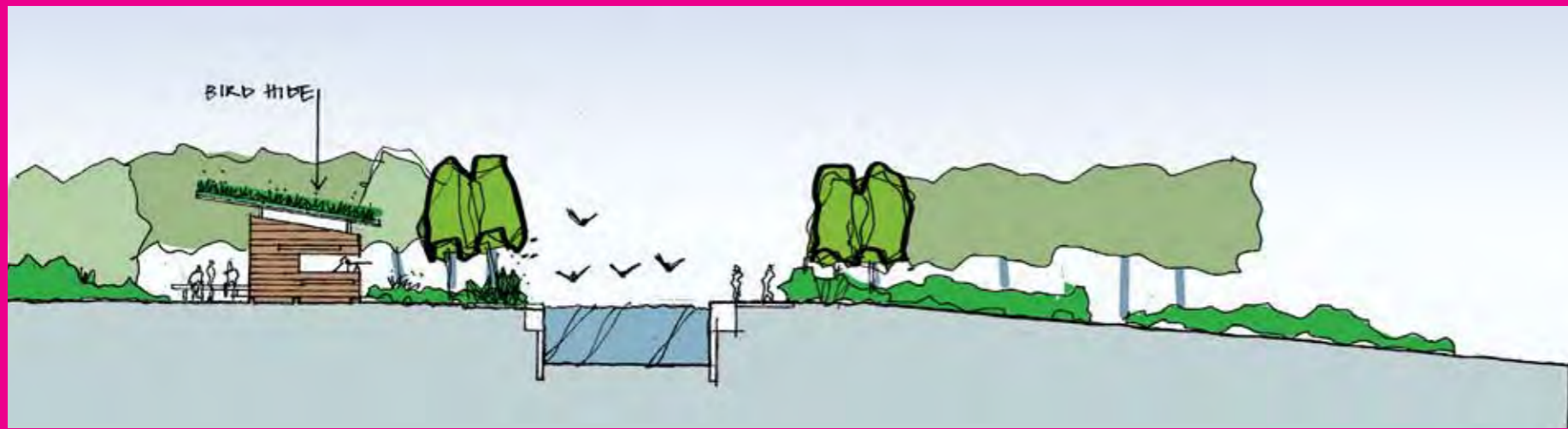
6 Ecology Park

The ecology park is likely to consist of timber boardwalks, bird hides, interpretation boards and pond dipping areas which could be used as a valuable learning resource. A fascinating variety of wildlife thrives at the Locks, including frogs, toads and newts, while there is a huge array of 'minibeasts'. In spring and summer the area comes alive with brightly coloured dragonflies and damselflies, butterflies over the long grass areas. Specially designed bird hides will allow you to watch the many

different species, both local and visiting, without disturbing them. As the seasons change, so do the types of birds that will come to the area.

Whatever the season, there will be something at Foxton locks for everyone - whether it be bird watching, looking at wildflowers or just relaxing in beautiful surroundings.

A typical section of what the ecology park might look like....



7 Events Space

Adjacent to the new visitors centre a new multi purpose events space is proposed. This multi-purpose space is intended to be used for the performing arts, fun days out and learning experiences, as well as festivals, events and rallies'. It is a flexible space capable of holding regionally significant events.

It's significance lies in the fact that it provides the visual platform for the visitors centre and is a key space for visitors to the site. It is intended to be surrounded by a formal avenue of trees linking it visually with the Visitors centre as well as strong belts of indigenous woodland vegetation

to help the area blend in with the character of the surrounding landscape.



