Feasibility Study Sutton to Earith

25 April 2024

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About Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Join us on our journey. **www.sustrans.org.uk.**

Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland).

Our vision
A society where the way we travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone.

Our mission
We make it easier for people to walk and cycle.

How we work

— **We make the case for walking and cycling** by using robust evidence and showing what can be done.

— **We provide solutions**. We capture imaginations with bold ideas that we can help make happen.

— **We're grounded in communities**, involving local people in the design, delivery and maintenance of solutions.

What we do

Contact us

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1. Executive summary

This report explores the potential for new cycling and walking routes connecting the communities of Sutton and Earith. Currently, the main means of connecting these two communities is via the B1381 - a fast road route that is far from suitable for cycling, although in times of high water levels even that route is not available and a much longer route on major roads via Chatteris has to be used.

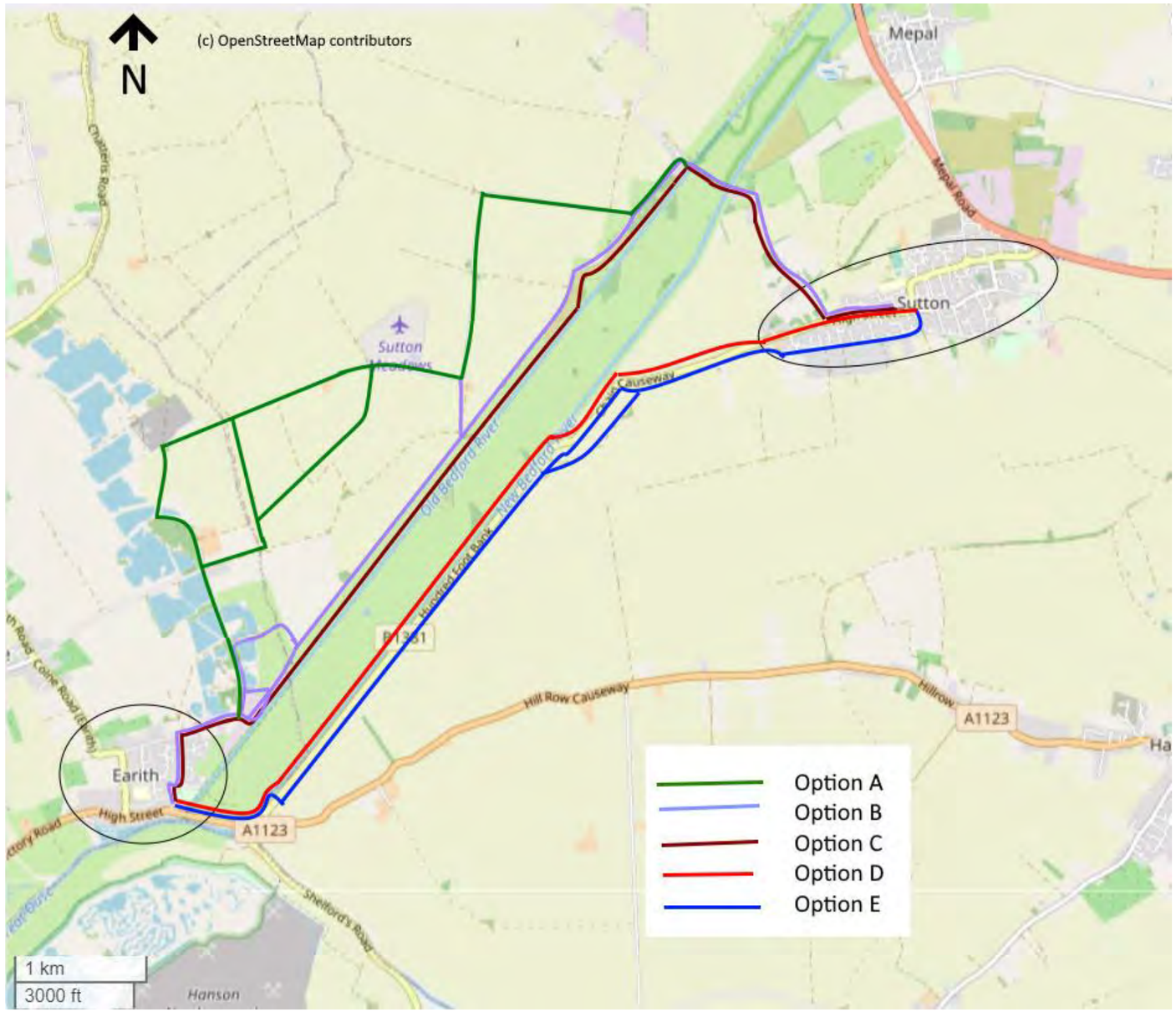
Cambridgeshire's flat landscape in this area makes it a perfect locale for cycling, whether it's for commuting or recreational purposes. Furthermore, the distance between Sutton and Earith is less than 8 kms, making it a suitable distance to commute on a bike. However there are few intermediate locations, between Sutton and Earith and the local population Is not high, which means that cycling volumes may be low. Certainly the volumes and speeds of traffic on the B1381 can be intimidating and one unfortunate experience with a speeding car can put people off from cycling for life, so it is not surprising that there is little evidence of people cycling along the B1381, at present.

This report explores various alignment options linking Sutton and Earith. It is important to note that all these options necessitate the use of private land, making it imperative to engage in detailed discussions with landowners before finalising any alignment. The biggest issues raised by the report are however related to the very sensitive ecology in the area and this needs to be a big focus of route selection.

This report delves into the intricacies of local travel within Sutton and Earith. It underscores the significance of ensuring that people have access to these routes either directly from their doorsteps or all the way to key destinations. Without such provisions, certain journeys will continue to pose challenges, regardless of the quality of the routes between Sutton and Earith.

East Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to enhancing facilities for local residents and visitors, while Sustrans is keen to investigate opportunities for linking Sutton and Earith with the National Cycle Network. These proposed routes are designed to integrate seamlessly with other existing and planned pathways which was briefly considered in Sustrans' earlier Feasibility Study on routes between Mepal, Sutton and Witchford.

Figure 1.1 Summary of the route options



None of the options are easy. It is important that all routes are developed to a high standard, that is suitable for all potential users and one that can be easily maintained to a good standard for many years.

Option A: Starting from Earith High Street this route heads north on residential and industrial roads before joining a bridleway that passes a number of fishing lakes, where there are major surfacing issues. The route needs a new link across private land and across Cran Brook, to link up with Meadland's Main Drove and Bedingham's Drove. This leads to the Causeway at Sutton Gault and eventually into Sutton.

The route is remote and generally quiet. It is the least direct option, but it avoids many of the challenges associated with other options and may be the most feasible option, if land agreements are possible and if the ecological challenges can be addressed.

Option B: Option B starts out in the same way as Option A, from Earith High Street heading north on residential and industrial roads, but then the route turns towards the Washes and follows a drainage channel on the boundary of the Washes and the adjacent arable land. The route continues parallel with the Washes with a sub-option of using Bedingham's Drove as in Option A or continuing along the edge of the Washes before joining up with Option A nearer the Causeway, from where it continues into Sutton.

Option C: Similar to Option B this option starts at Earith High Street and then follows the Washes, within the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) protected habitat area. The route mostly follows an existing track which would need surfacing. The track is used for maintenance of the area and it is therefore an obvious option. This track links up with the Causeway and Sutton in the same way that Options A and B do. The ecological sensitivity of this area means that this obvious route may not be deliverable and detailed discussions are needed with RSPB, Environment Agency and Natural England to further consider the feasibility of the route and whether it would be possible to obtain the necessary planning approvals.

Option D: Option D runs on the opposite side of the Washes to Options A, B and C and again involves construction within RSPB land. A major challenge with the route is the way that it would leave Earith and it is hard to see how major construction across the Washes can be avoided. This is likely to be extremely sensitive ecologically.

When the route reaches the B1381 it follows the public right of way on the bank on the eastern side of the new Bedford river, facing ecological considerations similar to Option B and Option C. The route then leaves the flood bank to follow the B1381 into Sutton on field edges, which are privately owned. Access into Sutton from this direction is tricky, due to limited highway space and buildings adjoining the road. The route would continues along Sutton High Street on road.

Option E: This option has the same major challenge of Option D in terms of finding a good route across the Washes that is parallel with the A1123. The route then starts following the B1381 on the north-western side before crossing to the south-eastern side at a dedicated crossing. The proposed route would then have to follow field edges (subject to agreement) and potentially a byway all the way to Sutton entering Sutton along The Row, which is a quieter road than the High Street, but with some gradients.

All options present notable challenges, including substantial ecological constraints and the potential necessity to acquire private land. All options are likely to be expensive – some very expensive, but in realty usage is not expected to be high so it is likely to be difficult to justify any of the options, when compared to routes in other locations.

To implement these routes successfully, there might be a need to employ Compulsory Purchase Powers. There will certainly be a need for further ecological studies and additionally, many proposed works are situated in areas prone to flooding, making Environment Agency consent another pivotal consideration.

2. Introduction

Sustrans has been asked to look at options for new walking and cycling routes from Sutton to Earith, in East Cambridgeshire. This request has come from the East Cambridgeshire District Council who are looking to improve local facilities and want to progress plans for routes, so that when funding becomes available, they can bid for funding. The objective of the report is to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the various options, so that further consultation can be had with the local community, local employers, and landowners to consider the best way forward.

2.1 Background to the project

There is a well-established cycling culture in and around Cambridge, but although people do cycle in and around Sutton and Earith the numbers are much lower than in the Cambridge area and between the two communities cycling levels are low.

In order to address this sort of issue local and national policies have been giving high priority to walking and cycling, as well as offering the potential for major funding in future.

Sustrans has also been reviewing the National Cycle Network and this review noted that the National Cycle Network is a local asset with incredible reach, connecting people and places across the UK and providing traffic-free spaces for everyone to enjoy.

The review identified that the Network is used by a broad range of people – walkers (for over half of journeys) and people on cycles, as well as joggers, wheelchair users and horse riders – but there is a lot more we can do to make it safe and accessible for everyone. The Network's routes have great potential for improvement. The character and quality vary hugely, and whilst 54% of the Network is Good or Very Good, 46% is Poor or Very Poor.

The review included a vision for a UK-wide network of traffic-free paths for everyone, connecting cities, towns, and countryside, loved by the communities they serve.

Sutton and Earith currently lack a direct link to the existing network. However, integrating new high-quality cycling provisions with the broader network connecting Mepal, Witchford, and Ely could significantly elevate the visibility and popularity of the link within the local cycling community. This integration not only enhances connectivity but also has the potential to promote cycling as a preferred mode of transportation within the area.

2.2 Purpose of the project

— To describe the current problems, obstacles, and propensity to walk and cycle in the area.

— To identify at least one high quality route that can be delivered between Sutton and Earith.

— To consider if there are merits in incorporating links with Sutton.

— To consider ways to improve links within all communities.

— To rank the route options in terms of benefits and costs and to consider ways to deliver improvements, including timetables and costings.

3. NCN principles

3.1 Why we have the NCN principles:

The National Cycle Network design principles set out key elements that make the Network distinctive and need to be considered during design of new and improved routes forming part of the Network.

Where the Network is not traffic-free it should either be on a quiet-way section of road or be fully separated from the carriageway.

For a National Cycle Network route on a quiet-way section of road traffic speed and flows should be sufficiently low with good visibility to comply with design guidance for comfortable sharing of the carriageway.

Signs and markings should highlight the Network.

Principle 1:

Traffic-free or quiet-way

Where the Network is not “traffic-free” it should either be on a quiet-way section of road or be fully separated from the adjacent carriageway.

For a National Cycle Network route on a quiet-way section of road the traffic speed and flows should be sufficiently low enough to encourage cycling for all ages and abilities.

It should have good visibility to comply with design guidance to allow for comfortable sharing of the carriageway.

Signs and road markings should highlight the Network.

Figure 3.1 Safe crossing for all, helping continuity on traffic free routes.

Principle 2:

Wide enough to accommodate all users.

The width of a route should be based on the level of anticipated usage, allowing for growth. A minimum width of 3m shall be delivered.

Where it is not possible to deliver this, all other avenues should be fully explored before path widths are reduced.

Physical separation between users should be considered where there is sufficient width and a higher potential for conflict between different users.

Structures should be designed to maximise movement space. A minimum path width between parapets of 4m shall be maintained.

Figure 3.2 At grade crossing of side road with separation for traffic, cyclists and pedestrians

Principle 3:

Designed to minimise maintenance.

A maintenance plan should be put in place during the development process.

Construction quality should be maximised to minimise future maintenance needs.

New planting should be kept well clear of the path.

Sufficient tree work should be undertaken as part of construction to minimise future issues.

Routes should be managed in a way that enhances biodiversity.

Figure 3.3 Easily maintained.

Principle 4:

Signed clearly and consistently.

Signage should be a mix of signs, surface markings and wayfinding measures.

Every junction or decision point should be signed.

Signage should be part of a network-wide signing strategy directing users to and from the route.

Signage should direct users of the Network to trip generators such as places of interest, hospitals, universities, colleges.

Signage should be used to increase route legibility and branding of routes.

Signage should help to reinforce responsible behaviour by all users.

Figure 3.4 Clear signing

Principle 5:

Smooth surface that is well drained.

Path surfaces should be suitable for all users, irrespective of age, ability or mobility needs.

Path surfaces should be maintained in a condition that is free of undulation, rutting and potholes.

Path surfaces should be free draining and verges finished to avoid water ponding at the edges of the path.

In, or close to, built-up areas a Network route should have a sealed surface to maximise the number of path users.

Figure 3.5 Smooth, tarmac surface, accessible for all non-motorised users

Principle 6:

Fully accessible to all legitimate users.

All routes should accommodate a cycle design vehicle 2.8 metres long x 1.2metres wide.

Any barrier should have a clear width of 1.5 metres.

Gradients should be minimised and as gentle as possible.

The surface should be maintained in a condition that makes it passable by all users.

Figure 3.6a Accessible for all

Figure 3.6b Corridors that provide continuity, that create short-cuts and are away from traffic, in attractive environments.

Principle 7:

Feel like a safe place to be.

Route alignments should avoid creating places that are enclosed or not overlooked.

Consideration should be given as to whether lighting should be provided.

Figure 3.7 Safe for all

Principle 8:

Enable all users to crossroads safely.

Road crossings should be in accordance with current best practice guidance.

Approaches to road crossings should be designed to facilitate a slow approach speed to a crossing, have enough space for several users to wait safely.

Signalised road crossings should be designed to minimise the wait time for NCN users. Where possible advanced notification systems should be used.

All grade separated crossings should provide step-free access.

Figure 3.8 Safe crossing for all

Principle 9:

Be attractive and interesting.

Network routes should be attractive places to be in and pass along.

Landscaping, planting, artwork and interpretation boards should be used to create interest.

Seating should be provided at regular intervals along a route.

Opportunities should be taken to enhance ecological features.

Figure 3.9 Attractive and interesting areas

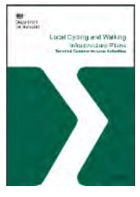
4. Guidelines and Standards

The most relevant guidance is listed on the Sustrans website at https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure . Local Authority Guidance and policies are also relevant. Examples of relevant guidance are given in this chapter.

4.1 General guidance for England

- **Department for Transport LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design**
- **Highways England CD 195 Designing for cycle traffic**
- **Department for Transport Local Transport Notes**
- **LCWIP Technical Guidance for Local Authorities (DfT).**





Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

- Sustrans introductory guide to low-traffic neighbourhood design
- Manual for Streets
- Slow Streets Sourcebook (Urban Design London)
- Streetscape Guidance (Transport for London)
- Achieving lower speeds: the toolkit (TfL).

LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design and its implications for design options.

The Government set out its ambitions to see a *"step change in cycling and walking in coming years"* in Gear Change – A bold vision for cycling and walking (Department for Transport, July 2020). The document sets out key design principles, which are the basis for the updated national guidance for highway authorities and designers, given in LTN1/20.

Figure 4.1 Key Design Principles

Although LTN 1/20 is issued as guidance its adoption will also be a condition for Government funding of all local highways' investment, as well as new cycle infrastructure.

"It will be a condition of any future Government funding for new cycle infrastructure that it is designed in a way that is consistent with this national guidance.

The Department for Transport will also reserve the right to ask for appropriate funding to be returned for any schemes built in a way which is not consistent with the guidance. In short, schemes which do not follow this guidance will not be funded." (Extract from Foreword LTN1/20)

LTN 1/20 has therefore been taken as the starting point when considering design options for this scheme. Some of the major implications in relation to the space needed for cycling, to ensure that the guidelines are met are:

- Properly protected bike lanes, cycle-safe junctions and interventions for low-traffic streets are needed for the whole scheme, with little scope for exceptions.
- Cycle infrastructure should be accessible to everyone from 8 to 80 and beyond.
- On urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians.
- Cyclists must be physically separated and protected from high volume motor traffic, both at junctions and on the stretches of road between them.
- Cycle infrastructure should be designed for significant numbers of cyclists, and for non-standard cycles.

LTN 1/20 sets out design speeds for cycles and dimensions of cycles, to aid designers. It sets out the need for good smooth, durable surfaces and gives exceptional circumstances where shared use may be appropriate. In this case it gives a minimum

width of 3m, which is used in this study, for rural routes. The document defines the type of provision for cyclists by traffic volume and speed and the type of users to be catered for. For the purposes of this study the aim is to cater for all.

The need for cyclists to be segregated from pedestrians (except in exceptional circumstances) and from motorised traffic is emphasised and this is related to traffic speed. This is particularly important for any route besides the A142 where speeds are high.

