



Cambridge Sport Lakes



Executive Summary Environmental Statement

CAMBRIDGE SPORT LAKES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This document provides a brief overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) commissioned by Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust to investigate and assess the environmental issues associated with the proposed Sport Lakes development between Milton and Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire.

The site is located 4.5 km north of Cambridge city centre, beyond the A14 trunk road and largely runs parallel to the Cambridge to Waterbeach railway line. The 95.1 ha lakes and park will be bordered on the north by Car Dyke Road and on the south by Milton. The site is currently flat fenland in agricultural use. A map showing the location of the site is provided in Figure 01.

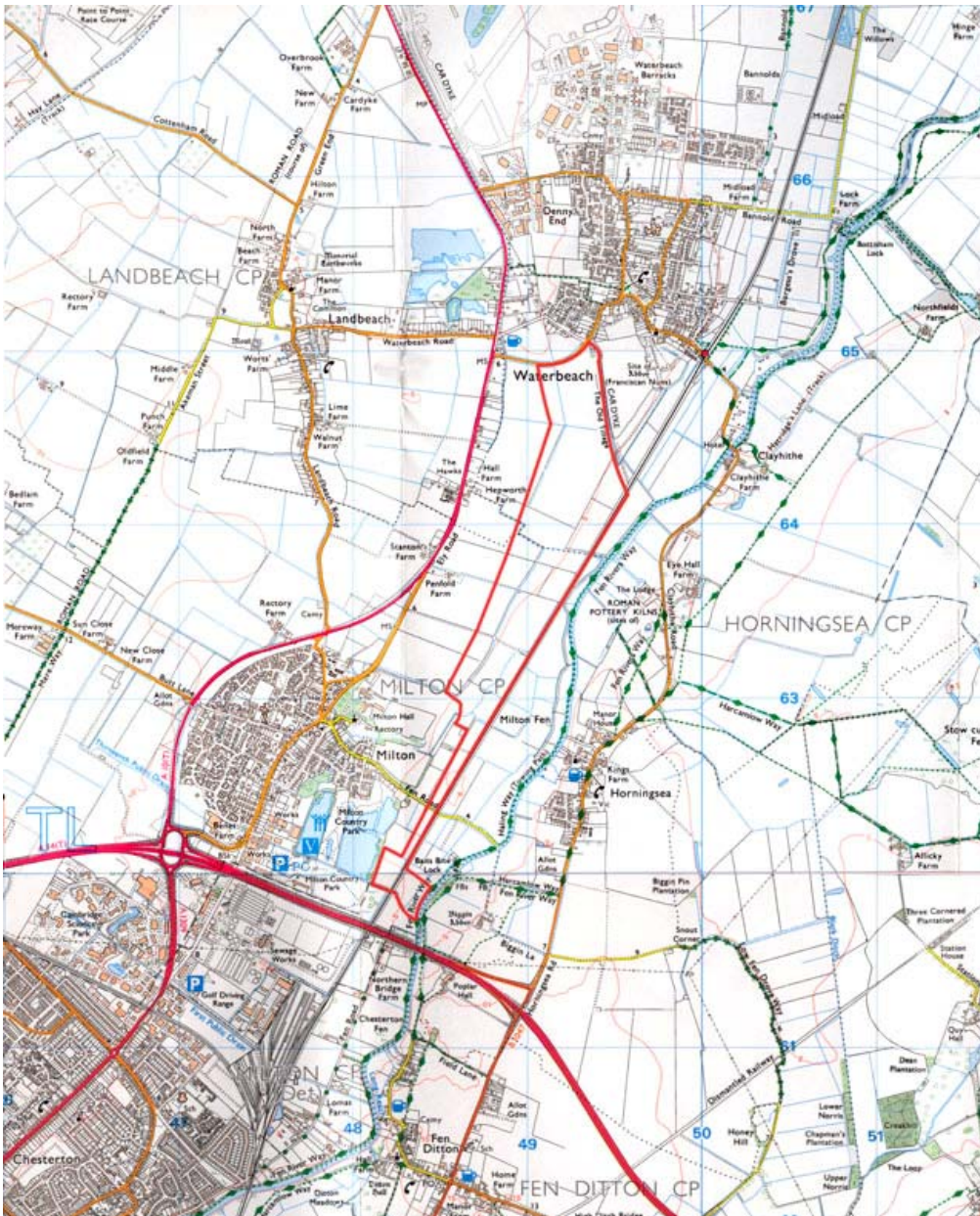


Figure 01
Site Location Plan

Proposed Development

The scheme will provide a 2000 m Competition Lake and a 1000 m Training Lake for rowing and canoeing, as well as a lake for angling. The lakes will be connected to the River Cam by a canal. Cambridge Sport Lakes offers a breathing space for the public where hundreds can pursue outdoor recreation on a daily basis. Special events and competitions will bring 20,000 visitors to the park each year to enjoy the 100 acres of undulating wooded parkland and nature trails. The park will provide sites for triathlon, BMX, cycling, camping and caravanning together with a Sports Centre and other ancillary buildings. The masterplan is shown in Figure 02.