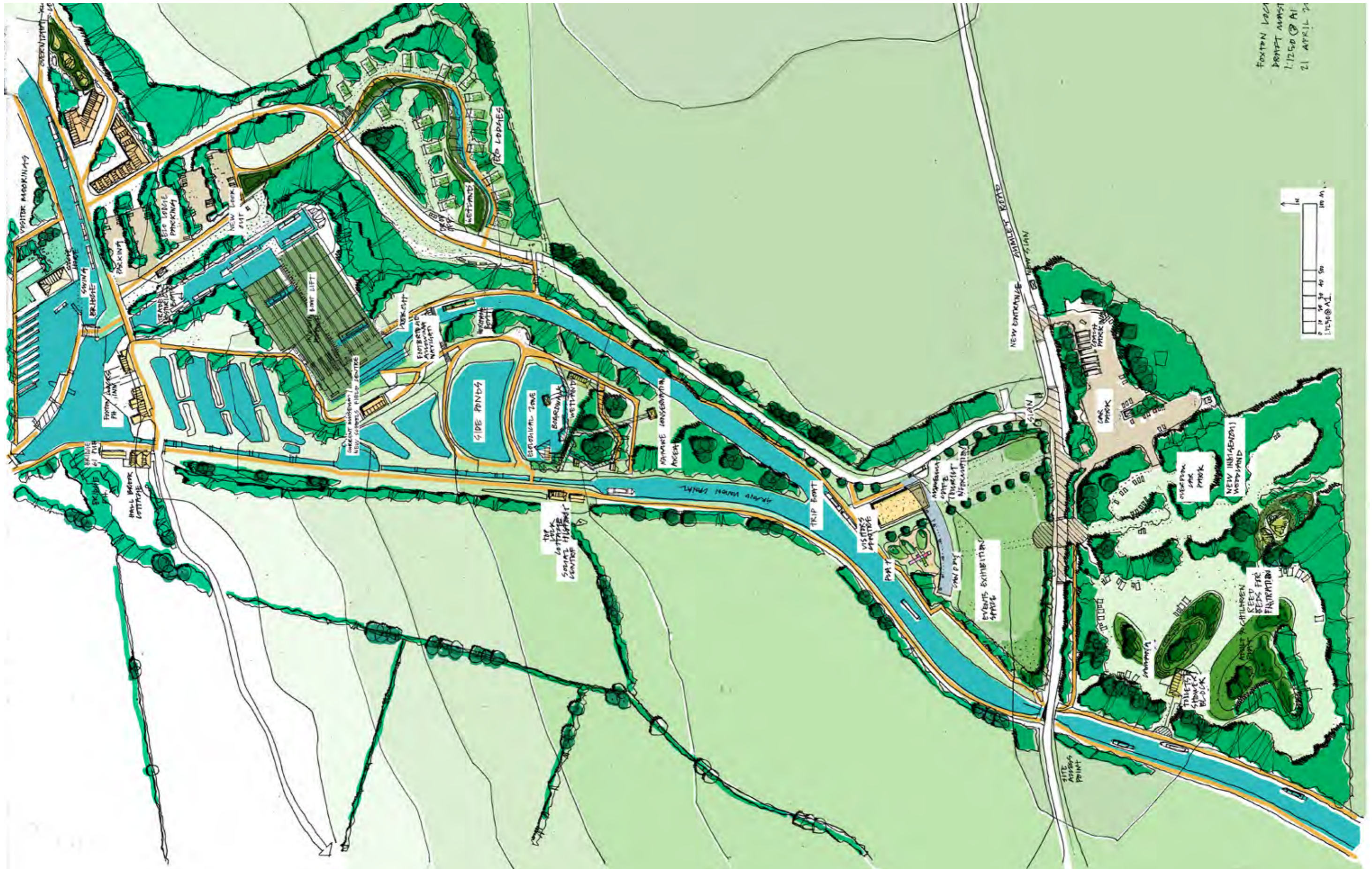
8 Camping Ground / Car Park

The camping ground could provide an informal and attractive green space for visitors staying overnight. It will be located adjacent to the main car park and is likely to comprise a grassy landscape with scattered trees and shrubs, swales and reed beds, grass mounding, a toilet and shower block.

Car parking at the site needs to cater for the regular pub-goers, a 'design day' baseline of visitors to the Foxton Locks visitor experience, and occasional peaks in demand on summer bank holidays. The Masterplan explores the way in which the arrangement of car parks can be combined with an events management strategy to cater both to baseline and to peak demand periods.



The proposed masterplan



Transport and Signage

Proposed visitor numbers to Foxtan Locks would increase by approximately 38% in the 'with boat lift' development scenario.

Visitors are predicted to drive up to 90 minutes to reach the site. Visitors on coach trips may have driven for up to 2.5 hours. This 90 minute trip is indicated in the isochrone diagram opposite.

There are four possible routes that visitors would take to the site. Of these, two are more desirable as they use larger roads and are better able to cope with the traffic, and do not pass through local villages. It is intended that brown tourist attraction signs will direct traffic onto these routes.

The implementation of the new Masterplan would generate 200 new vehicle movements on a summer Sunday. This represents a 21% increase on existing traffic generated by the site, and 50 new traffic movements during the peak hour

Trip generation, routing, and modal share can be influenced by a travel planning process, which would seek to smooth traffic peaks, direct traffic to the most desirable routes, and promote the most sustainable and least congestive modes of transport.

A contingency plan for coping with bank holiday traffic would be produced as part of the travel planning process.

Access routes within the site will be improved to provide better access for mobility impaired visitors.

Trips to the site

The central idea of the Foxtan Locks masterplan is to increase the number of visitors attending the site. This leads to the understandable assumption that traffic will increase in proportion with the increase in numbers of visitors. This is a cause for concern by local residents and the local highways authority, due to the potential for increased traffic to have a negative impact on the local area.

The transport strategy examines the above assumption, looking at the proposed modal split, and the potential impact of travel planning to mitigate against increased traffic. In particular, introducing coach travel to the site is shown to have a large potential mitigating effect.

Routing

Part of the local concern regarding increased traffic numbers relates specifically to traffic driving through the villages of Foxtan and Gumley. The transport strategy therefore includes a study of the routing options that would be taken by visitors from different locations within the attraction's catchment area.