For side roads LTN 1/20 gives examples of priority crossings for cyclists and for main road crossings LTN 1/20 sets out the requirements and relates this to traffic speeds. This is again very significant for the A142.

The guidance is clear that there needs to be a step change in terms of the quality of provision for cycling and that provision is not aimed so much at those who cycle already but rather at those who are not confident to cycle at present.

Speed Limit[1]	Motor Traffic Flow (pcu/24hpur)[2]	Protected space for Cycling: Fully Kerbed Cycle Track	Protected space for Cycling: Stepped Cycle Track	Protected space for Cycling: Light Segregation	Cycle Lane (mandatory/advisory)	Mixed Traffic
20mph[3]	0					
	2000					
	4000					
	6000+					
30mph	0					
	2000					
	4000					
	6000+					
40mph	Any					
50+mph	Any					

Provision suitable for most people
Provision not suitable for all people and will exclude some potential users and/or have safety concerns
Provision suitable for few people and will exclude most potential users and/or have safety concerns

Notes:
1. If the 85th percentile speed is more than 10% above the speed limit the next highest speed llmlt should be applied.
2. The recommended provision assumes that the peak hour motor traffic flow is no more than 10% of the 24 hour flow
3. In rural areas achieving speeds of 20mph may be difficult, and so shared routes with speeds of up to 30mph will be generally acceptable with motor vehicle flows of up to 1,000 pcu/per day

Figure 4.2 Extract from LTN 1/20 showing the type of provision required.

Table 6-1: Minimum recommended horizontal separation between carriageway and cycle tracks*

Speed limit (mph)	Desirable minimum horizontal separation (m)	Absolute minimum horizontal separation (m)
30	0.5	0
40	1.0	0.5
50	2.0	1.5
60	2.5	2.0
70	3.5	3.0

*Separation strip should be at least 0.5m alongside kerbside parking and 1.5m where wheelchair access is required.

26 Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces, DfT, 2007
27 Inclusive Mobility – A Guide to best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure, DfT, 2002

Figure 4.3 Extract from LTN 1/20 showing the required separation from the carriageway as speeds vary.

Speed Limit	Total traffic flow to be crossed (pcu)	Maximum number of lanes to be crossed in one movement	Uncontrolled	Cycle Priority	Parallel	Signal	Grade separated
≥ 60mph	Any	Any					
40mph and 50mph	>10000	Any					
	6000 to 10000	2 or more					
	0-6000	2					
	0-10000	1					
≤ 30mph	>8000	>2					
	>8000	2					
	4000-8000	2					
	0-4000	2					
	0-4000	1					

Provision suitable for most people
Provision not suitable for all people and will exclude some potential users and/or have safety concerns
Provision suitable for few people and will exclude most potential users and/or have safety concerns

NOTES:
1. If the actual 85th percentile speed is more than 10% above the speed limit the next highest speed limit should be applied
2. The recommended provision assumes that the peak hour traffic flow is no more then 10% of the 24 hour flow.

Figure 4.4 Extract from LTN 1/20 showing the requirements for safe crossings of busy roads.

LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design and its implications for design options.

Although LTN 1/20 is issued as guidance, its adoption will also be a condition for Government funding of all local highways' investment, as well as new cycle infrastructure.

"It will be a condition of any future Government funding for new cycle infrastructure that it is designed in a way that is consistent with this national guidance. The Department for Transport will also reserve the right to ask for appropriate funding to be returned for any schemes built in a way which is not consistent with the guidance. In short, schemes which do not follow this guidance will not be funded." (Extract from Foreword LTN1/20) .

Figure 4.5. LTN 1/20 Core Design Principles.

Gear Change

There are policies at very local and at national level to encourage walking and cycling. National guidance is most recently set out in Gear Change and LTN 1/20.

Gear Change sets out ambitious targets for big increases in cycling and walking in our towns and cities by 2030. It also sets out the benefits of active travel.

Figure 4.6 Gear Change cover

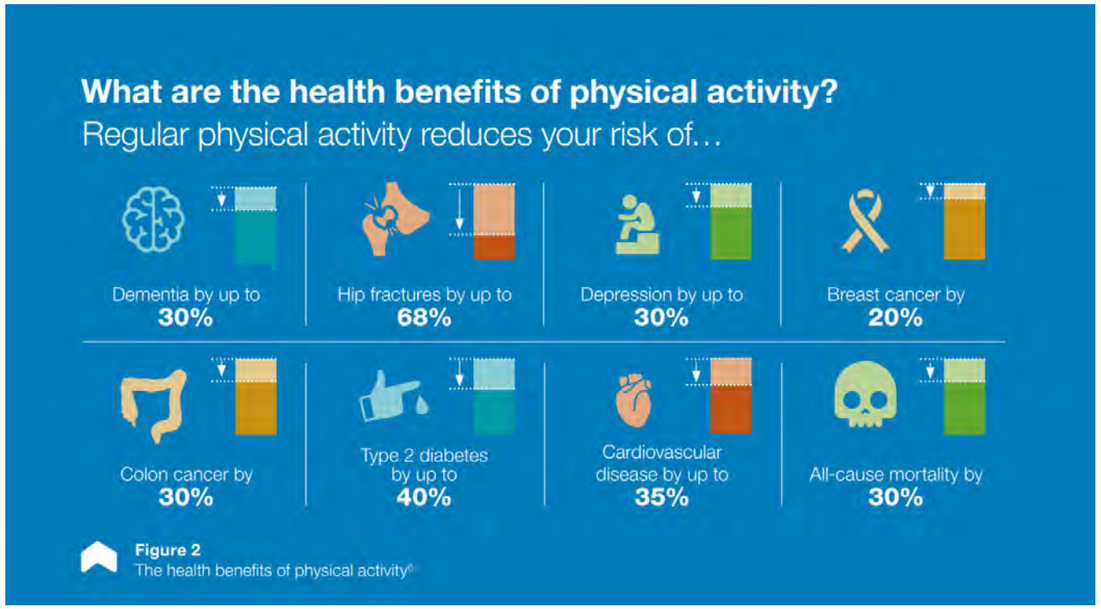


Figure 4.7 Extract from Gear Change

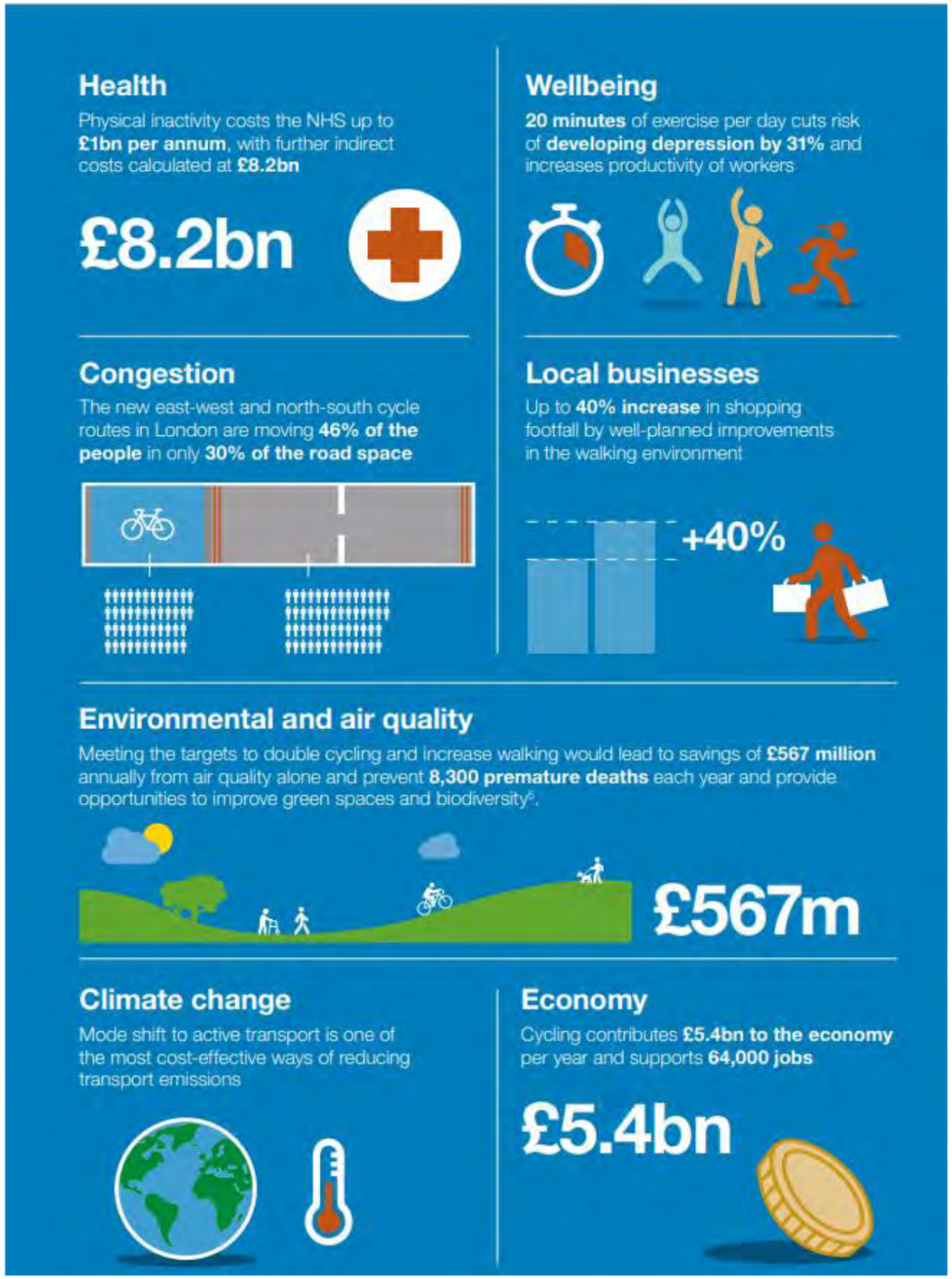


Figure 4.8 Extract from Gear Change

4.2 Local Authority Guidance and Policies

As the Strategic Transport Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the Combined Authority published the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan in November 2023. The plan includes policies supportive of Active Travel.

Figure 4.2.1 - Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

As the highway authority Cambridgeshire County Council is the body that is reponsible for the public highway in Cambridgeshire. Larger scale projects are prioritised each year by officers and members of the County Council. These arise from strategic plans, such as the Local Transport Plan and Transport Strategies, as well as more immediate maintenance and safety requirements. Transport plans and policies are shown on the County website.

The County Council also works with local communities to help deliver improvements to their highways and streets. Traffic calming, parking restrictions, speed limit changes and footway and pedestrian crossing improvements are some of the most common improvements and these are all relevant for active travel. A significant fund is the annual 20 mph fund.

The County Council expects bids for 20 mph funding to fit into one of the following, which are all relevant for active travel. In general, a new 20mph limit should be in an area with features that justify a lower speed limit to drivers, for example, an area that has:

- evidence of traffic incidents or potential dangers within an existing 30/40mph
- vulnerable road users e.g. pedestrians (of all ability), cyclists, equestrian users and motorcyclists
- visible homes, shops, and business frontages
- a school or a school route
- a cycling route
- a quiet lane designation
- an area that would benefit from more active travel such as cycling and walking.

Figure 4.2.2 – 20 mph speed limit street

The East Cambridgeshire Local Plan sets out future plans for the district and includes the following within section 2.4.1 Spatial Vision:

"Better cycling and pedestrian facilities and links will be provided, including segregated cycle routes along key routes linking towns and villages……

There will be better access to the countryside and green spaces for local communities which helps to improve people's quality of life…"

The Policies map for Sutton (on the following page) sets out potential growth in Sutton.

Figure 4.2.3 - East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

Earith is in Huntingdonshire and is covered by the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. The Cambridgeshire

and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan is also very relevant for Earith given the mineral extraction in the area.

There is no regular bus service between Earith and Sutton. Earith has buses to and from St Ives and Sutton has buses to and from Ely. Greenways between the communities would have a tangible benefit for longer journeys than wheeling or walking alone would accommodate.

Sutton Neighbourhood plan

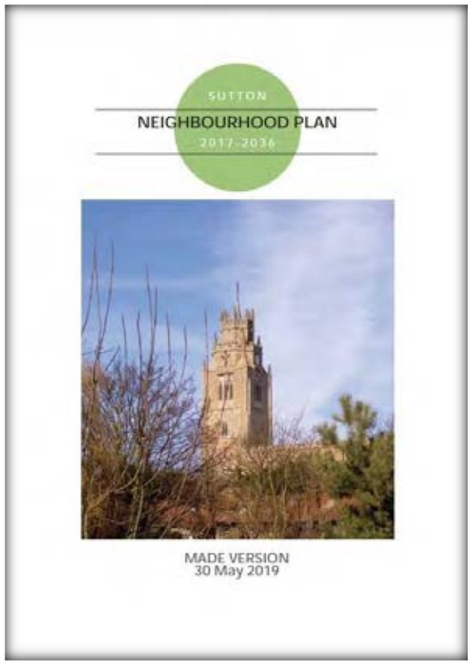


Figure 4.2.4 – Sutton Neighbourhood plan

Sutton parish has expressed their support for active travel, as outlined in the document:

"Sutton is seven miles from Ely by the A142 road and around 18 miles from the centre of Cambridge. It is possible to cycle all the way to Ely on cycle/pedestrian routes and 30mph areas, although the section from Sutton to Witcham Toll is awaiting upgrade…

Objective 6. All new development to be delivered in a way which facilitates improvements for pedestrians and cyclists alongside adequate

vehicular access and where possible promotes public transport links… "

Walking Strategy

The Walking Strategy element included within the LTP is still relevant today, especially with regards to the number of short trips under 1 mile completed on foot, and the reliance on the car for trips of 2 miles or less.

Public perception of the walking environment is perhaps more acute, and the problems / barriers faced more "in focus". What is missing though is the acknowledgement that noise, clean air and proximity to moving traffic are now regarded as being fundamental to encouraging this as a mode of transport.

The relocation of the health centre to outside of the village, and the poor-quality link for pedestrian access ensures that trips are made by car. The development of the railway as a multiuser greenway would overcome this barrier.

Cycling Strategy

The County's first Cycling Strategy in 1995 has certainly evolved and the County Council is an Authority that is forward-thinking and keen to adapt, however the study area remains a challenge that is yet to be fixed.

Many of the guidance documents noted within the LTP are old, outdated or no longer relevant – and a reliance on these to determine solutions should be cautioned against.

All of the 10 policies identified in the LTP remain relevant today – but the significant changes in infrastructure design and delivery mean that ambition, design, political and public support are more inter-twined through the publication of Gear Change and Local Transport Note LTN1:20

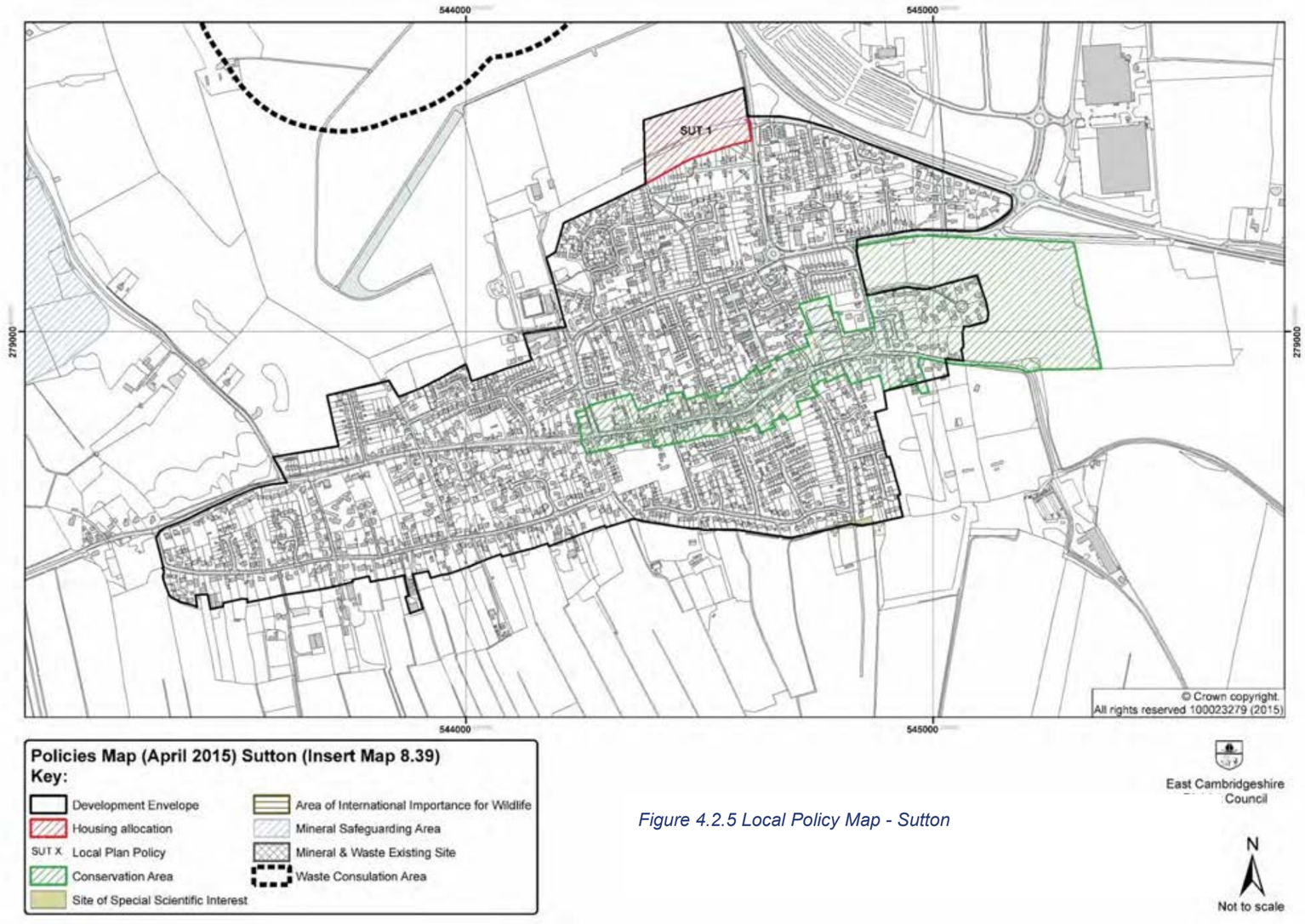


Figure 4.2.5 Local Policy Map - Sutton

The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 classifies Earith as a small settlement covered by Policy LP9.