Figure 02
Site Plan of Proposed Sport Lakes

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Environmental Impact Assessment considers the proposals against site-specific issues identified by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) in accordance with the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999*, and against current national, regional and local planning policies. It addresses the following issues: landscape, hydrology, ground pollution, ecology (flora and fauna), archaeology and heritage, transport, public access and health impacts.

The creation of Cambridge Sport Lakes offers a significant environmental gain that would be achieved by provision of two lakes running between the A10 north of Milton and the adjacent railway line, with the planting of bands of trees and landscaping for walking, running, and cycling. Another gain derives from the reduction of flood-risk achieved by an increase of 34% in pondage for the River Cam through the canal to the lake area. The site will offer enhanced ecological benefits from the increases in water habitat and tree/shrub coverage. There would be some disruption and some loss of ecological habitat during construction, but these can be limited and mitigated.

The visual appearance would be enhanced by introduction of some planted embankments near the railway route. Pedestrian and cycle access to the site for the public would be improved with new paths that link Waterbeach to Milton and Cambridge. There would be vehicle access, but only from the north with vehicle routes which are shielded from the edges of the site to the west and north. Most vehicular access to the site for large sporting events would be by public transport using the Park and Rides situated nearby.

The Environmental Statement, complimented by supporting studies analyses the benefits and issues of the project: these are summarised below.

1. HYDROLOGY

Flood Risk and Ground Pollution (See Volume 3 : Mott Macdonald Stage 1 Flood Risk Assessment).

- a) The flood risk from the River Cam will be significantly reduced because there will be an increase of 275,000m³ of pondage which will increase flood storage on the River Cam above Baits Bite Lock by 34% or a total volume of 420,000m³.
- b) The existing land drainage will be replaced in the area of development, with connecting cut-off drainage around the lakes and water pumps to maintain the current water table: the area is under laid by 1.5m ground and then 15m of Gault Clay.
- c) Local aquifers that provide water resources will be protected by the selected method of constructing and sealing of the lake beds.

2. LANDSCAPE

- a) There are no statutory designated sites within the area.
- b) There will be a loss of some existing trees and of (mostly irregular) hedgerow, and of grassland and ditches. (See Volume 2 : Landscape Design Masterplan by Lovejoy).
- c) New planting will include a continuous belt of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees of selected species, large numbers of shrubs, (some 3 km of hedgerow) and grassland and ditches will be replaced.
- d) Landscaping will include contouring to above ground level providing general interest and cover for the railway line and also outwards from the site to adjacent roads.

3. ECOLOGY

- a) There are no statutory designated sites within the area affected by the proposals.
- b) The current ecology includes (limited breeding and wintering birds, reptiles, water voles, otters) (See Volume 4 : Mott Macdonald Ecology and Nature Conservation).

- c) There will be disruption on the site and to adjacent areas during construction which is planned to take a total of approximately eighteen months. This will be mitigated before construction starts by detailed searching and safe removal of any protected species in consultation with the appropriate statutory bodies, with provision of alternative habitat.
- d) The new planting of woodland, shrubs, hedges and grassland and the new water margins and ditches will provide greater and better habitat than at present.

4. ARCHAEOLOGY

Field evaluations by Oxford Archaeology suggest that significant archaeological interest is unlikely. The steps recommended in Volume 5 : Research Design for Archaeological Mitigation by Oxford Archaeology Unit will be followed for the whole site in consultation with the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Office. Nearby Conservation Areas will not be adversely affected due to the new development being effectively screened by earth mounding and extensive tree planting.

5. HERITAGE

There are no conservation areas or other protected areas on the site. The site lies close to the Milton Park area and mitigation measures will ensure that any effects during construction are mitigated and that on completion of the project, the amenities of the park will be better than at present through planting and landscaping.

6. TRANSPORT

Increases in car traffic to and from the site will be minimised by the existing good public transport and cycleway links to the site. (See Volume 6 : Transport Assessment by John Allen Consulting) There will be improved pedestrian and cycle access, especially from the SE and SW. Vehicle access will enter off the Car Dyke at Waterbeach.

For large events, it is proposed that public transport will be provided under a traffic management plan that relies on satellite parking at remote Park and Ride locations to bring visitors to the park via shuttles. The plan would be coordinated with the Police and the local highway authority

7. CONSTRUCTION ON SITE

The only buildings to be constructed on the site will be the Sports Centre, boathouse, two residential accommodations for Wardens and amenity blocks for visitors.

8. HEALTH

There will be noise, dust and some vibration on the site during construction but the effects of that will not reach adjacent residential accommodations to any significant extent. All excavated material will stay on site.

The health benefits after construction are considerable in the facilities for sport and outdoor recreation for individual members of the public who live nearby and those who will do so in the future, those who visit and for those in the local, regional and national sports teams for rowing, canoeing, triathlon, cycling and BMX.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Following the submission of the planning application, there will be an opportunity for any interested parties to make their views clear. The planning application, Environmental Statement and supporting documents are available for viewing at the following location(s):

Planning Department
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne, Cambs CB3 6EA

The Environmental Statement and Non-Technical Summary are also available from Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust at Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust, Murdoch House, Station Road, Cambridge CB1 2RS

There is a charge of £50 for each copy of the Environmental Statement requested. The Non-Technical Summary is available free of charge.