Signage

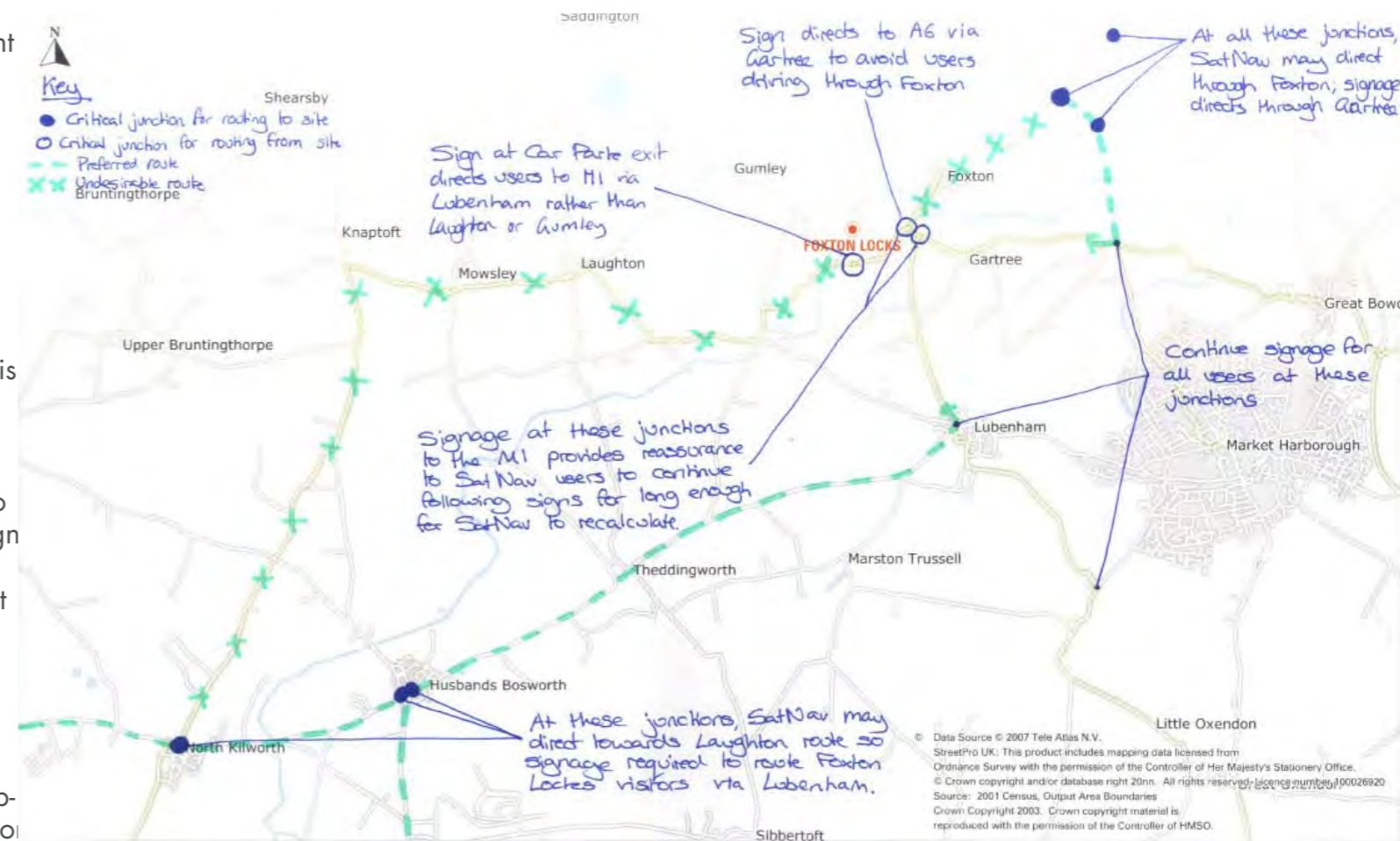
The signage strategy is undertaken from the point of view of minimising the number of drivers driving through Foxtan or Gumley. The strategy identifies preferred alternative routes and the key points at which drivers could be diverted from the less preferable routes onto the preferred ones. Signage is then proposed at these points.

It is recognised that signage has a wider role in terms of marketing the attraction; Signage serves to inform the marketing strategy so that any brown sign that are implemented as a result of the marketing strategy (e.g. on the M1) are installed in a way that contributes to, rather than contradicts the preferred routing strategy outlined within this report.