LP 9

Small Settlements

Each Small Settlement to which this policy applies is defined above.

Development Proposals within the Built-up Area

A proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the:

a. level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement;
b. opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport;
c. effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

Development Proposals on Land well-related to the Built-up Area

A proposal for development on land well-related to the built-up area may be supported where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan.

Figure 4.2.6. Extract from Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies the land near Earith as a Mineral Safeguarding area (Sand and Gravel).

Figure 4.2.7 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

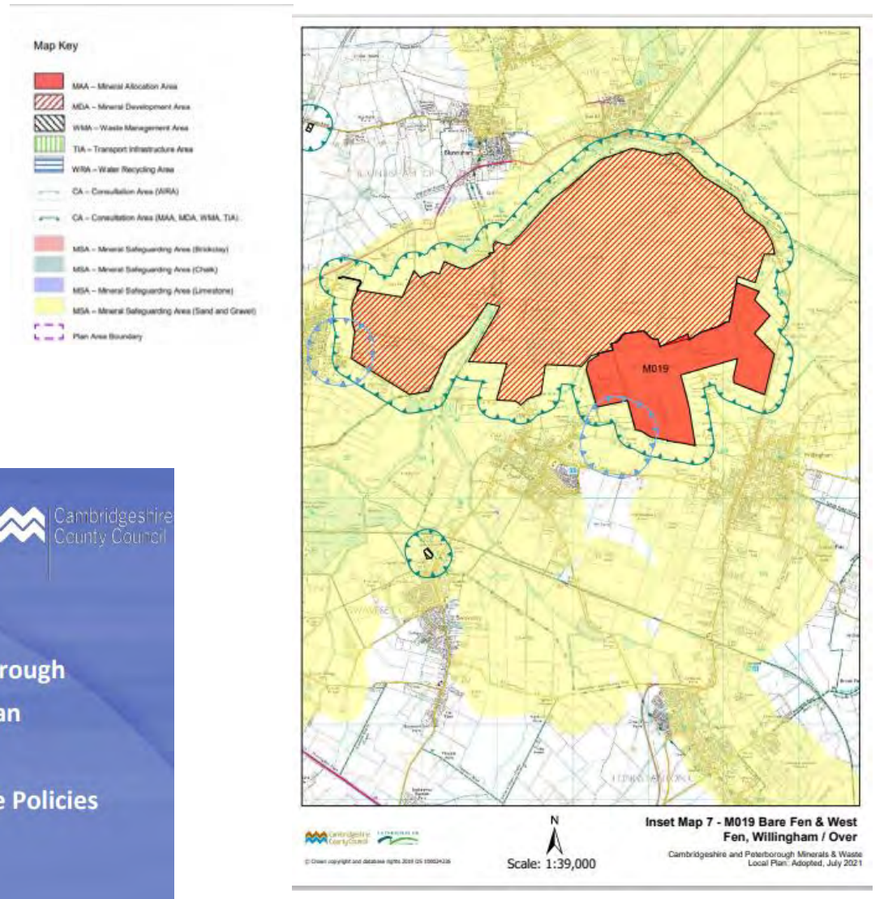


Figure 4.2.8 Inset Map 7 from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan..

East Cambridgeshire District Council- Cycling and walking routes strategy.

East Cambridgeshire District Council has produced a Cycling and Walking routes strategy which was informed by public consultation in 2020. It includes information on the responses and an analysis of all the options put forward, such as the many proposed cycle routes as shown in fig 4.13. The strategy also shows clear interest and demand for a new route between Mepal and Witchford.

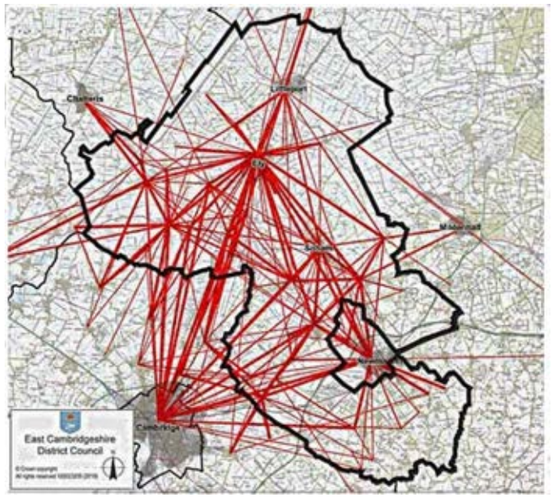
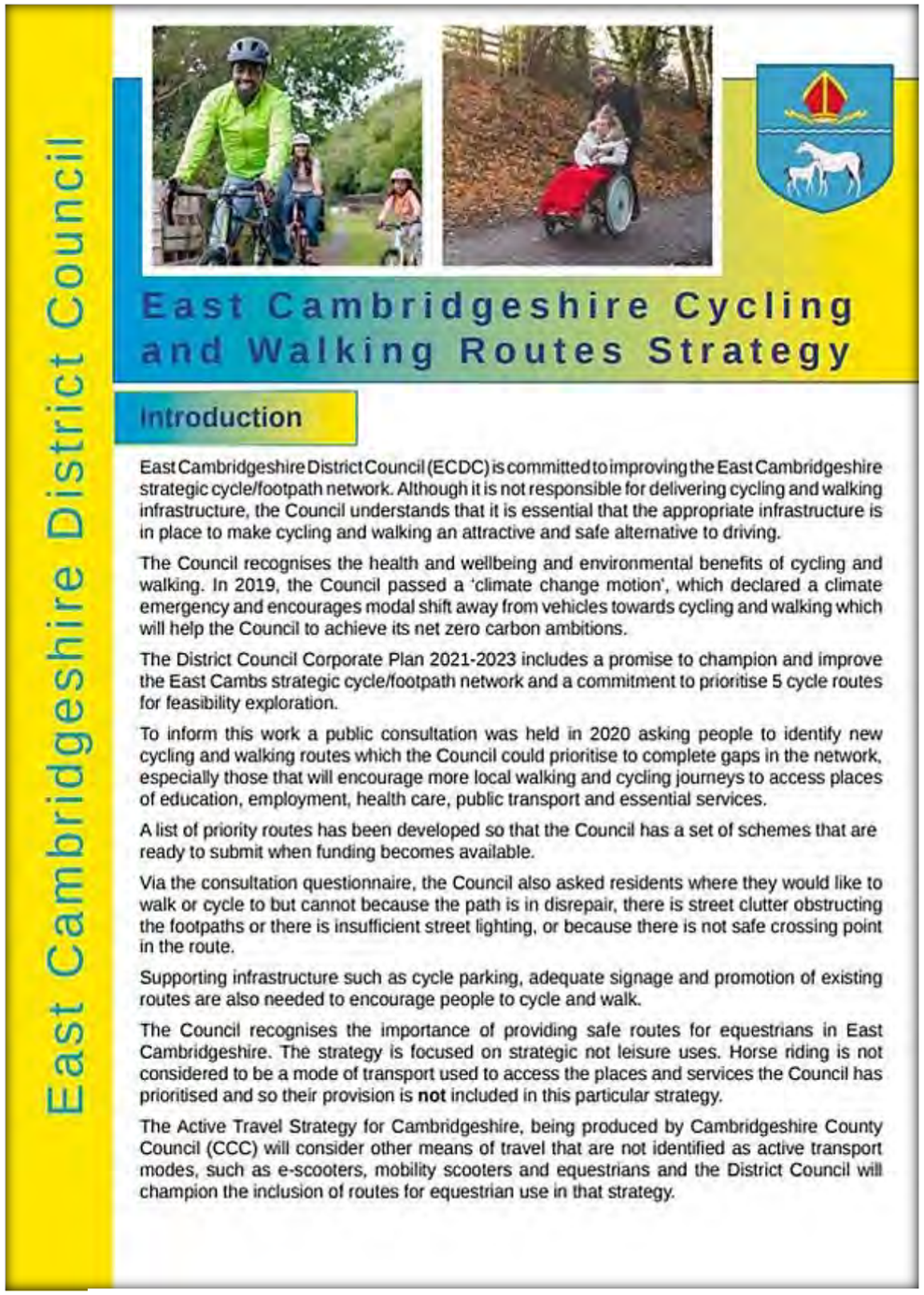


Figure 4.3.1 Cycle Route options from East Cambridgeshire Cycling and Walking Routes Strategy


East Cambridgeshire District Council

East Cambridgeshire Cycling and Walking Routes Strategy

Introduction

East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) is committed to improving the East Cambridgeshire strategic cycle/footpath network. Although it is not responsible for delivering cycling and walking infrastructure, the Council understands that it is essential that the appropriate infrastructure is in place to make cycling and walking an attractive and safe alternative to driving.

The Council recognises the health and wellbeing and environmental benefits of cycling and walking. In 2019, the Council passed a 'climate change motion', which declared a climate emergency and encourages modal shift away from vehicles towards cycling and walking which will help the Council to achieve its net zero carbon ambitions.

The District Council Corporate Plan 2021-2023 includes a promise to champion and improve the East Cambs strategic cycle/footpath network and a commitment to prioritise 5 cycle routes for feasibility exploration.

To inform this work a public consultation was held in 2020 asking people to identify new cycling and walking routes which the Council could prioritise to complete gaps in the network, especially those that will encourage more local walking and cycling journeys to access places of education, employment, health care, public transport and essential services.

A list of priority routes has been developed so that the Council has a set of schemes that are ready to submit when funding becomes available.

Via the consultation questionnaire, the Council also asked residents where they would like to walk or cycle to but cannot because the path is in disrepair, there is street clutter obstructing the footpaths or there is insufficient street lighting, or because there is not safe crossing point in the route.

Supporting infrastructure such as cycle parking, adequate signage and promotion of existing routes are also needed to encourage people to cycle and walk.

The Council recognises the importance of providing safe routes for equestrians in East Cambridgeshire. The strategy is focused on strategic not leisure uses. Horse riding is not considered to be a mode of transport used to access the places and services the Council has prioritised and so their provision is **not** included in this particular strategy.

The Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire, being produced by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) will consider other means of travel that are not identified as active transport modes, such as e-scooters, mobility scooters and equestrians and the District Council will champion the inclusion of routes for equestrian use in that strategy.

Figure 4.3.2 Introduction to East Cambridgeshire Cycling and Walking Routes Strategy

5. Description of Existing Routes

Figure 5.1 showing the current cycling infrastructure between Sutton and Earith. The existing National Cycle Network is a long way from Sutton and Earith, with the nearest connections being at Ely and St Ives. Currently, there is a lack of dedicated cycling provisions between these two communities.

Currently, there is no specific provision for cycling in Sutton and Earith, with cycling needing to be on the road. This is facilitated by the 20 mph zone in Sutton. Most people at present wishing to cycle between Sutton and Earith are compelled to use the B1381, which, despite being the most direct route, presents considerable challenges and limitations. The road is characterised by high traffic speeds, making it hard for all people walking, cycling, and wheeling. The combination of significant traffic flow and elevated speeds creates an environment that is intimidating and potentially unsafe for a broader spectrum of cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Traffic data from https://roadtraffic.dft.Figov.uk shows an annual average daily traffic flow of 5100 vehicles per day in a manual count conducted in 2008. Given the passage of time and potential changes in traffic patterns, it is anticipated that the current traffic volume may be higher. Unfortunately, more recent data is not available, but it is crucial to consider that traffic conditions may have intensified since the last recorded data in 2008.

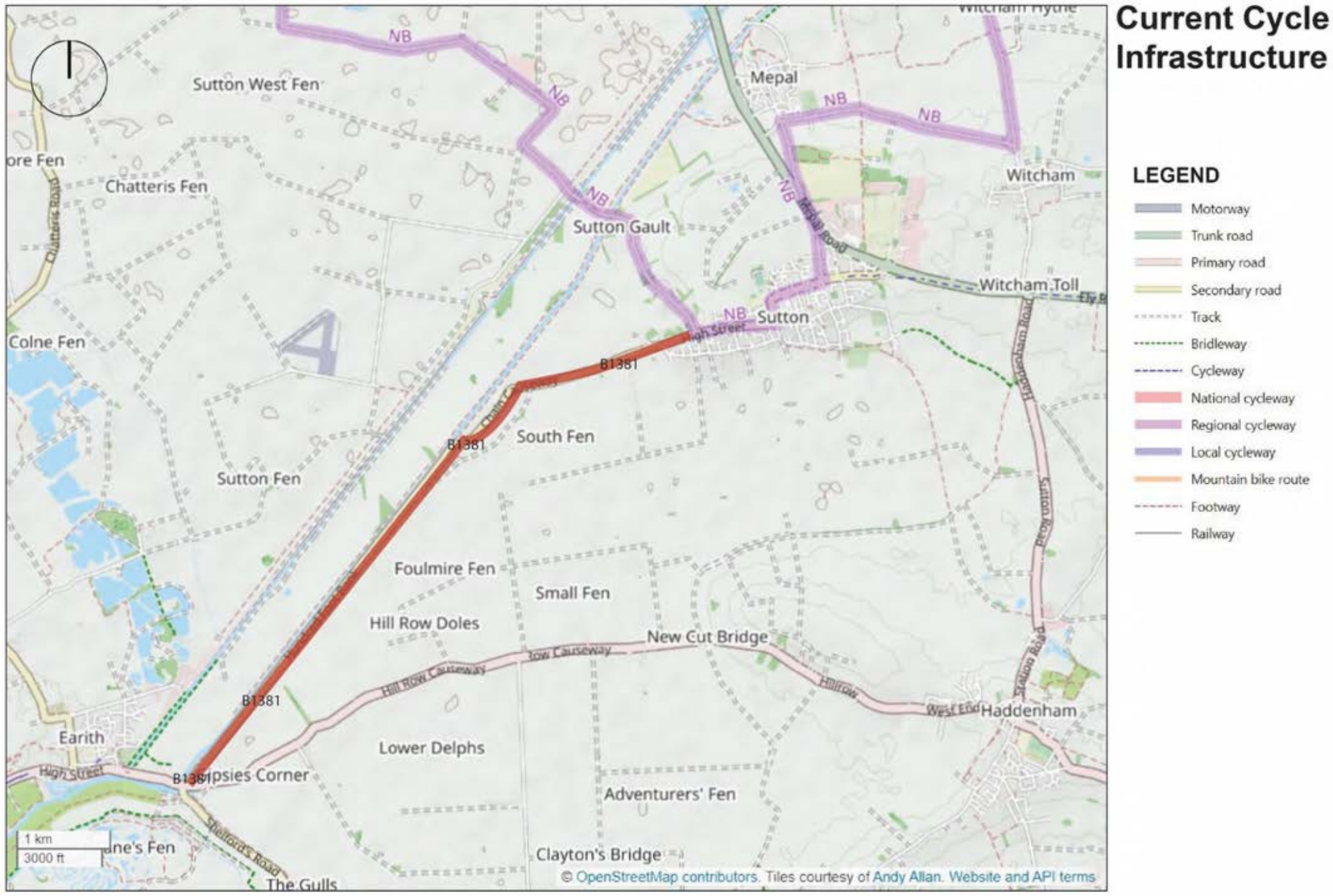


Figure 5.1 Route description of existing routes

5.2 Issues with existing road at Sutton Gault.

The Causeway is a potential route considered as part of the study, since it is a relatively quiet road that crosses the Wash. When the road floods, it becomes impassable for vehicles, which have to follow a big diversion route, with the sections of unflooded road being very quiet. Flooding is a major issue in this area and during the study the Causeway has been closed for many months.

Although the road may be closed to motorised traffic there is a causeway that allows people walking and wheeling to use the alignment and cross the flooded ground, during the months of potential road closure. The causeway is however very long and narrow with little space for passing and is not suitable for significant numbers of users, so changes are needed. Cambridgeshire County Council have indicated that they may replace the decking in the next few years. Clearly the causeway will have a limited life, but no major changes are anticipated at present, apart from the decking.

Conceptual designs for changes to the causeway have been explored in Chapter 7. However, further detailed design and a topographical survey are necessary to move forward.

Figure 5.2.1 The Causeway when not flooded.

Figure 5.2.2 The Causeway during flood.

5.3 Other issues

Limited road options:

There are few minor roads in this area, but there is The Causeway (see 5.2) and Bedingham's Drove to the north-west of the Washes, but there is currently no linkage with Earith on this alignment. The B1381 is the only current option that links with both Earith and Sutton. It has limited highway verge so any route following the B1381 will need to acquire non-highway land. Given traffic volumes and speeds on the road crossing it is also a major issue, requiring either a bridge or signalised crossing.

Surfacing of all roads is also a factor with comfort being important and cyclists being particularly vulnerable to road defects.

Washes and rivers:

These dominate the landscape and heavily influence potential routes. Any option needs to consider seasonal variations, flood scenarios, and infrastructure resilience.

Wash crossing near Earith and A1123:

New provision is needed to cross the Washes on the A1123 alignment, in an area of sensitive ecology and that is prone to flooding.

Figure 5.3.1 View of River Great Ouse Washes

Figure 5.3.2 View of River Great Ouse Washes

6. Design constraints

6.1 Environment Agency

The overall route is significantly impacted by flood zones, posing a notable challenge for the development of cycling infrastructure. In particular, Option A is situated in flood zone 3, and a significant portion of Options B, C, and D fall within flood zone 1. Option E is mostly situated in flood zone 2. The on-site investigation by Sustrans revealed a considerable and drastic difference during the flood season, where the causeway hinders vehicle usage. The presence of flood zones underscores the importance of thorough planning and infrastructure considerations to address challenges associated with seasonal flooding.

It is crucial to highlight areas of concern particularly those surrounding the riverbank. Ensuring that paths are constructed to withstand potential flooding is essential, and careful consideration must be given to the impact on routes if they were to be submerged during flooding. Constructing routes on higher ground, when feasible, is a logical approach to minimise flood risks. However, this may not always be a viable option. Developing sealed surface paths is recommended to mitigate maintenance costs and damage associated with flood events.

The flood risk holds significance, especially in obtaining consent for works, considering the transportation of construction materials into the floodplain. It is necessary to demonstrate to the Environment Agency that either the impact of such works will be negligible concerning flooding or that compensatory measures will be implemented. While preliminary thought has been given to the placement of new ramps and bridges, the specifics of compensation requirements need to be agreed upon with the Environment Agency. This negotiation will have implications for land requirements and overall project feasibility. Such construction would still be permissible under National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance as it would class as “water compatible development”.

The need for a flood risk assessment (FRA) may be appropriate given the proximity to the village, and the known history of flooding that has occurred.

The flood map for planning shows river and sea flooding data only. This data doesn’t include other sources of flooding. It is for use in development planning and flood risk assessments. This information relates to the selected location and is not specific to any property within it. Flood risk data is covered by the Open Government License which sets out the terms and conditions for using government data.

Figure 6.1 Flood Map of Sutton and Earith

6.2 Ground and Geology

https://webapps.bgs.ac.uk/data/maps

Underlying Geology

Figure 6.2.1 depicts the bedrock geology map, highlighting that Sutton is primarily characterised by the Kimmeridge Clay Formation. In contrast, Earith is predominantly associated with the West Walton Formation and Ampthill Clay Formation.

The superficial layer of geology predominantly consists of peat with occurrences of Diamicton. In Earith, Shell Marl, River Terrace Deposits are presents. and in between Sutton and Earith Peat are present, while areas along Sutton feature sand and gravel deposits.

https://www.bgs.ac.uk/geological-data/map-viewers

Coal Mining

British Coal records suggest that no mine works are recorded and therefore the routes are not regarded as high risk from mining related subsidence.

https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/coalauthority/

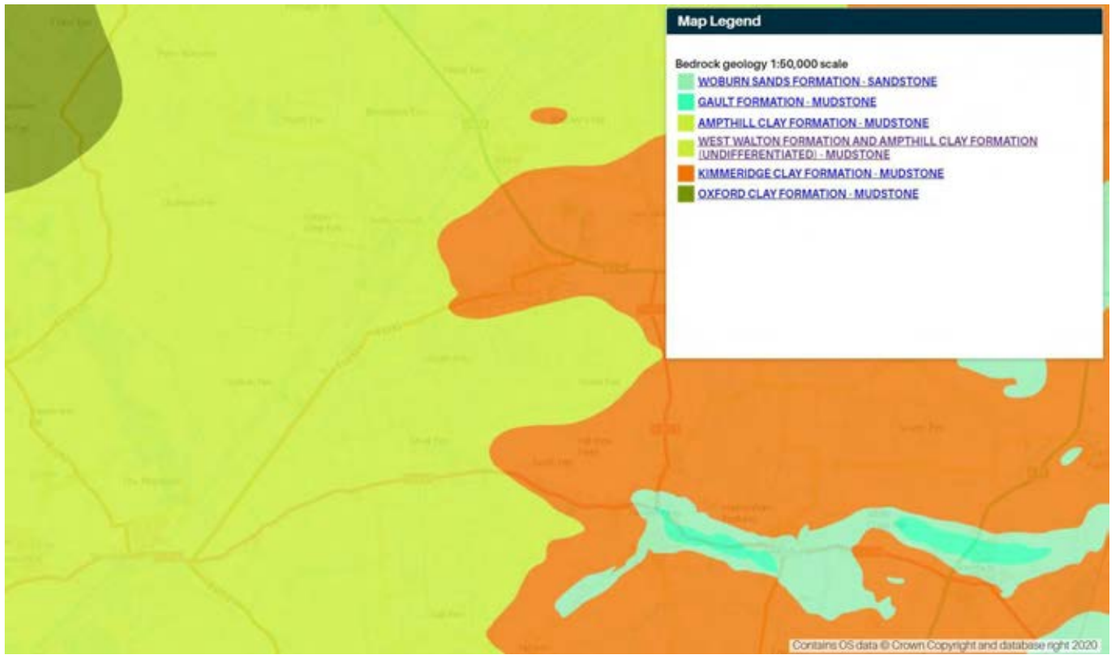


Figure 6.2.1 Bedrock Geology map

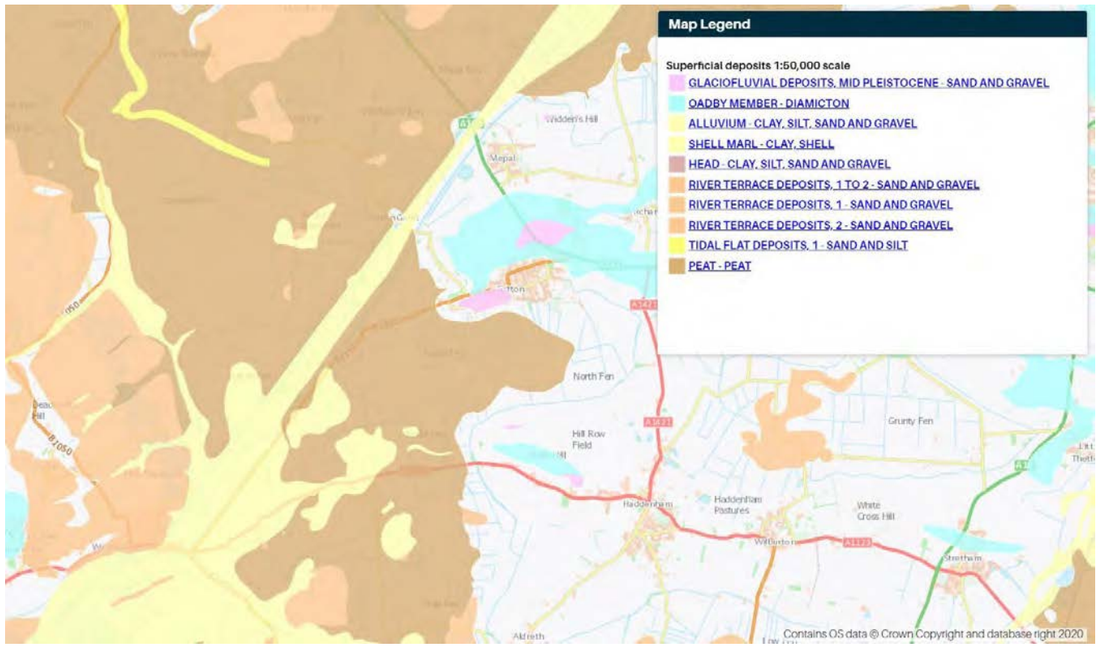


Figure 6.2.2 Superficial deposits Geology map

6.3 Utilities

A significant challenge in this study, especially with the various sub-options, lies in determining how to enhance the bridge over the causeway. The preferred solution, as outlined in chapter 7, involves keeping the existing bridge supports and modifying the bridge/ causeway, but it is possible that the supports will also need modifying or replacing. An initial search has revealed as shown in Figure 6.3.2, there are currently no gas pipes in the area and Figure 6.3.3 shows no UK Power Network infrastructure under the existing bridge. However, engaging with all utility companies will be crucial in further planning and design efforts.

6.3.1 The Causeway Bridge

Figure 6.3.1 Map showing location of the causeway

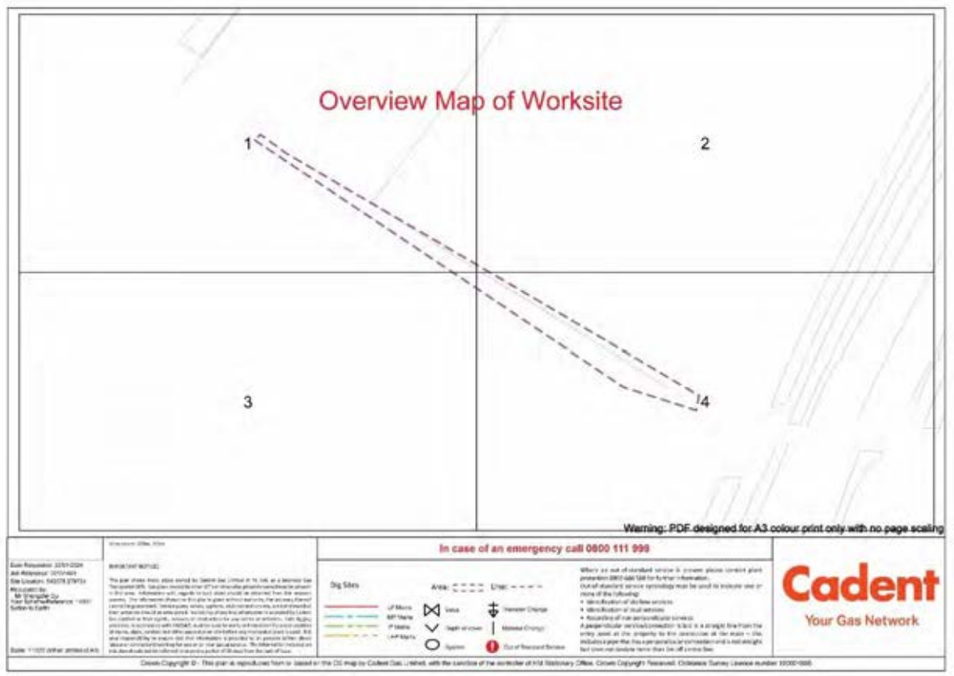


Figure 6.3.2 Cadent utilities map of the Causeway bridge

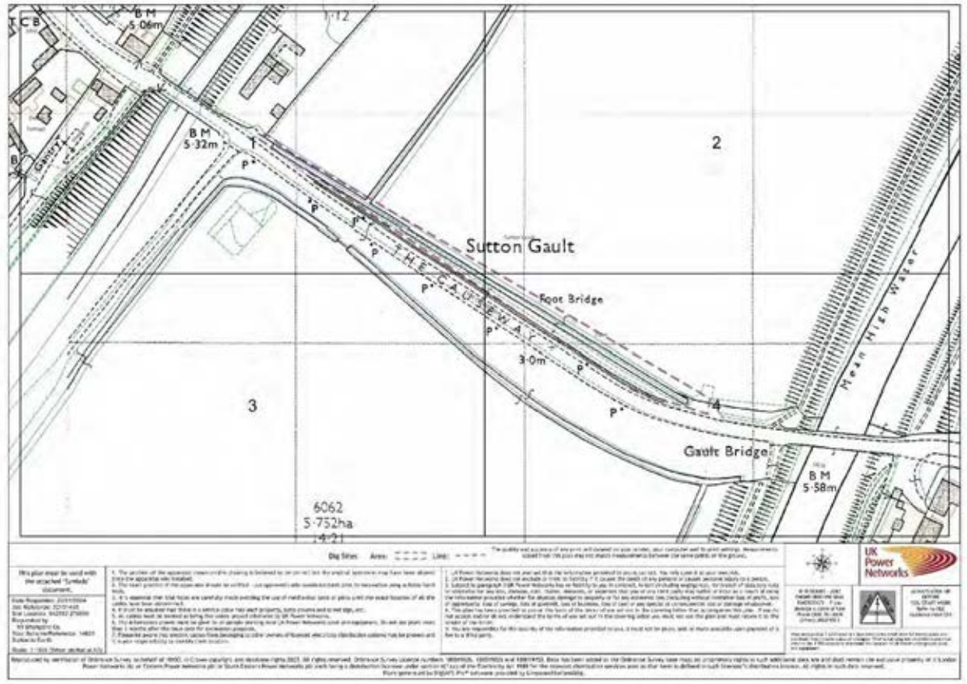


Figure 6.3.3 UK Power Network utilities map of the Causeway

6.3.2 B1381

An initial search has revealed as shown in Figure 6.3.2, there are currently no gas pipes in the area and Figure 6.3.3 shows no UK Power Network infrastructure under the existing bridge. However, engaging with all utility companies will be crucial in further planning and design efforts.

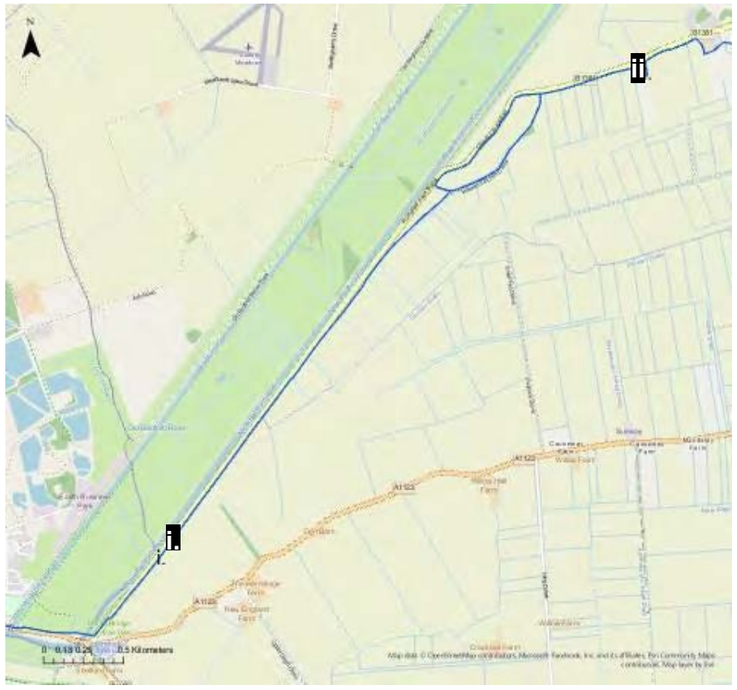


Figure 6.3.2.1 Map showing utilities search conducted location of the B1381.