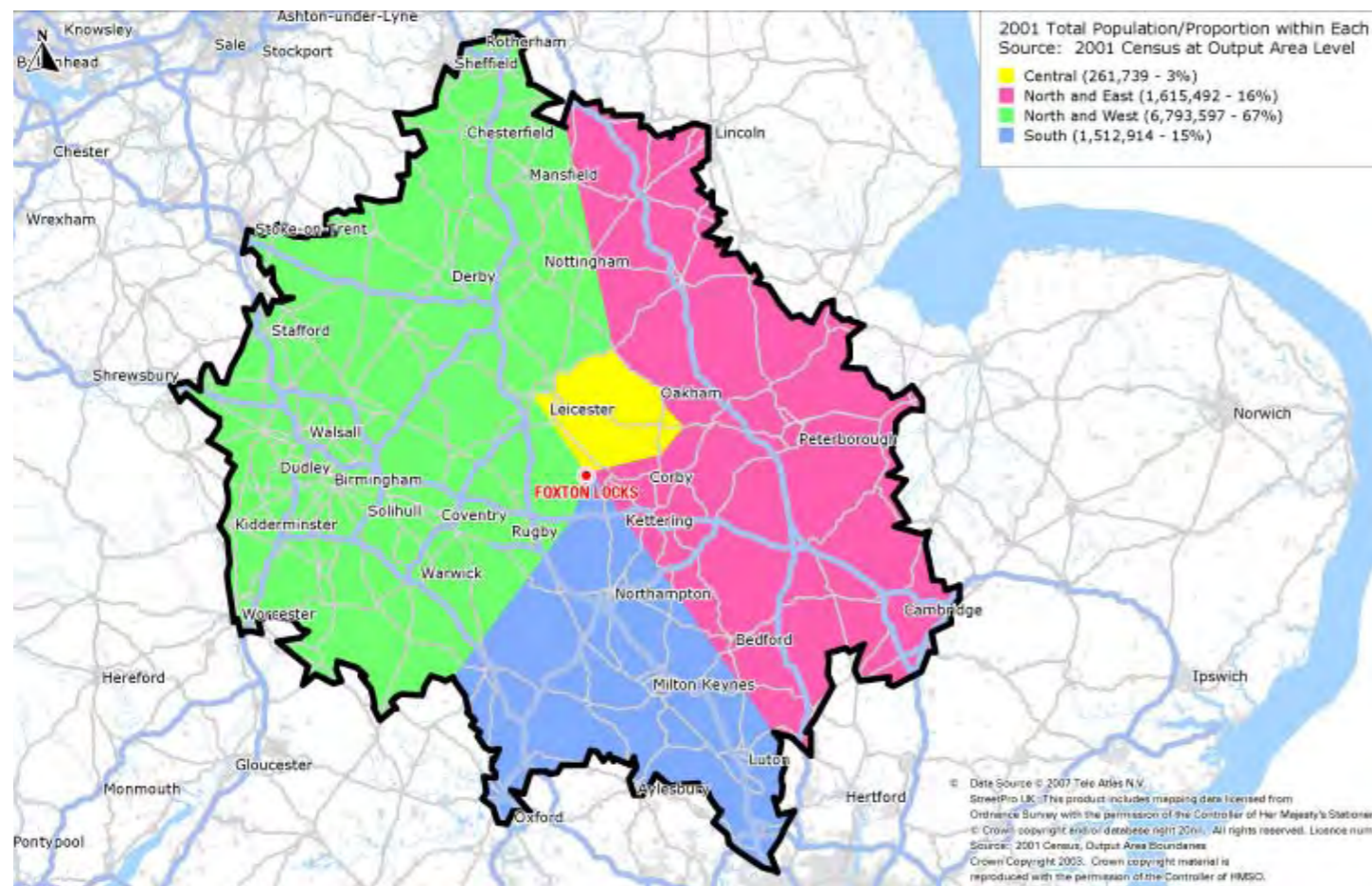
Car parking and traffic management

Car parking at the site needs to cater to regular pub-goers, a 'design day' baseline of visitors to the Foxtan Locks visitor experience, and occasional peaks in demand on summer bank holidays. The masterplan explores the way in which the arrangement of car parks can be combined with an events management strategy to cater both to baseline and to peak demand.