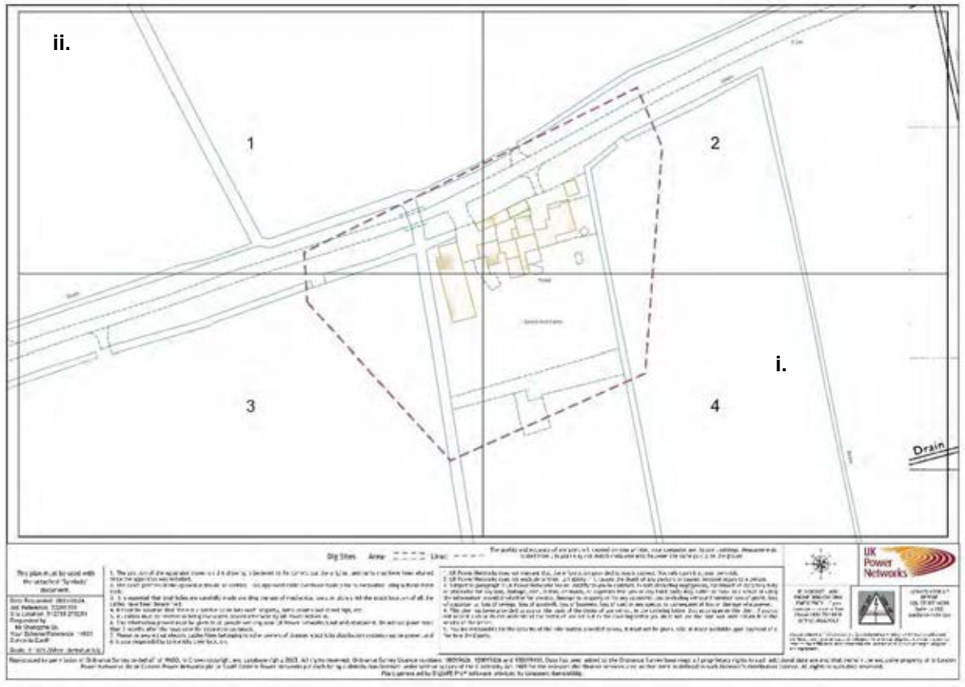


Figure 6.3.2.3 UK Power Network utilities map of the B1381

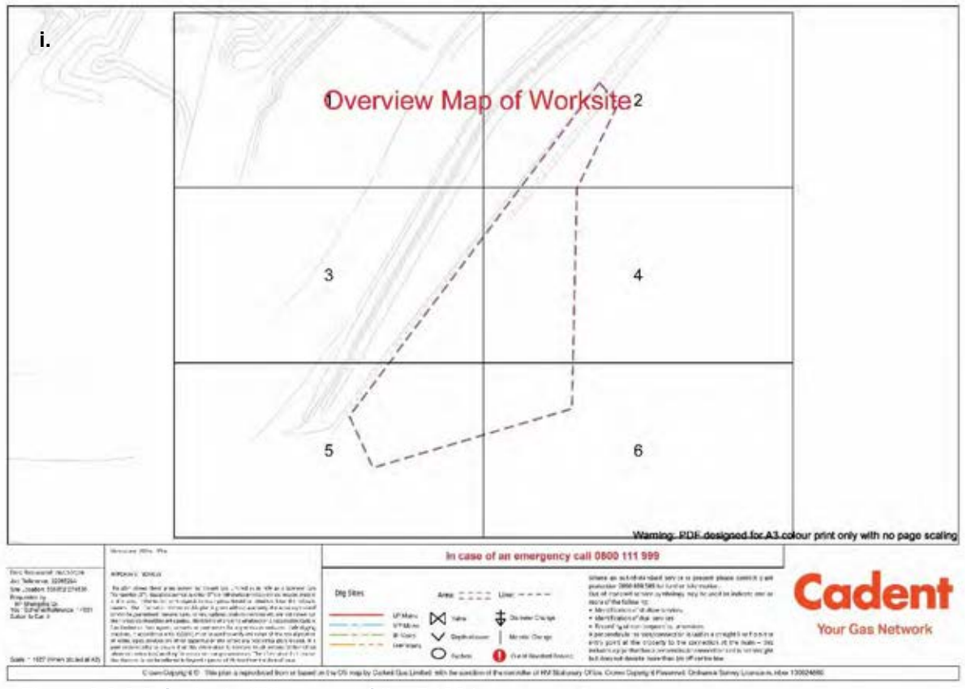


Figure 6.3.2.2 Cadent utilities map of the B1381

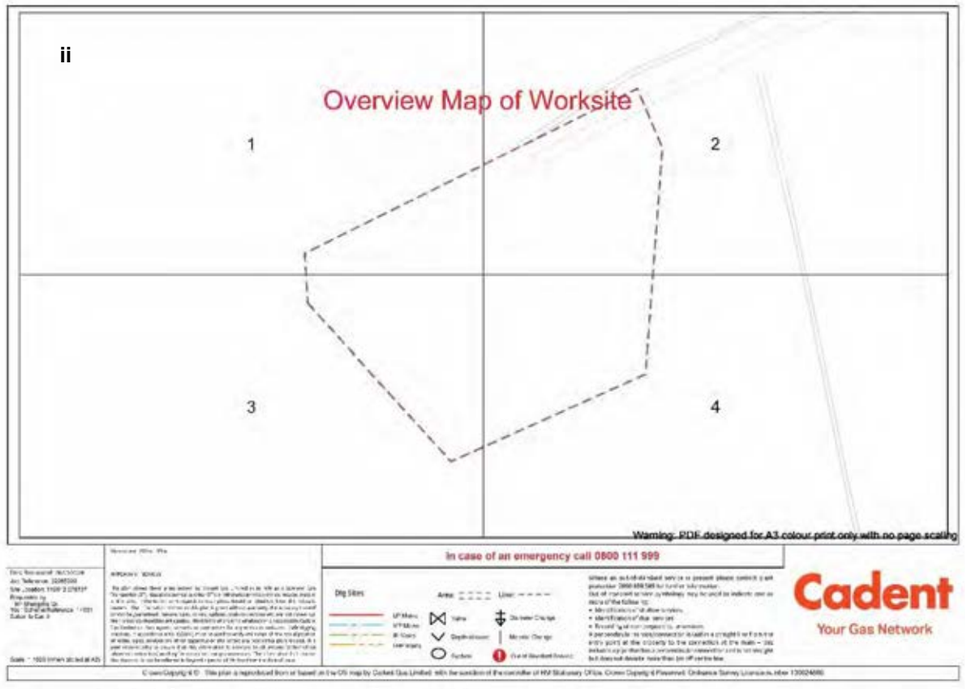


Figure 6.3.2.4 Cadent utilities map of the B1381

6.4 Heritage and Historic Environment

https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search

According to the Historic England website search, their only recorded areas of concern along the proposed routes is the scheduled monument situated on top of the washes next to the A1123. Although the route alignment is not in direct contact with this monument this will need further consultant and topographical designs. Furthermore, there are several listed buildings in Sutton and Earith, including isolated properties. Though the works along the road will be highly unlikely to affect these listed buildings, this aspect must be considered carefully during the development of the connecting route. Typically, it is highly uncommon for a new path proposal to have a direct impact on existing buildings, especially those with listed status.

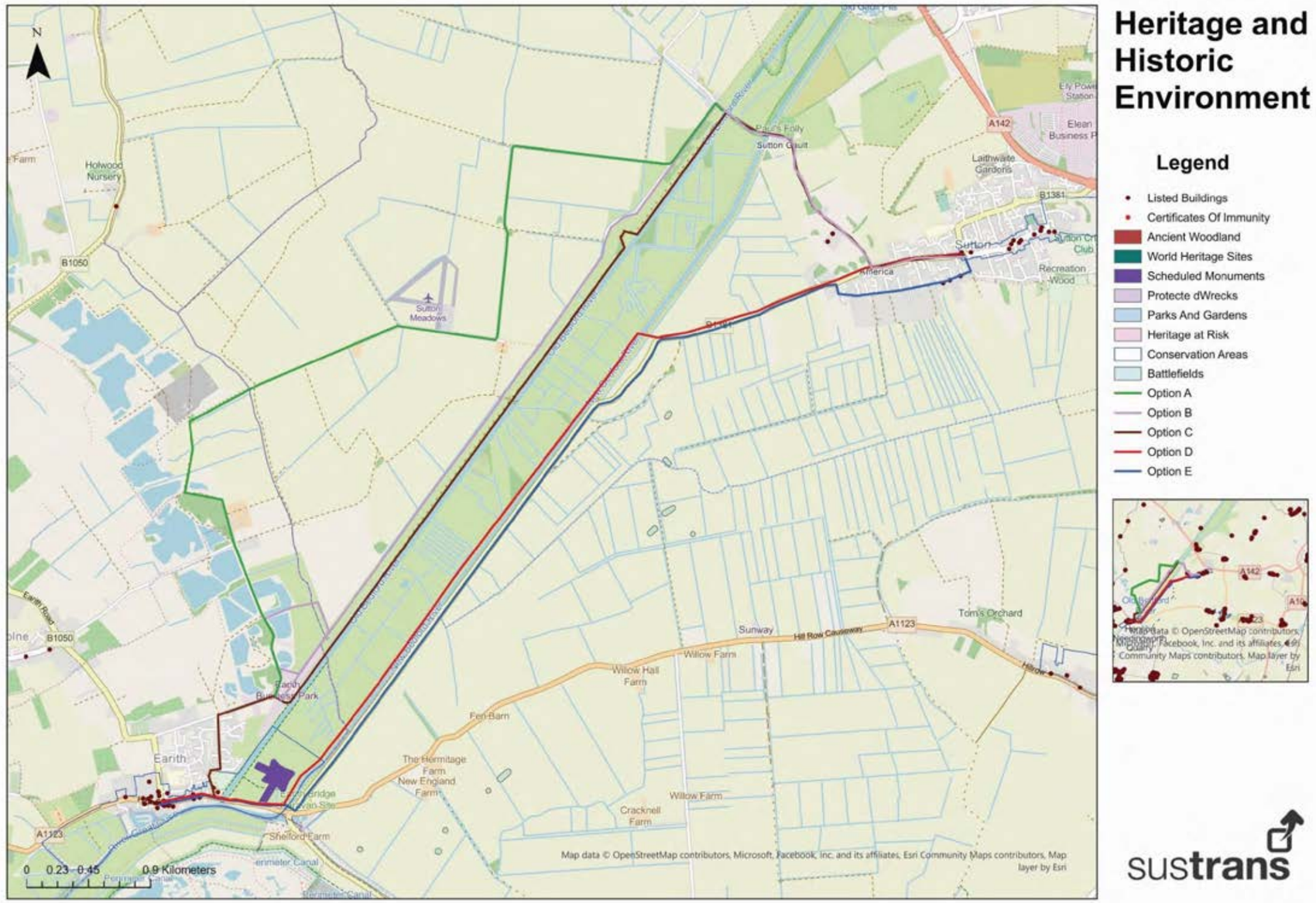


Figure 6.4 Map of Heritage and Historic Environment

6.5 Public Rights of Way

The rights of way in the area are very attractive and tranquil in comparison with the busy B1381. However, the experience of using the routes in winter was that they can get very muddy and wet and very difficult for many people to use. Some rights of way are also very overgrown and appear to be little used.

Public footpaths run along bank tops on both sides of the Washes. There are also rights of way within the Washes themselves, although County Council records show a lack of continuity in places. A bridleway runs along the foot of the flood bank to the north-west of the Washes from near the A1123 in Earith to Short Drove in Earith and an additional public footpath runs along Counter Drain, but there appear to be discontinuities in these rights of way.

A public bridleway runs north from Short Drove and usage of this is considered for Option A, although this would need major surfacing works.

Whilst the use of rights of way has advantages (in that people walking and wheeling have rights to use bridleways and there is already existing access) it will be important to consider all users, including equestrians. Landowner's agreement is needed if, for instance, it was proposed that a public footpath should be used for the route.

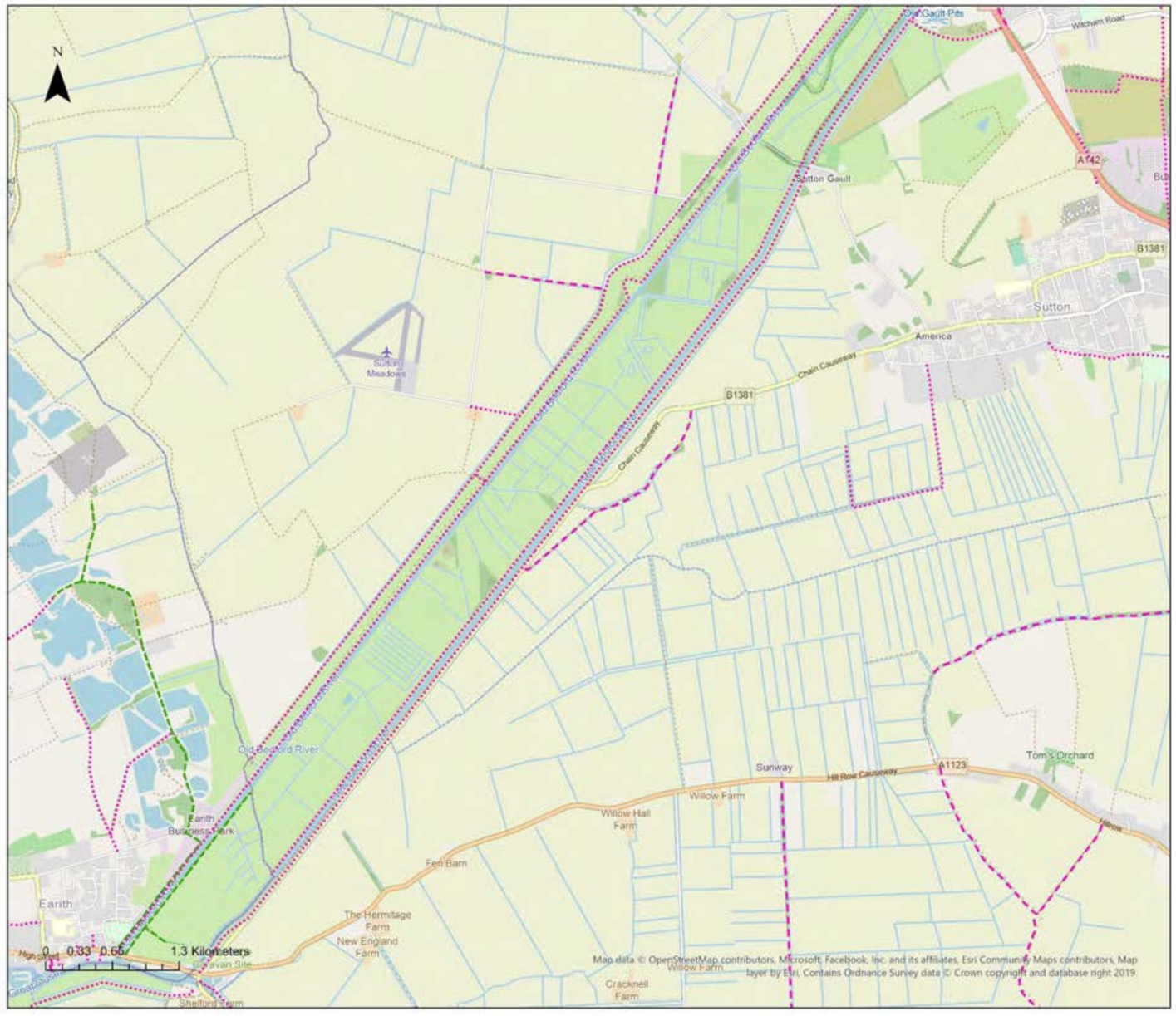


Figure 6.5 Public Rights of Way map between Sutton and Earith

6.6 Local Points of Interest and destinations

https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search

The main points of interest and destinations are centred around Sutton and Earith centres. Additionally, Earith Business Park serves as an employment site.

The large number of lakes in the Earith area also make this a significant destination for fishing.

Figure 6.6: Points of Interests Heat Map

6.7 Traffic Incidents

Incident data can highlight some concerns. Numbers of Incidents are low in general. This may be due to the overall low population and limited cycling activity in the area. Notably, there is a record of a fatal incident involving a cyclist on the B1381 between Sutton and Earith. This suggests that significant safety improvements on the B1381 could save lives. Furthermore, as often happens in areas of population numerous serious incidents involving pedestrians and cyclists were reported in both Sutton and Earith. This suggests that significant safety improvements in Sutton and Earith would be beneficial.

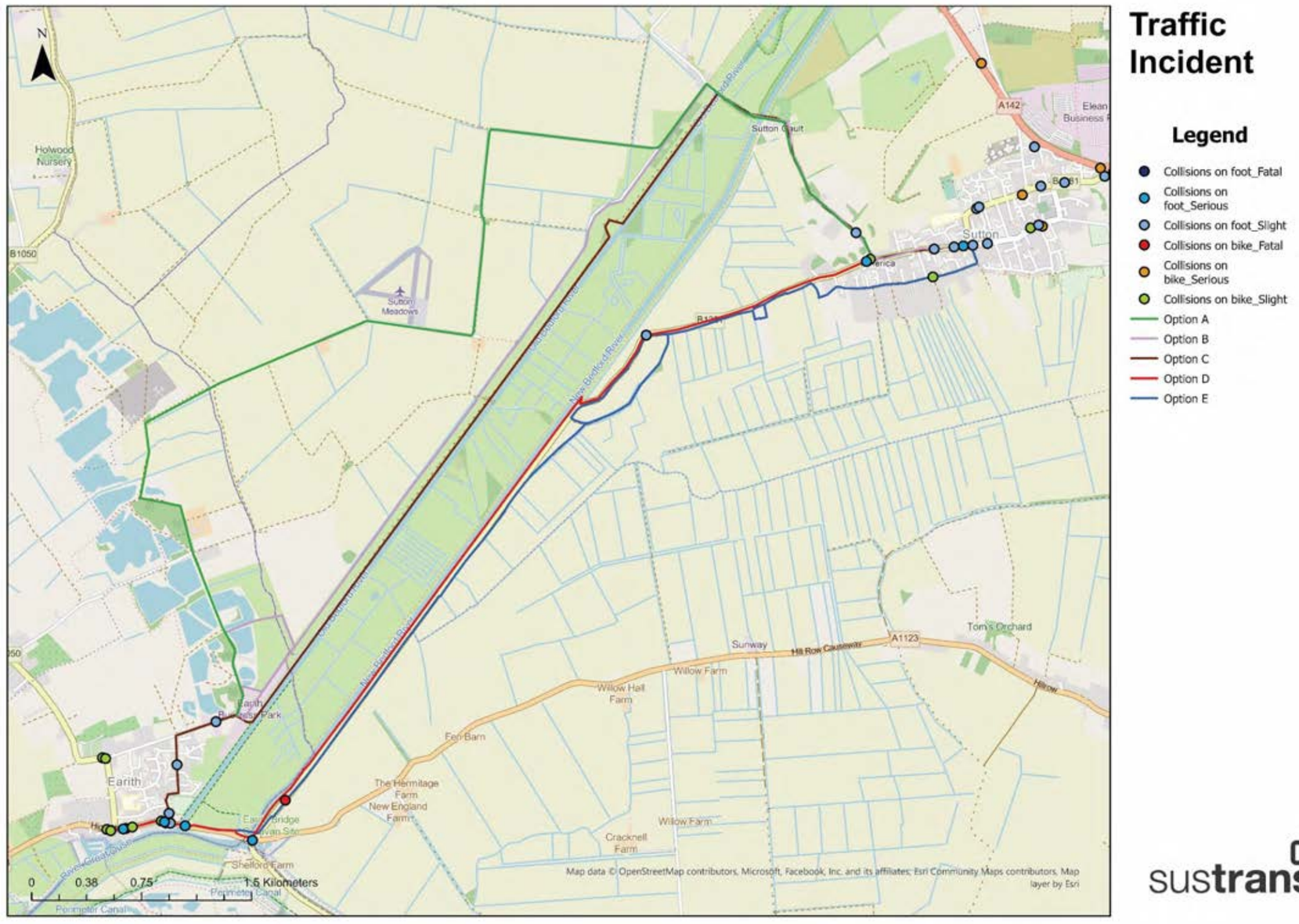


Figure 6.7 Traffic Incident Map

6.8 Ecological constraints

The ecological constraints in this area are major and are discussed in detail in Chapter 9. They are so major that it is possible that none of the options will be deliverable. It will certainly be necessary for further ecological studies to take place for the selected option before it can go ahead.

7. Route Appraisal and design considerations

To justify the expenditure and maximise utility, any route between Sutton and Earith should cater to the needs of as many residents in these areas as possible. Ideally, the cycling and walking network within Sutton and Earith should be well-developed, providing a seamless and direct connection from start to destination for as many people as possible, including all residents and destinations between them. The aim is to create a comprehensive network that enhances accessibility and convenience for a wide range of users.

It is significant that there are few destinations and not many people living between Sutton and Earith. Sutton Gault can be considered a destination given that there are a few houses there and the Washes can be spectacular, particularly when in flood. There are also a number of houses and mobile homes near the junction of the B1381 and the A1123 that are close to Earith but are isolated from it and these residents have a clear need for better links with Earith in particular.

Routes have been selected on the basis that they should follow existing rights of way or highways or obvious boundaries such as field edges and riverbanks. Whilst the use of rights of way or the riverbanks are an obvious aim it does not guarantee that routes can be delivered and there will need to be negotiations with landowners and community engagement even before formal consents are sought.

All options proposed leave Earith in a north-easterly direction and enter Sutton from a south-westerly direction but there are variations depending on which side of the Washes the route is and which side of the B1381 a route is. For fair comparison all options start and finish in the same place:

- The junction of Bridge End and Earith High Street (the A1123).
- The junction of The Brook and the High Street in Sutton.

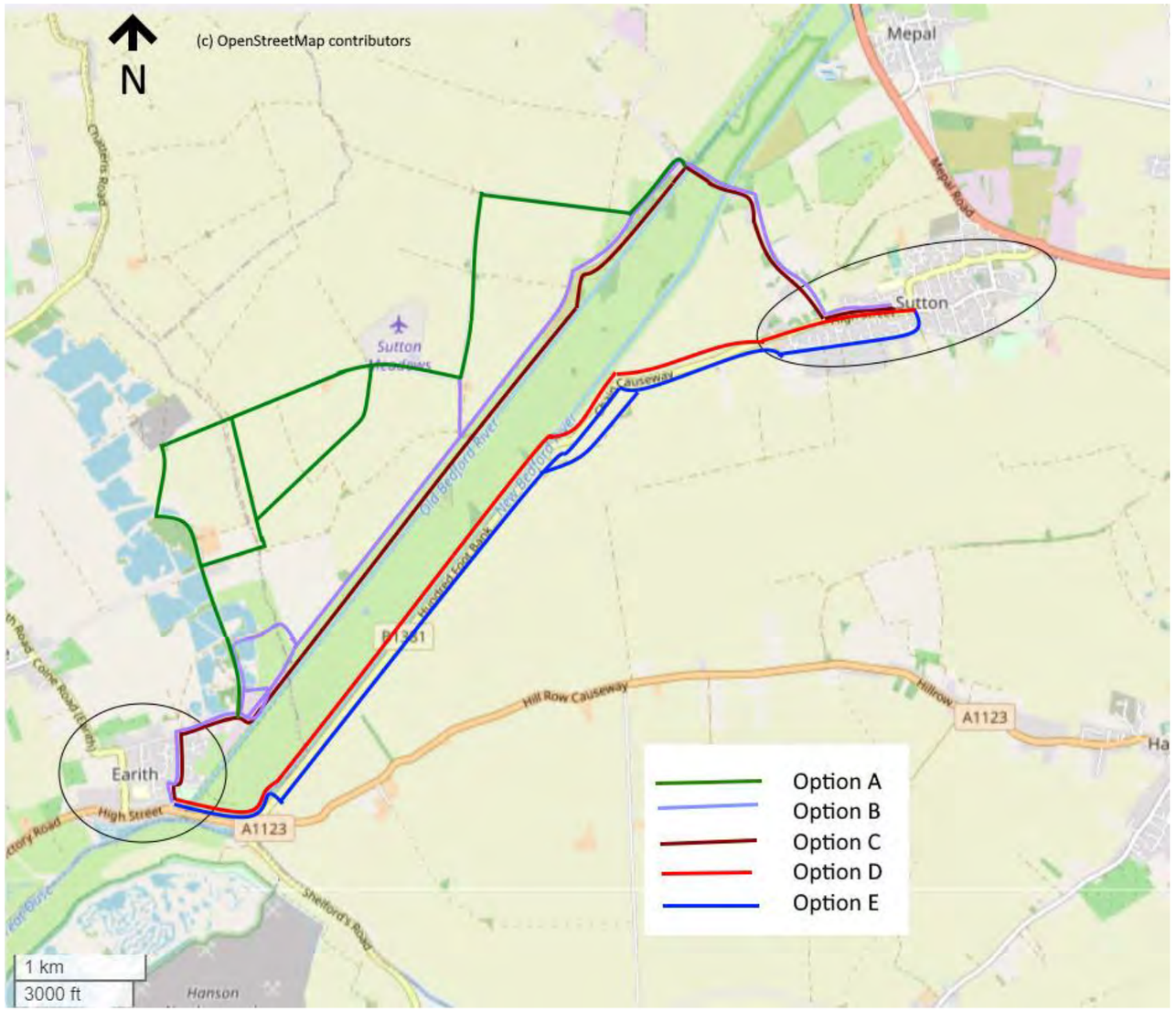
All options assume a 20mph limit across both Sutton and Earith and it is assumed that most roads in Sutton and Earith can be made LTN 1/20 compliant. However that would be extremely difficult for the A1123 in Earith.

The route options have been designed with the priority of ensuring safe pathways for travel between Sutton and Earith. The considered options vary in their level of directness and it has to be acknowledged that no option can better the B1381 in terms of directness.

The general approach of the options is to minimise reliance on using the B1381. The existing route within the B1381 verge has been ruled out due to limited space and the challenges related to this route are discussed further in this chapter. The significant changes from the existing setup involve the introduction of new segregated paths and road crossings, which must adhere to the quality of provision outlined in LTN 1/20. However, the options also consider opportunities to utilise existing lightly trafficked roads, with careful consideration given to enhancing their appeal for cycling where possible.

Routes and links can be formed by combining parts of different options and it could be argued that there is a case for more than one option being delivered. More detailed discussions about all options are presented later in this chapter, but a summary of the routes is provided here:

Figure 7.1 Route Options.



Option A:

Starting from Earith High Street this route heads north on residential and industrial roads before joining a bridleway that passes a number of fishing lakes, where there are major surfacing issues. The route needs a new link across private land and across Cran Brook, to link up with Meadland's Main Drove and Bedingham's Drove. This leads to the Causeway at Sutton Gault and eventually into Sutton.

The route is remote and generally quiet. It is the least direct option, but it avoids many of the challenges associated with other options and may be the most feasible option, if land agreements are possible and if the ecological challenges can be addressed.

Option B:

Option B starts out in the same way as Option A, from Earith High Street heading north on residential and industrial roads, but then the route turns towards the Washes and follows a drainage channel on the boundary of the Washes and the adjacent arable land. The route continues parallel with the Washes with a sub-option of using Bedingham's Drove as in Option A or continuing along the edge of the Washes before joining up with Option A nearer the Causeway, from where it continues into Sutton.

Option C:

Similar to Option B this option starts at Earith High Street and then follows the Washes, within the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) protected habitat area. The route mostly follows an existing track which would need surfacing. The track is used for maintenance of the area and it is therefore an obvious option. This track links up with the Causeway and Sutton in the same way that Options A and B do. The ecological sensitivity of this area means that this obvious route may not be deliverable and detailed discussions are needed with RSPB, Environment Agency and Natural England to further consider the feasibility of the route and whether it would be possible to obtain the necessary planning approvals.

Option D:

Option D runs on the opposite side of the Washes to Options A, B and C and again involves construction within RSPB land. A major challenge with the route is the way that it would leave Earith and it is hard to see how major construction across the Washes can be avoided. This is likely to be extremely sensitive ecologically.

When the route reaches the B1381 it follows the public right of way on the bank on the eastern side of the new Bedford river, facing ecological considerations similar to Option B and Option C. The route then leaves the flood bank to follow the B1381 into Sutton on field edges, which are privately owned. Access into Sutton from this direction is tricky, due to limited highway space and buildings adjoining the road. The route would continues along Sutton High Street on road.

Option E:

This option has the same major challenge of Option D in terms of finding a good route across the Washes that is parallel with the A1123. The route then starts following the B1381 on the north-western side before crossing to the south-eastern side at a dedicated crossing. The proposed route would then have to follow field edges (subject to agreement) and potentially a byway all the way to Sutton entering Sutton along The Row, which is a quieter road than the High Street, but with some gradients.

Option A

Starting from Earith High Street this route heads north on residential and industrial roads before joining a bridleway that passes a number of fishing lakes, where there are major surfacing issues. The route needs a new link across private land and across Cran Brook, to link up with Meadland's Main Drove and Bedingham's Drove. This leads to the Causeway at Sutton Gault and eventually into Sutton.

The route is remote and generally quiet. It is the least direct option, but it avoids many of the challenges associated with other options and may be the most feasible option, if land agreements are possible and if the ecological challenges can be addressed.

The option is outlined in Figure 7A.1 and discussed in detail section by section.

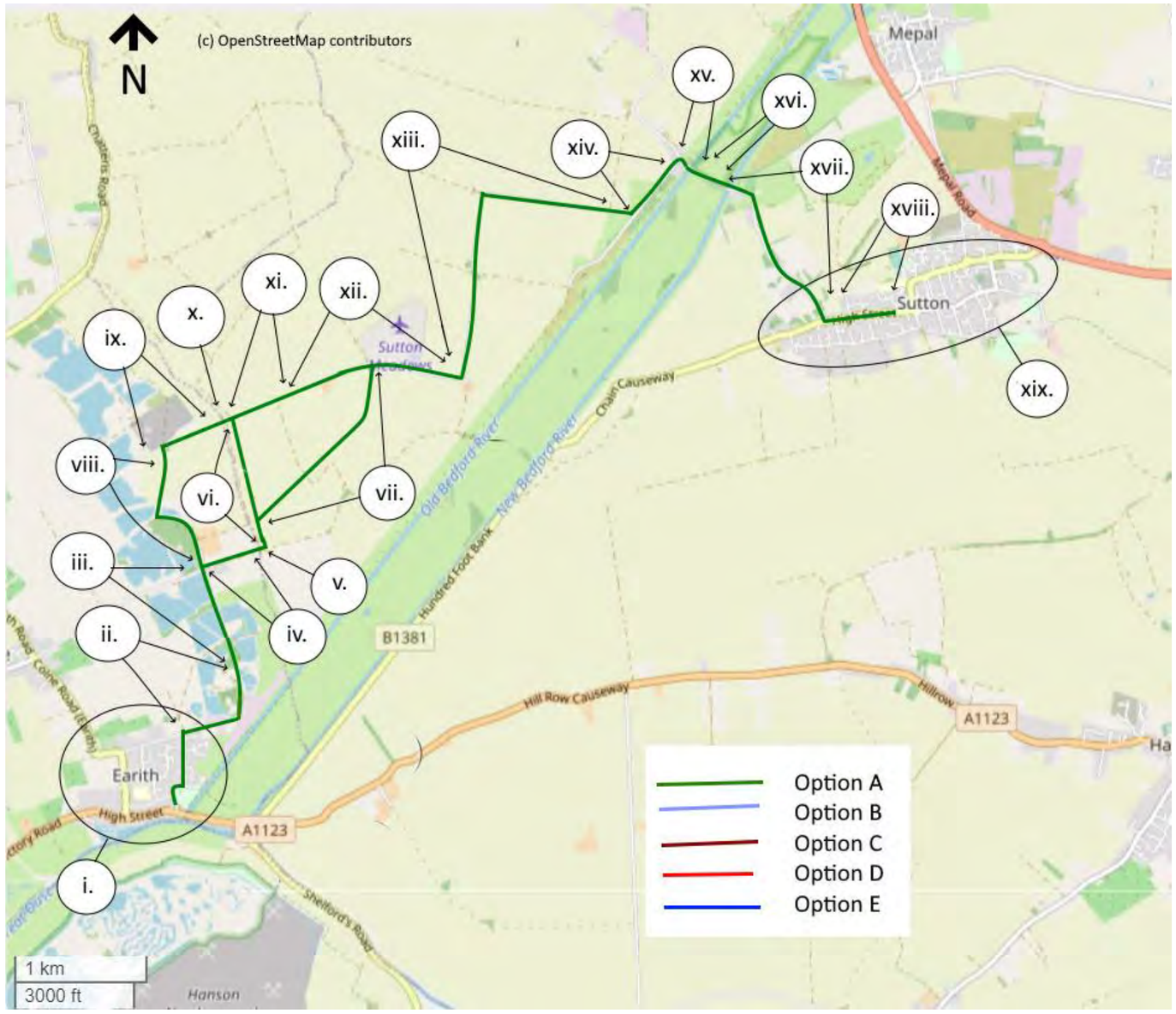


Figure 7A.1 Option A

i.

As depicted in Figure 7A 1.1, the street space in Earith is constrained. Traffic on the A1123 is significant and has a huge impact on the community, to the extent that there is no obvious way to bring the High Street (A1123) up to anything like the standards expected in LTN 1/20. No routes considered for this study therefore propose using the A1123.

Figure 7A.1.1 Earith High Street/ A1123.

It is notable that there is a good quality path that follows the A1123 between Earith and Bluntisham, which should really be linked with any proposed route between Earith and Sutton. Sadly it seems that although the path is to a good standard it is inaccessible to all but a few due to the need to cycle with the traffic on the A1123. It is essential that any route considered between Earith and Sutton does not have this problem.

Figure 7A.1.2 Existing path between Bluntisham and Earith that is only accessible by cycle by cycling on the A1123.

Apart from the A1123 most of Earith is predominantly a low-traffic area, with vehicles mainly comprising residents or those accessing the community, but there is some movement of HGVs accessing the industrial units within Earith. Nevertheless with some changes to junctions, some traffic calming measures and the introduction of a 20 mph limit most roads in Earith could be suitable for cycling in line with the requirements in LTN 1/20. It is considered suitable for cyclists to share the road with traffic, given that speeds remain low. A recommended speed limit of 20 mph is proposed, accompanied by measures to reinforce this, including junction tightening, and enhanced pedestrian crossings.

Figure 7A.1.3 Colne Road in Earith is one of the busier local roads but has much more potential than the busy A1123.

Figure 7A.1.4 Colne Road/Meadow Lane junction – one of the junctions in Earith that would benefit from changes.

ii.

Meadow Drove is currently a 40 mph road that becomes a derestricted road. It serves a caravan and camping site, some small industrial units and Earith Business Park. It is not a through road and is therefore not a busy road but the nature of traffic and potential speeds are a concern. It is recommended that it should be included within the 20mph zone of Earith and some traffic calming measures should be introduced.

Figure 7A.2.1 Meadow Drove at the end of the 40 mph limit.

Meadow Drove continues north beyond Earith Business Park and is surfaced up to the entry to Fenland Fisheries. Given the road's current conditions and relatively low traffic volumes, a 20 mph speed limit is appropriate.

Figure 7A.2.2 Meadow Drove north of the Business Park

iii.

Meadow Drove continues beyond Fenland Fisheries as a bridleway and is potholed and at the time of visit there were large puddles meaning that major works are needed to bring it up to a suitable standard. Since it is a bridleway the County Council has rights to undertake surfacing works and people have the right to use it on foot, wheeling or on horse-back, but local consultation will be needed.

Figure 7A.3.2 View of Meadow Drove unsurfaced bridleway section

iv.

Meadow Drove meets Holme Drove and Earith Fen Drove and the nature of the bridleway changes. Google maps shows a road heading north-east from this point across Cran Brook. The road is shown as Ash Road, but it is not evident as a road at present and starts off as a private farm entrance (Ring Farm). The alignment does however appear to be still there (and is visible from Google Earth), but more significantly there is an obvious parallel and better alignment that follows hedge lines and field boundaries to the north of Ash Road. This would make a good alignment and it is recommended that discussions are held with landowners to see if a suitable 3m wide path can be constructed along the route with the necessary fencing/ screening from neighbours.

Figure 7A.4.1 A route along this field edge (red arrow) would be a good alignment with Ash Road as shown on maps to the right of the tree on a slightly different alignment.

Figure 7A.4.2 Ash Road as shown on maps goes through this farm entrance and is not recommended.

Figure 7A.1.11

v.

This area is inaccessible without landowner's agreement and has not been surveyed but can be seen from Google Earth. A crossing is needed of Cran Brook and this will need to be part of discussions with landowners. There is an existing farm accommodation bridge on the Ash Road alignment, that may be adequate but it is likely that a new bridge will be needed that separates users from other activities. Any route and details are subject to agreement with the landowners.

vi.

This area is inaccessible without landowner's agreement and has not been surveyed but can be seen from Google Earth. An existing access track runs besides Cran Brook used by farm traffic and vehicles accessing a reservoir construction site. A safe crossing will be needed of this track and a new path will be needed away from Cran Brook following the farm track to a suitable point where the path would turn away from Cran Brook. Any route and details are subject to agreement with the landowners.

vii.

This area is inaccessible without landowner's agreement and has not been surveyed but can be seen from Google Earth and part can be seen from Meadlands Main Drove. An existing drain and field boundary runs north-east from Cran Brook and then turns to meet Meadlands Main Drove. It looks an attractive alignment that would be away from farm activity, but needs surveying and any route and details are subject to agreement with the landowners.

viii.

There are many options as to how to link Meadow Drove with Meadlands Main Drove, which is essential for continuity of the route. All options are subject to agreement with the landowners and will need to fit in with the farming, fishing and quarrying activities as well as the sensitive ecology. At this point the alignment outlined in v, vi and vii appears to be the best option more discussions are needed with landowners. One obvious alternative would be to continue on the bridleway alignment that would be a continuation of Meadow Drove and then turn north-east,

From the Holme Drove junction the bridleway is gated and appears to be shared with farm traffic initially and then quarrying traffic. Any surfacing works would need to be very robust to ensure that a good smooth surface is durable and works for all users. The bridleway stops at a gate.