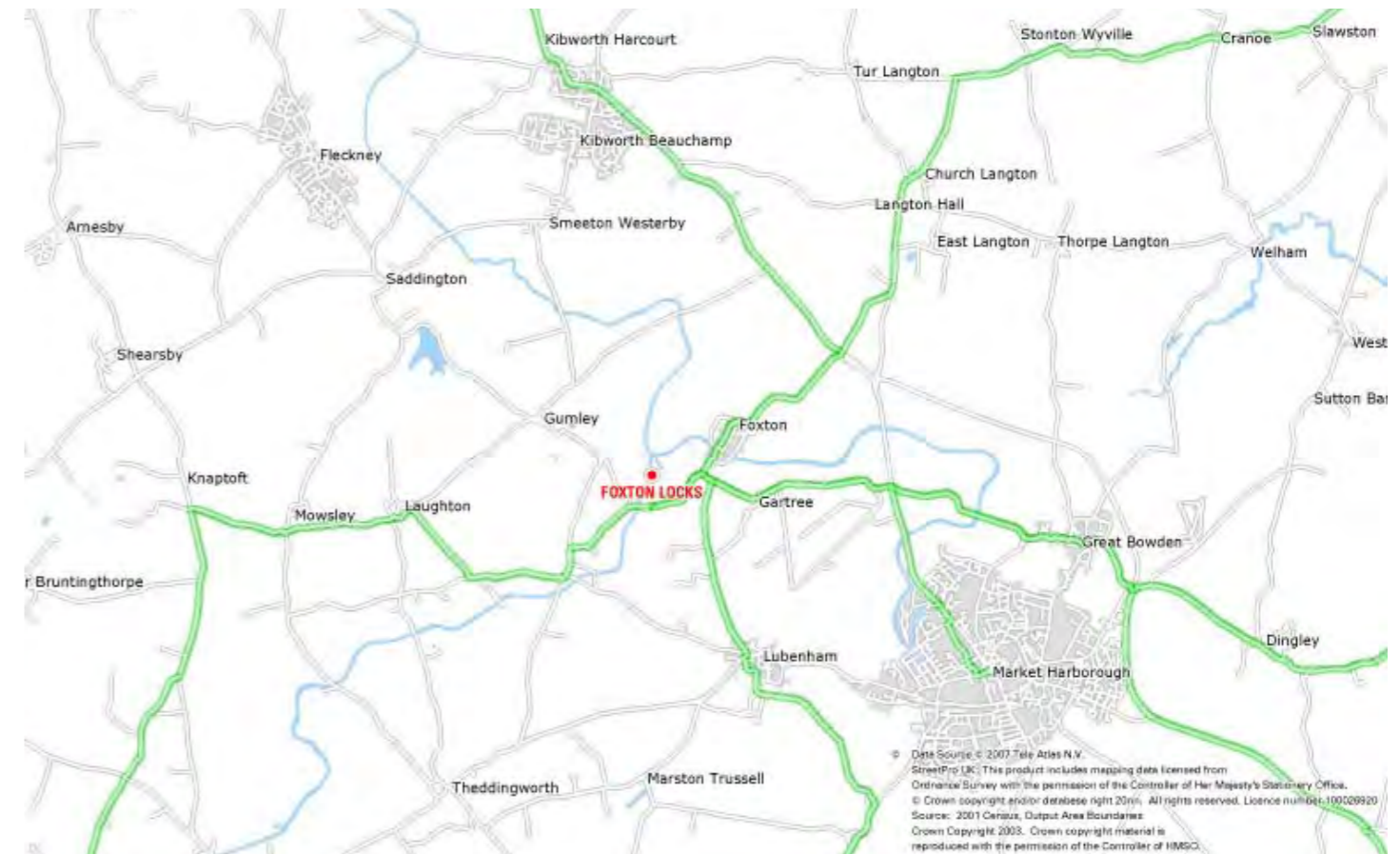
Signage strategy



90 Minute drive isochrone from Foxton Locks



Main long distance strategic access corridors into Foxton Locks

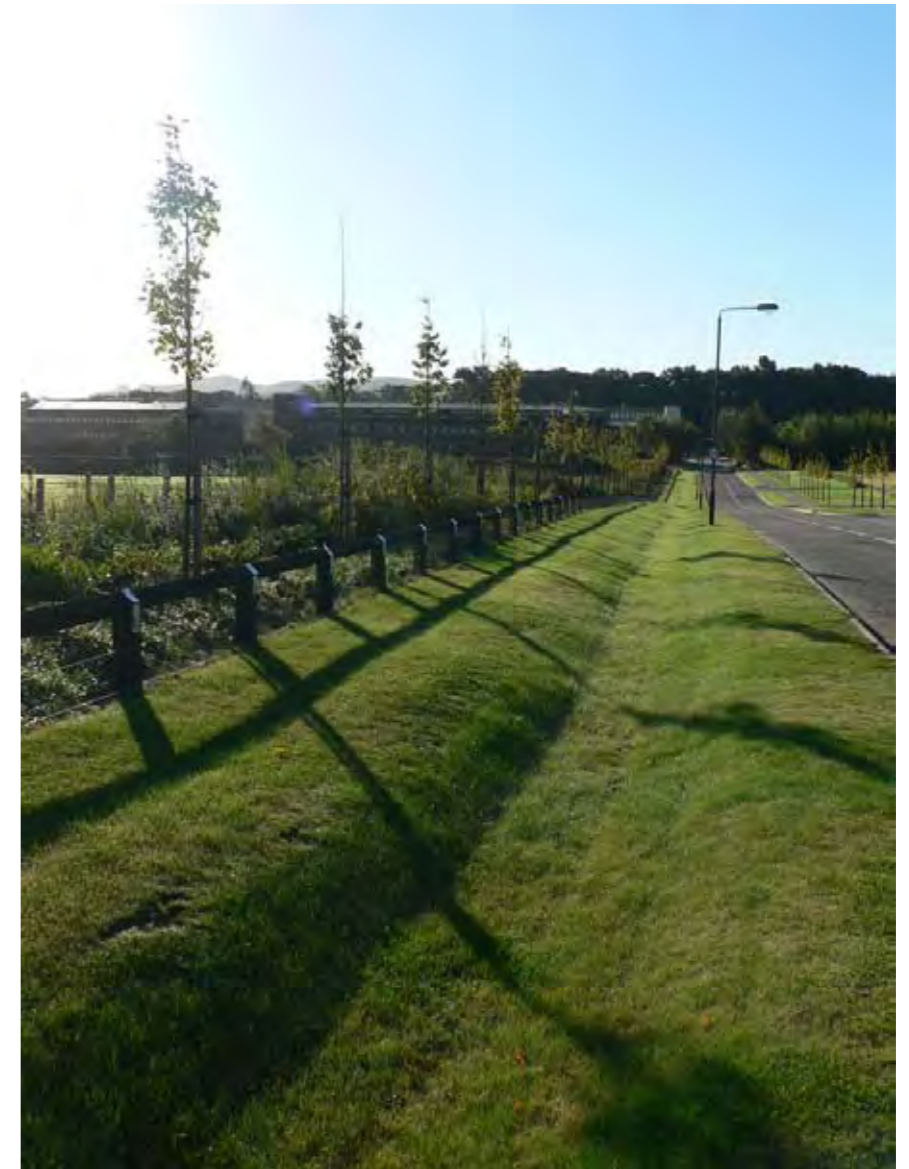


Water Management Strategy

A key component of the scheme could be the collection and removal of surface water in a sustainable manner. The landscape is likely to be designed with a high proportion of soft landscaping areas, allowing surface water to infiltrate into the soil beneath and reducing the potential for flood incidents. Grey water recycling could also be a feature of the camping grounds, the eco lodges and overnight accommodation areas. In these locations a series of ponds and ditches would help to clean and polish waste water prior to either its discharge off site or its potential re-use.

The incorporation of a network of swales will form attractive landscape features around the scheme, alongside serving the important function of promoting return of water to the canal negating the need for some underground drainage systems.

During periods of peak flow and rainfall, water will be channelled towards the on-site attenuation areas which will be located around the site, that will have the added benefit of providing an ecological and a learning resource. However, at most times though surface water run-off will infiltrate directly into the groundwater via swales, ditches and green fields.



Bio-diversity Strategy

The project has the potential to enhance and create a mosaic of additional valuable habitats. A combination of the following habitat/landscape features are proposed:

- The planting of new native woodland belts primarily adjacent to the new camp site together with enhancement and management of existing woodland which will benefit bats and nesting birds in the area.
- New areas of meadow grass particularly within shallow bio-swales managed for water retention and to provide valuable habitats for plants and insects which in turn provide valuable food resources for birds.
- The reinforcement of the existing network of green boundaries via a range of continuous hedges that will become important habitat links. These in time will provide potential commuting and foraging habitat for bats and nesting habitat for birds.
- A comprehensive tree planting strategy, using locally sourced species where possible, to provide a good biological structure improving the biodiversity across the site.
- Additional open water bodies, with soft edges to encourage and promote bio-diversity.

Implementing the above measures could help to contribute to the ecological and visual diversity of the place, by creating a framework for the natural establishment and progression of locally provenant flora and fauna species.