Figure 7A.8.1 The bridleway/ farm track at its southern end seen from Meadow Drove.

Figure 7A.8.2 The bridleway/ farm track looking back towards Earith.

Figure 7A.8.3 The bridleway with potential quarrying traffic.

Figure 7A.8.4 The bridleway ends at this gate.

Figure 7A.8.5 The bridleway ends at this gate.

ix.

This area is inaccessible without landowner's agreement and has not been surveyed but can be seen from Google Earth and from the gate (above). Any new route would need to fit in with quarrying activities and future plans as well as farming activities. From Google Earth it appears that an alignment is possible following field boundaries, but any route and details are subject to agreement with the landowners.

Figure 7A.9.1 Any route would have to navigate around/ across this area to a suitable crossing of Cran Brook.

x.

This area is inaccessible without landowner's agreement and has not been surveyed but can be seen from Google Earth. A bridge is needed over Cran Brook and this will need to be part of discussions with landowners. This crossing could be avoided and an alternative to sections ix and x would be delivery of sections iv, v and section vi along a long length of Cran Brook. Any route and details are subject to agreement with the landowners.

xi.

There appears to be a historic road alignment that may have extended across Cran Brook, certainly east of Cran Brook the road is obvious. It is in poor condition and would need major works and agreement of the landowner for its use. The surface would need to be robust enough to accommodate all users, so it will be important to understand how it is used and would be used in future. The route I currently gated although the gate appears to be slightly beyond the extent of public highway.

Figure 7A.10.1 The closed and private road looking west towards Cran Brook.

Figure 7A.10.2 The poor surfacing presumably extends from the edge of the public highway at Maedlands Farm to Cran Brook, but has not been surveyed. (View towards gate from near Maedlands Farm.).

xii.

Meadland's Main Drove that passes Sutton Meadows Airfield and is a very quiet road that would be suitable for use by cyclists. It is generally in good condition but will inevitably have some signs of farming and may need sweeping occasionally. The critical consideration is that, despite this alignment avoiding the ecologically sensitive area along the RSVP, significant populations of swans were observed during the site investigation. Further ecological assessments will be conducted in the ecological chapter to determine the success or challenges associated with this segment, and it will be contingent on ecological agreements.

Figure 7A.12.1 Meadland's Main Drove.

xiii.

Meadland's Main Drove turns north and becomes Bedingham's Drove, which has similar characteristics to Meadland's Main Drove. It is in good condition for a Fen road but will inevitably have some signs of farming and may need sweeping occasionally. The same ecological considerations apply as for x.

Figure 7A.13.1 Bedingham's Drove from near the Meadland's Main Drove junction

Figure 7A.13.2 Bedingham's Drove.

xiv.

Where Bedingham's Drove meets the edge of the Washes it turns to run parallel with the banks of the Washes and passes a few properties. It is still quiet and suitable for use by cyclists, but the surface of this section is poorer than elsewhere and surfacing repairs are needed. It is recommended that the speed limit in this area be reduced to 20-30mph. Additionally, considering the characteristics of this section and sections xii. and xiii. , designating it or all sections as a Quiet Lane could further enhance its suitability for pedestrians and cyclists.

Figure 7A.14.1 Bedingham's Drove.

xv.

Bedingham's Drove meets the Causeway where cyclists would need to turn right on the road. The junction is wide and would benefit from tightening up to keep speeds down. The Causeway itself can be very quiet in winter, if the Washes are in flood and the road is closed, but in summer it can be busier and would benefit from a 20 mph limit throughout. The road crosses over the Washes floodbanks and crosses the Washes at ground level. This is the area that is prone to flooding.

Figure 7A.15.1 Bedingham's Drove/ The Causeway junction.

Figure 7A.15.2 The Causeway as it approaches the area prone to flooding.

xvi.

As depicted in the photo below, this road segment experiences seasonal closures due to flooding. A flood gate has been installed in the area, making the bridge/ causeway the sole crossing during the flood season.

In summer the majority of cyclists would be expected to use the road, rather than the bridge/ causeway, but during closure that is not an option. This section is therefore one of the most significant parts of the route and options are considered on the following page.

Figure 7A.16.1 In dry conditions most cyclists would use the road rather than the bridge/ causeway on the left.

Figure 7A.16.2 In flood conditions the road is hardly visible on the right of the bridge/ causeway on the left.

The width of the bridge structure is 90 cm. It is very long at approximately 185m and it is made of regular sections supported on piers. It is believed to date from 1983 and is the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), so any changes would need to be agreed with the County Council. Sutton Gault Footbridge CCC ref 427797 was designed and built by CCC. In correspondence with Cambridgeshire County Council Gareth Guest confirmed in an email dated 12th February 2024 that "*There are no plans to change the structural layout but we may look to replace the timber decking in the next couple of years only.*"

Figure 7A.16.3 View of structure in dry conditions.

The main issues with the existing bridge relate to its width. It is not wide enough for two people to pass comfortably and would be unusable by many with mobility issues. Consideration has been given to widening the bridge – it should ideally be replaced by a 4m wide bridge throughout, but a cheaper and simpler option would be to replace just some sections leaving regular passing spaces. Narrower sections could be left at 0.9m or ideally widened to 1.5m to make them more accessible. The challenges with widening the bridge relate to the available space, trees, flooding, ecology and road safety. Any widening towards the road would increase the chance of impact by traffic. Any widening away from the road could impact on trees. Any widening which could impact on water flows in flooding. Any works in such an ecologically sensitive area will also need very careful consideration.

It is clear that changes are needed for this option to be a viable route and this part of the route could be a real highlight of the area, but detailed surveys, design work and consultation are needed.

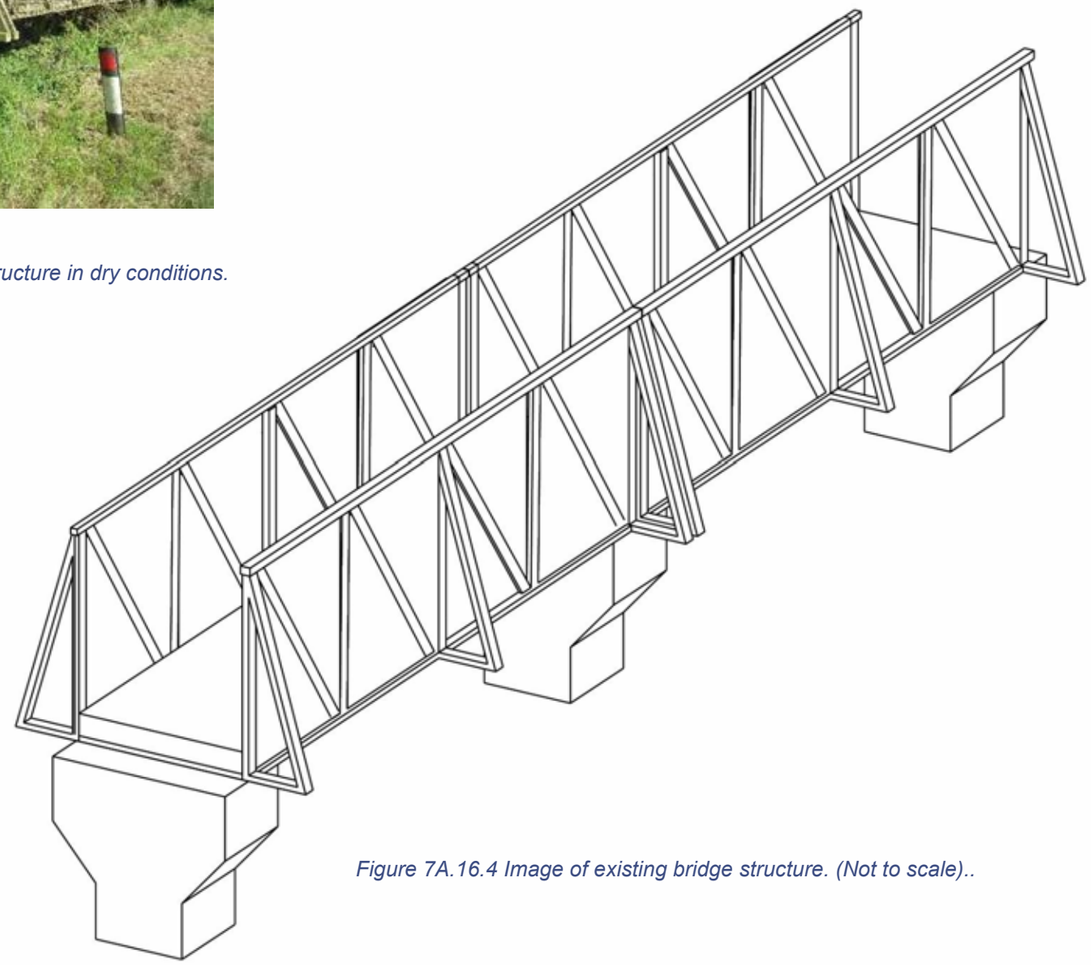


Figure 7A.16.4 Image of existing bridge structure. (Not to scale)..

Figure 7A.16.5. The bridge/ causeway connects to higher ground at each end.

Figure 7A.16.6. The bridge/ causeway connects to higher ground at each end.

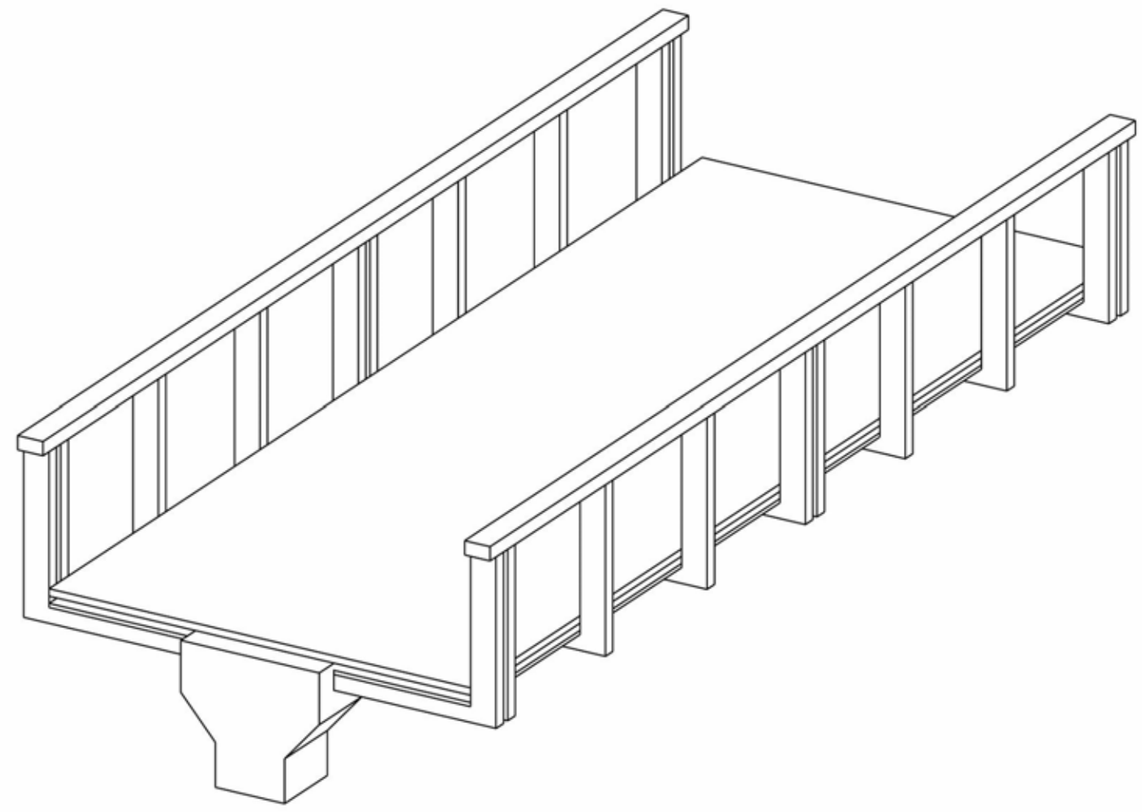


Figure 7A.16.7 Sections of bridge could be replaced by a wider section (ideally at least 4m wide). Trees may be impacted and the proximity to the road may be an issue. (Not to scale).

Figure 7A.16.8. The existing support arrangement. Detailed design is needed to see if it can be retained with a new bridge arrangement as adjacent.

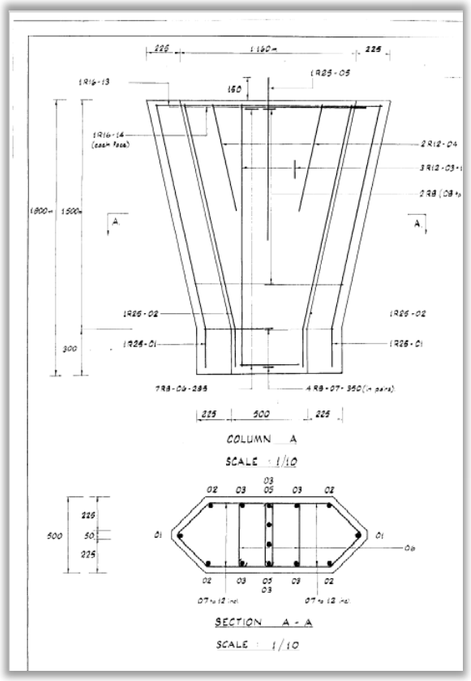


Figure 7A.16.9. Extract from County Council bridge drawing showing support structure. (See Appendix for more details).

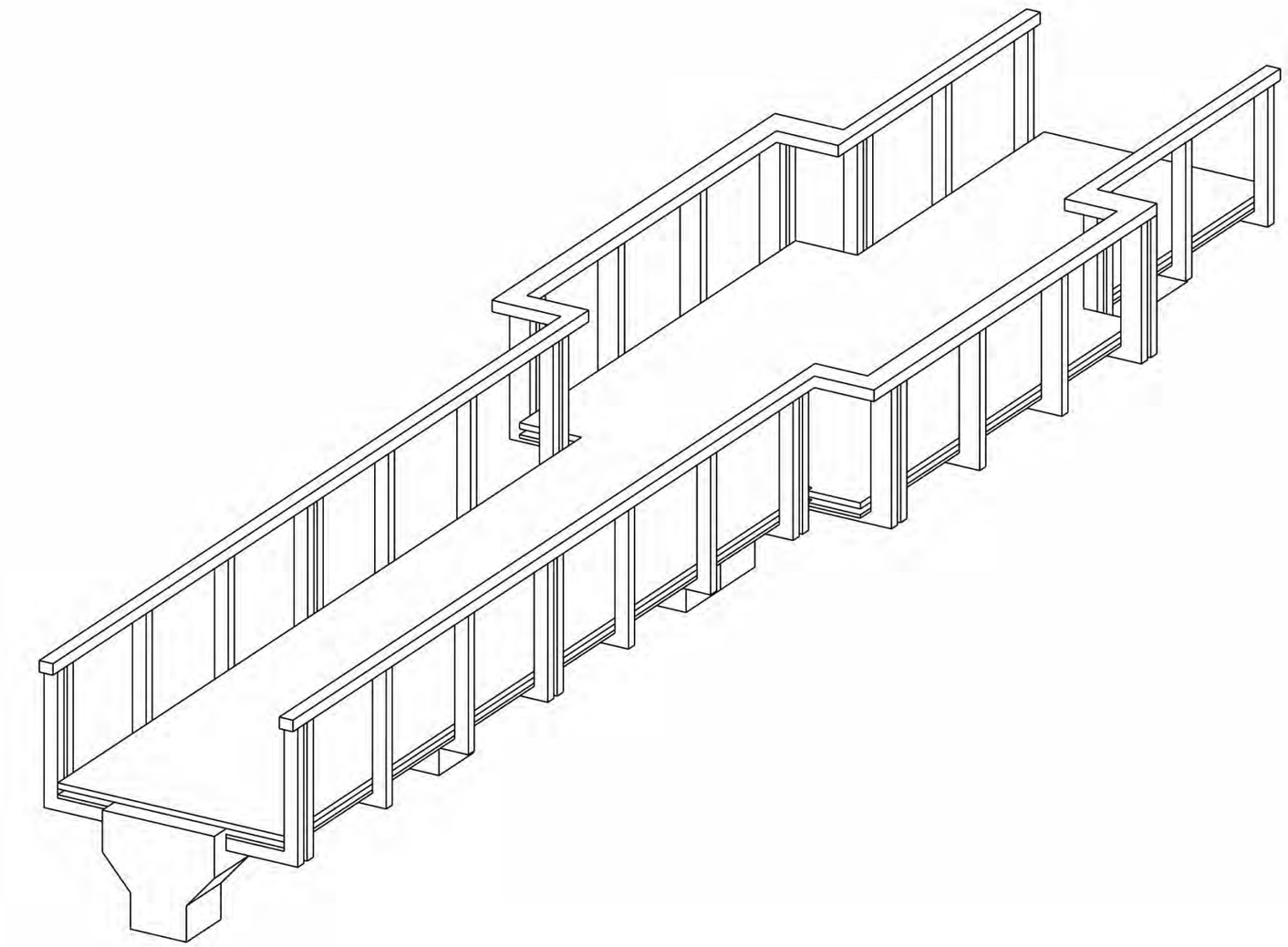


Figure 7A.16.10 Image showing how wider and narrower sections could allow passing. (Not to scale).