Planting Strategy

Introduction

The planting strategy for the area aims to reinforce and enhance the existing flora. The planting proposal will aim to create a series of different landscape types through the use of plants with differing character.

Naturalistic Planting

Generally, planting will blend into the surrounding natural rural wooded landscape. A mixed native woodland buffer strip could surround the site, providing link with the surrounding woodland context. The woodland could provide an attractive screen which will mitigate any visual impact of the new built form such as the visitors centre.

Open grassland meadow areas will be extended up to woodland boundaries of the site. These areas will have a natural feel and will be managed to encourage native wild flower species.

Formal Planting

Adjacent to the visitors centre, planting is likely to be more formal and appropriate to the straight lines of the built form. In this area, the hard landscape could be softened by extensive tree planting. Roads and pedestrian routes could also be enhanced through new trees to form stronger tree belts.



Hard Materials Strategy

Hard landscape materials within the landscape will be selected for their attractiveness and durability. In addition, sustainability issues will be considered and in line with aims for management of surface water, the intention will be to use permeable paving solutions in car parking areas and for footpaths.

The highest quality materials are likely to be used within the public realm in the immediate vicinity of the visitors centre and within other high-use areas.

A simple palette of materials will be used, with the materials selected used to define the character of individual spaces. Changes in material colour and texture could be used to separate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle routes.



Public consultation

Consultee views:

A Public Consultation event was held on the 12th May 2009 at the Black Horse pub in Foxton Village. Representatives from the following organisations and agencies were in attendance:

British Waterways
Harborough Borough Council
Leicestershire County Council
Leicester Shire promotions
Foxton Inclined Plane Trust
Foxton Parish Council
Foxton Boatyard / Shop
Old Union Canal Society
Scottish and Newcastle Pub enterprises
Harborough Museum

The consultation sought comments on the emerging Masterplan proposals. In addition to the working boat lift, the proposals included several projects to improve facilities for visitors and to make better use of the site, as well as contributing financially towards a sustainable boat lift.

These proposals will provide a high quality experience for visitors, as well as creating a substantial number of new jobs and enabling investment in the boat lift. On its own, it is recognised that a working boat lift is not economically viable.

Comments from Q and A Session at Public consultation:

1. Purpose of site is to move boats – safety is a concern if attracting more visitors. a working boatlift will disperse the visitors
2. How will we make money from these additional visitors ?
3. How will the crossing paths (figure of eight) get over the Upper Arm. plan shows “footbridge allowing navigation”, detail design to follow.
4. Why are we promoting cycling when our contractors leave thorns which give ‘multiple punctures.
5. Happy with most of the proposals, but concerned by large size of mooring basin entrance
6. Marina occupiers don’t want to be looked at as a tourist attraction, but more moorings look good.
7. As a boater, prefer the mooring option – spaces for visitors with 1 – 2 night stop.
8. Main income will come from the eco lodges, which are sensitively sited.
9. Liked viewing platform at the bottom of the Plane, but it should be covered, for shelter, and built into the bank. Mike Beech – this is where the Visitor Centre should be located.
10. Most of the buildings aren’t intrusive, but those on the boatyard site will change the character. There are masses of sympathetic canalside buildings, therefore not a problem.
11. If everything is provided, will it generate enough income?
12. HLF will provide the capital, as it involves people and jobs
13. Falkirk doesn’t make a profit – the income goes outside BW into the local economy. Wants break even or make profit – which can go into supporting BW
14. We can charge boaters to use it

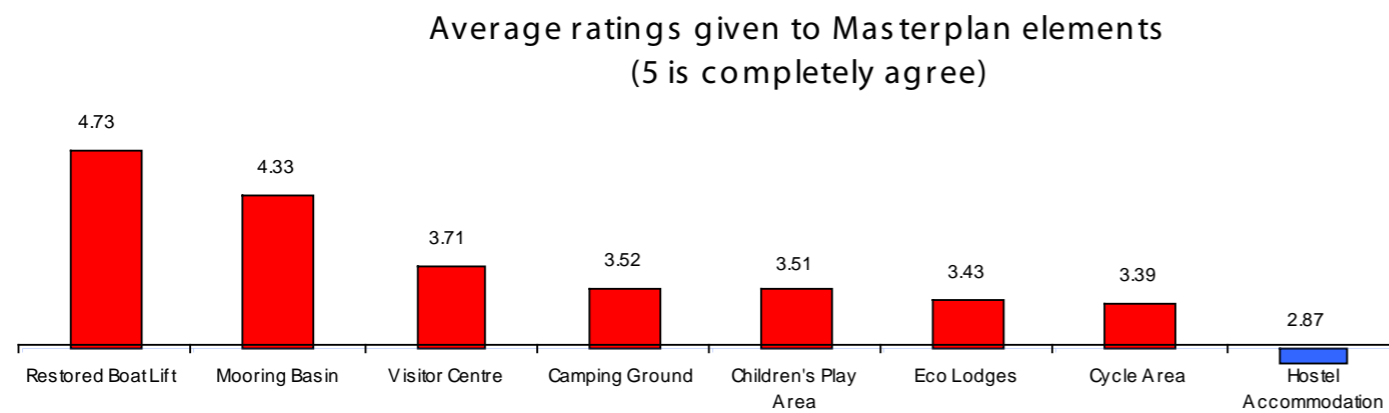
15. Opportunities for local businesses. All businesses need to work together
16. The restructuring map shows Foxton cut in half.
17. If not careful, other businesses will go broke.
18. Lots on a small site which is already congested. Should incorporate the village study centre (original village school) – extend the walk into the village
19. Why not include caravans ?
20. Conservation Area, so must comply with relevant policies. Keen to update the previous masterplan and comment. At officer-level – want development at appropriate level and retain character.
21. Needn’t all appear on Day One – could be phased - but do need critical mass.
22. Overnight stays is good for the region and also increases funding opportunities. Beryl McDowall – they will spend more too, so look again at caravans.
23. It was a designated Caravan Club site. They can have 6 caravans at a time, plus run rallies with 50 / 60 coming.

24. Liked the balance. Children’s activities – excellent
25. It is the car park income that is keeping it going
26. Where will boaters wind
27. Will the boatlift be open all year round?
28. Month is too short for societies to comment
29. It must be driven by steam.



Public consultation feedback Summary

Following the draft masterplan consultation open day at The Black Horse Inn, Gumley on May 12th 2009, members of the public were invited to give their views by responding to a questionnaire either by post or on-line via the partnership website. The closing date was June 9th. The web-page registered 1157 hits, indicating a high level of interest.



Ratings above the line reflect a positive response, ratings below the line reflect a negative response

Findings

Respondents were asked, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being completely disagree and 5 being completely agree, the extent to which they were in favour of several key features of the Masterplan.

An average rating was calculated for those responses (maximum score 5 equals completely agree):

There was a positive response given to all but one of the proposed Masterplan elements.

The most popular features were the restored boat lift and the mooring basin, both of which received ratings indicating that on average respondents were strongly in favour of these elements.

The visitor centre received ratings indicating that on average respondents were in favour of this element.

The camping ground, children's play area, ecolodges and cycle area were each given a broadly positive average rating.

The response to the hostel-style accommodation was ambivalent to slightly negative.

Response to Individual Elements: Restored Boat Lift

The vast majority of respondents (88%) completely agreed with the restoration of the Boat Lift. Supporting comments mentioned its unique status, its heritage and educational value and it being the main focus of Foxton Locks.

"This is the unique attraction at Foxton - it would be the only working inclined plane lift in Britain and would be an attraction of local, regional and international appeal. All the other proposed amenities could be provided anywhere - and already are - so the restoration of the boat lift should be the 'raison d'être' and central to any application for 'public' funding - either Heritage Lottery or other."

The few dissenting comments were concerned about the costs of the restoration and the spoiling of the site that would come with the restoration.

Mooring basin

The majority of respondents either completely agreed (58%) or agreed (24%) with the inclusion of the mooring basin. Only a minority disagreed. In their comments respondents recognised the integration of the moorings with the restoration of the Boat Lift as well as expressing concerns that any development be sympathetic to the site:

"This is a MUST! Foxton is about the canal and boats, More visitor moorings on site are needed and a working boat lift would attract a lot more visiting boats."

"Development will attract more stopping boaters. Care please not to develop a huge car park effect"

Visitor centre, cafe and shop

The majority of respondents either completely agreed (47%) or agreed (29%) with the Visitor Centre. A significant minority strongly disagreed (19%) or disagreed (2%).

There was some polarity in the comments expressed between those who strongly felt such a facility was essential and those who were less convinced that a visitor centre was justified without the restoration of the Boat Lift:

"Visitor centre will provide the info to enable visitors to understand the site. A better space for the museum will contribute to their understanding and they will need somewhere to refresh themselves"

"The current facilities are in no way up to speed for a regional attraction"

"Only provided this facility is provided as an ancillary amenity to a restored working boat lift. If not such a centre would just be an attempt to create a nostalgic 'theme park' at Foxton which would meet with great resistance from local residents and have no regional, national or international significance."

Camping ground

Just over half the respondents either agreed (33%) or completely agreed (24%) with including a camping ground.

Supporting comments mentioned the benefits from opening up to new markets, increasing the number of overnight stays and the associated increase in revenue. It was also seen as a relatively cost effective facility.

"To encourage visitors, especially families, to spend more time at the site and in the locality"

Concerns about its appearance, supervision and maintenance were reasons given for not agreeing with the camping ground.

"Yes, but there would need to be a warden for the campsites"

Play area

The majority of respondents either completely agreed (29%) or agreed (29%) with the inclusion of the Visitor Centre. A minority either completely disagreed (13%) or disagreed (11%).

Comments included concerns over the lack of child-friendly facilities on site as well as concerns over safety:

"Careful control of children on site is vital"

"Having visited recently with two 4 year olds, no play ground meant we had to leave early as they wanted the swings"

The potential value of the family market was recognised as was the opportunity to create a bespoke facility:

"Families need somewhere that is child centred. The play area should be unusual and related to the canals in some way. That will encourage families to return and spend more"

"Children are great at encouraging adults out to good play areas!! Once there they may go for a walk and use facilities and come back time and time again"

A minority of respondents felt Foxton Locks wasn't the place for children:

"We don't want a 'theme park'. Children should come here to learn. they can play elsewhere!"

Ecolodges

Over half of respondents either completely agreed (27%) or agreed (27%) with the inclusion of the Ecolodges. A fifth of respondents either completely disagreed (18%) or disagreed with this element.

In the comments, there was recognition given of the economic benefits of the Ecolodges. However, this was tempered by a strong desire not to overdevelop the site.

"this fits in with the green credentials of the site and will provide reasonably priced accommodation for families"

"Full consideration must be given to impact that long stay parking requirements for lodges will have on the current predominant short term parking for day visitors"

Cycle area

Half the respondents either completely agreed (30%) or agreed (20%) with the inclusion of a cycle area. Just over a quarter of respondents either completely disagreed (18%) or disagreed (8%) with this element.

Responses indicated that this element was not as popular as the mooring basin and should therefore complement rather than compete with it:

"Not at the expense of the Visitor Mooring Basin. Cycle areas can be created anywhere, mooring basins can only be created in a very limited number of locations"

Comments tended to include caveats indicating that controlled cycling only was welcome:

"Cycle hire only preferred. Must link into current cycle offer. Leisurely/recreational cycling to be encouraged and NOT serious offroading"

"The site is unsuitable for cyclists, however something adjacent to the site could attract a different visitor group providing sufficient cycle paths/routes were available near to the site"

Hostel style accommodation

Responses to the hostel-style accommodation was roughly evenly divided amongst the full range of agreement options, with approximately the “smallest third” agreeing, the “largest third” disagreeing and a further third sitting on the fence.

Comments reflected this range of opinion:

“Provision of camping, eco lodges & ‘hostel’s is overkill, visually unsatisfactory, unlikely to bring significant income”

“This would extend overnight offer. Must have full sustainability designed in eg YH at Moira in National Forest”

“This would provide an additional lower cost facility but should we not be providing a limited number of high quality accommodation units?”

Additional Comments

Additional comments ranged from general comments of support to suggestions for additional features and activities, to concern about over-development of the site and associated increases in visitor numbers.

“Good luck!”

“ Whilst I agree you need some sort of visitor centre as people first enter the site from the top car park, it would also be wonderful to have a visitor centre/cafe/boat lift ticket office with views over the inclined plane.”

“ The idea of a wildlife area with boardwalk is I think a major one,needs to be expanded on.”

“What about a Noddy type train to get around the site”

“It will be spoilt for ages with lots of building going on. It will be so busy it will no longer be a pleasure to visit!”

“The point of historic sites is that they are just that - historic. Not modern interpretations and restorations”

“Just go for it”

The Masterplan refined

Following receipt of the public consultation feedback, three key amendments were made to a number of the Masterplan elements

These were, in no particular order:

1. The number of eco lodges shown on the Masterplan was reduced.
2. The play area was represented as a water play space with interactive elements, rather than a standard play area.
3. The area indicated as being solely for long term moorings was amended to show moorings and a cycle hire facility.

Planning

The design team met with Harborough District Council (Brett Culpin / Steve Pointer / Gareth Jones) on 9th March 2009 to discuss the emerging masterplan.

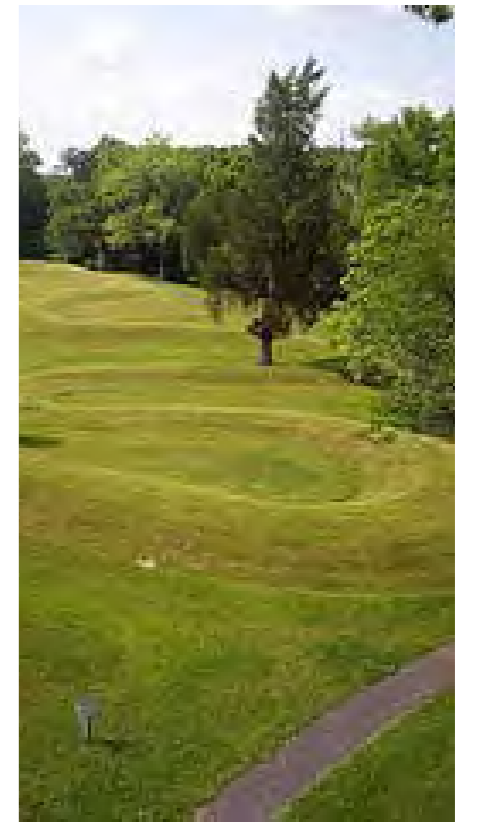
It was suggested that the proposals might become Strategic Planning guidance, helping to inform the emerging Local Development Framework. Key points of note that emerged from the meeting:

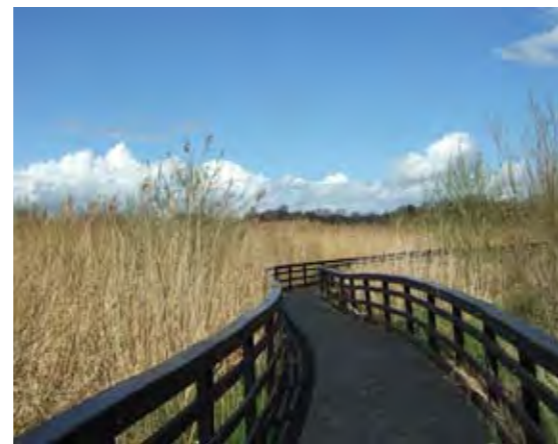
The need for a green travel plan.

Only camping on the camp site, not caravanning. Strong support was expressed for the hostels and the eco lodges to provide accommodation for visitors and school groups.

Two storey overnight accommodation was deemed to be appropriate adjacent to the waters edge.

Interest within the proposals would be strong from the the local universities and archeological interest in the area would be high.





Conclusion:

The delivery of the Masterplan will provide an additional jewel to Leicestershire's tourism offer.

The offer is strong and has the potential to become a draw of national significance. The vision is built upon a commitment to exemplar standards of architecture and landscape which places an emphasis on pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired.

The Masterplan that has been created is intended to provide a clear vision for the transformation of the existing site into an exciting tourism focused development that will be of social, economic and physical benefit to Foxton and its environs.



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