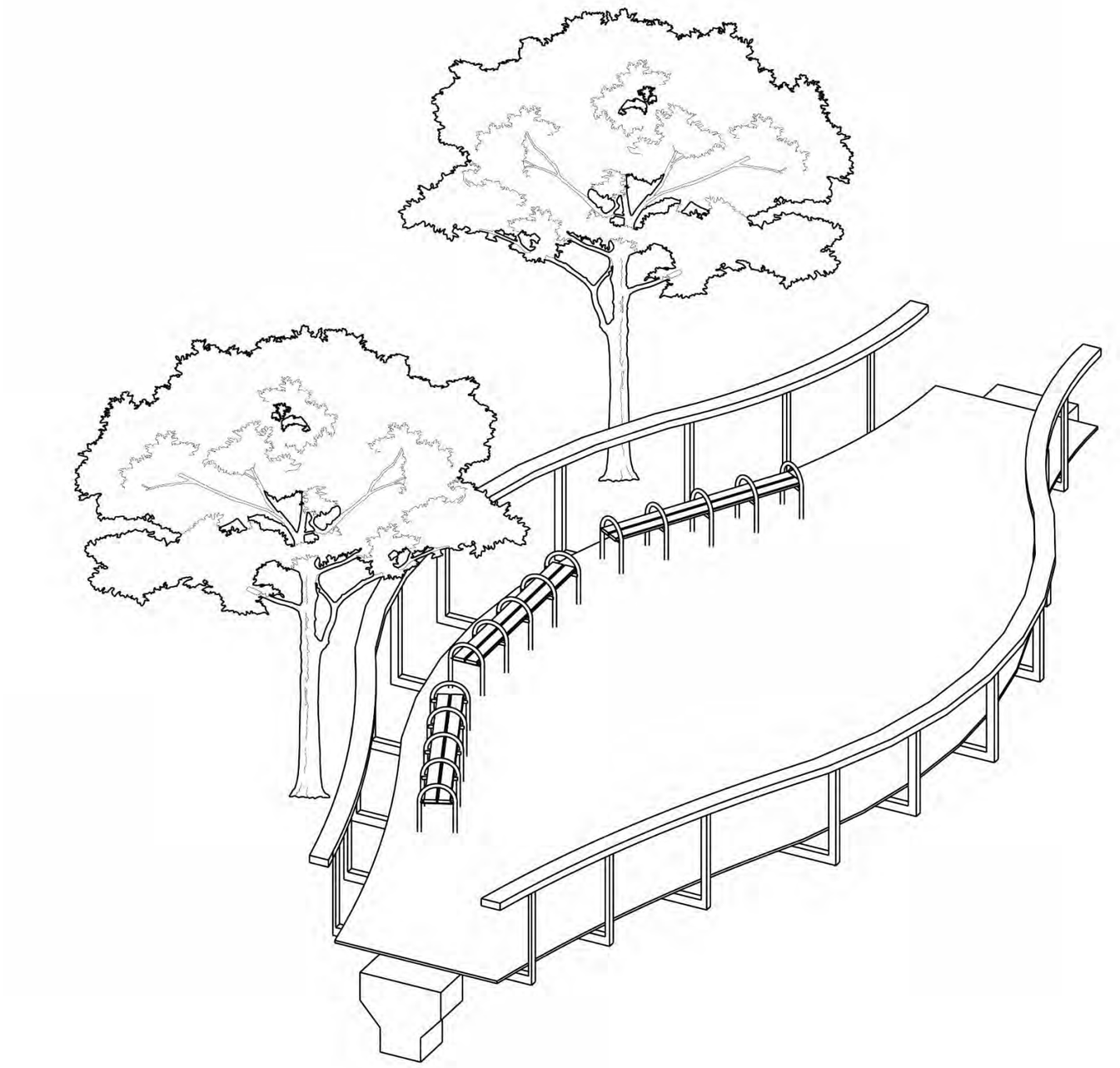


Figure 7A.16.11 Image showing how wider and narrower sections could allow passing. This could also include seating. (Not to scale).

xvii.

After passing the Causeway, the route exhibits different characteristics. There is a footway parallel to some of Bury Lane that could be widened to facilitate shared use by pedestrians and cyclists, but the only continuous solution would be to retain the road much as existing with cyclists using the road, but with the road designated as a 20 mph road. This is the recommended solution. Traffic volumes will vary significantly depending on whether the road is open or closed, which is dependent on water levels in the Washes.

Figure 7A.17.1 Bury Lane at a time when it was closed to through traffic.

Figure 7A.17.2 Bury Lane.

xviii.

Bury Lane connects with Sutton High Street at the start of the High Street and this is a challenging location because traffic volumes are higher than on other parts of the route and there is a challenging right turn from the High Street into Bury Lane. There is space in the vicinity of the junction for changes to be made and the Bury Lane junction will need to be made much tighter to reduce speeds and form more of a gateway. It is likely that a signalised junction will be needed with roadspace reallocated to allow space for a protected cycle lane for those turning right. Without significant changes it is likely that the junction will fail a Junction assessment under LTN 1/20.Detailed design and significant funding is needed for this junction. For the rest of the route along the High Street traffic calming measures and an extension of the existing 20 mph zone is recommended. Community engagement is recommended to change this important road to encourage slower speeds and less through traffic. This work should a review of existing traffic islands and width change.

Sutton High Street is the focal point where numerous points of interest are concentrated. Similar to many historic towns and villages, Sutton faces space constraints between buildings, making it challenging to reallocate road space for segregated cycleways while maintaining two-way traffic flow and accommodating pedestrians. In Sutton, the practical reality is that most cycling will occur on the roads, although current conditions are not particularly attractive for cyclists. It is essential to implement measures that enhance the safety, convenience, and appeal of cycling as much as possible, especially considering the challenges posed by gradients.

Figure 7A.18.1 Bury Lane junction with Sutton High Street. Major changes are needed.

xix.

Sutton lacks obvious options for redirecting traffic, with one potential strategy being to encourage as much traffic as possible to use the Brook instead of the High Street. It is important for the success of any new facilities that they can be accessed by as many residents of Sutton as possible as well as nearby communities. Links with Mepal are addressed in the Mepal – Witchford Feasibility study. For Sutton itself the main requirements are likely to be junction changes, increased crossings, the extension of the existing 20 mph limit and other measures to emerge from community engagement to make the whole town an easy place to cycle and walk. The most significant changes likely to be needed are at the Bury Lane/ High Street junction outlined in section xviii. and also the replacement of the B1381/ Mepal Road roundabout as discussed in the Mepal – Witchford study.

Figure 7A.19.1 Sutton High Street, with church in the background. This area is already 20mph, but would benefit from better crossings.

Figure 7A.19.2 The Mepal Road/ B1381 roundabout would fail junction assessment under LTN 1/20 and needs major changes.

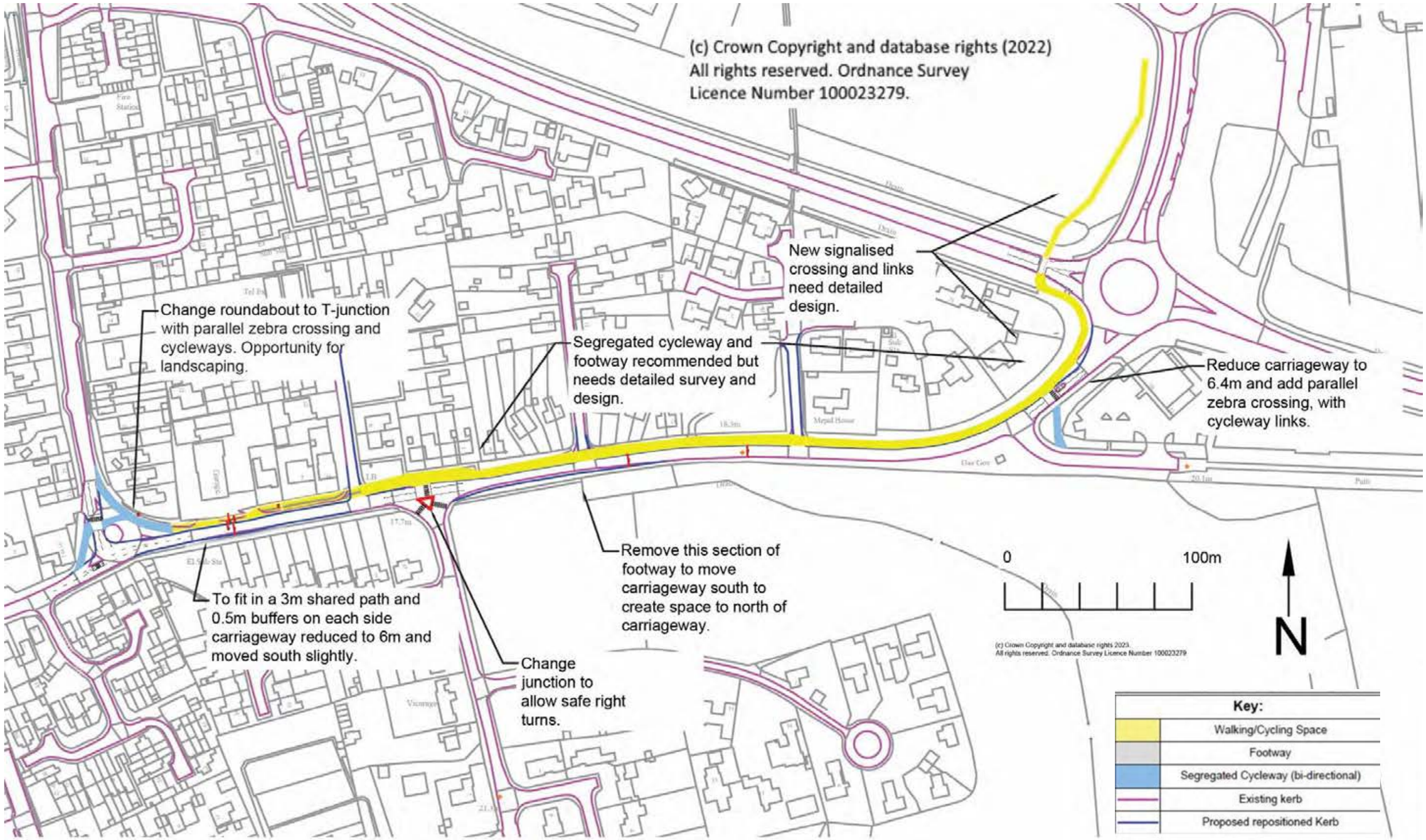


Figure 7A19.3 Drawing showing potential changes along Ely Road in Sutton, with a link to Elean Business Park to bring the road up to LTN 1/20 standards.

Option A Summary	
Comparative Length	7.3km along the B1381 or 24.5 km via Chatteris if A 1123 is flooded. 10.9 km for Option A It is the least direct option, but it avoids many of the challenges associated with other options and may be the most feasible option subject to land agreements and ecological sensitivity.
Likely estimated cost	• Works in Earith • Works in Sutton • 20 mph zone in Earith • 20 mph zone in Sutton • Meadow's Drove 800m surfacing. • Meadow Drove traffic calming measures 430m. • 2.3km f new path Meadow's Drove to Meadlands Main Drove • A new 4m bridge crossing Cran Brook Drain • Bedingham's Drove/ the Causeway junction tighten. • Bedingham's Drove resurfacing work 200m. • The causeway bridge widening work. • Signalised Junction at Sutton Bury lane/ High street. *500m segregated cycle lane for link between Sutton and Elean Business Park needed. Costing has been addressed in Mepal to Witchford report.*
Engineering difficulties	Changes to the causeway at Sutton Gault are a major challenge, especially if the existing support structures cannot be re-used. It is also possible that any partial changes will necessitate replacement of the whole existing structure. A challenging new signalised junction in Sutton will need further design work. Building on the existing flood bank/ public footpath would be very difficult so is not recommended. The field edge alternative includes two new small bridges.
Ecological issues	Major issues to resolve. See Chapter 9.
Land ownership issues	Land ownership appears to be mostly one landowner.
Other issues	The route across the Washes in flood can be very spectacular and a feature in its own right.
Overall	This may be the most achievable option if it can be made to work well with farming and quarrying operations.

Option B

Option B starts out in the same way as Option A, from Earith High Street heading north on residential and industrial roads, but then the route turns towards the Washes and follows a drainage channel on the boundary of the Washes and the adjacent arable land. The route continues parallel with the Washes with a sub-option of using Bedingham's Drove as in Option A or continuing along the edge of the Washes before joining up with Option A nearer the Causeway, from where it continues into Sutton.

The route is described in sections as indicated in Figure 7B.1.

i.

Refer to Option A

Figure 7B.1.1 Earith High Street , where traffic volumes are a major issue, but elsewhere there is potential for significant improvements.

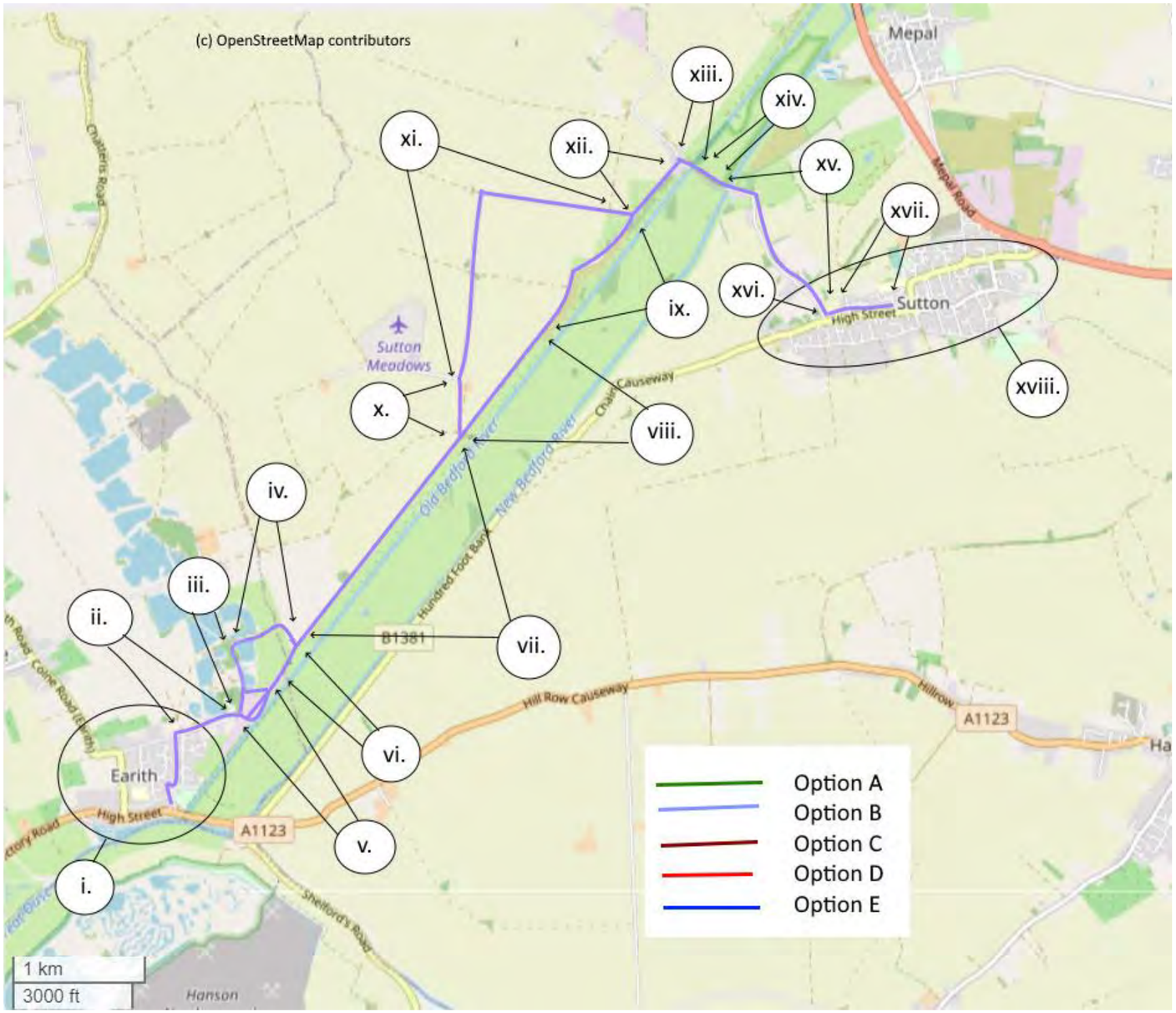


Figure 7B.1 Option B

ii.

Refer to Option A. Meadow Drove.

iii.

Meadow Drove changes from public highway to bridleway by the entrance to Earith Business Park, where it narrows, but it is a surfaced road, suitable by use on bike as far as Fenland Fisheries, where the surfacing deteriorates and major works are needed. Although it is a bridleway it still carries motorised traffic and surfacing would need to be robust. The Drove runs between fishing lakes and is fenced on both sides. Since it is a bridleway the County Council has rights to undertake surfacing works and people have the right to use it on foot, wheeling or on horse-back, but local consultation will be needed.

Figure 7A.3.1View of Meadow Drove surfaced bridleway section

Figure 7A.3.2 View of Meadow Drove unsurfaced bridleway section

iv.

The alignment for this section is unclear and has not been surveyed, because the land is private. The aim is to link Meadow Drove with the edge of the Washes in a manner that reflects local land uses and ecology. From Google Earth it is evident that there are routes that could be achieved that run between fishing lakes and around fishing lakes, but there is a lot of security in the area and clearly any route would have to be securely fenced from the fishing lakes. The route will need to be negotiated with landowners and there may be opportunities to include a route in any future developments. The open land provides sufficient width for paving, if agreed. making it suitable for route development.

Figure 7A.4.1View from Meadow Drove showing a route between lakes. Security issues will be a major challenge.

v.

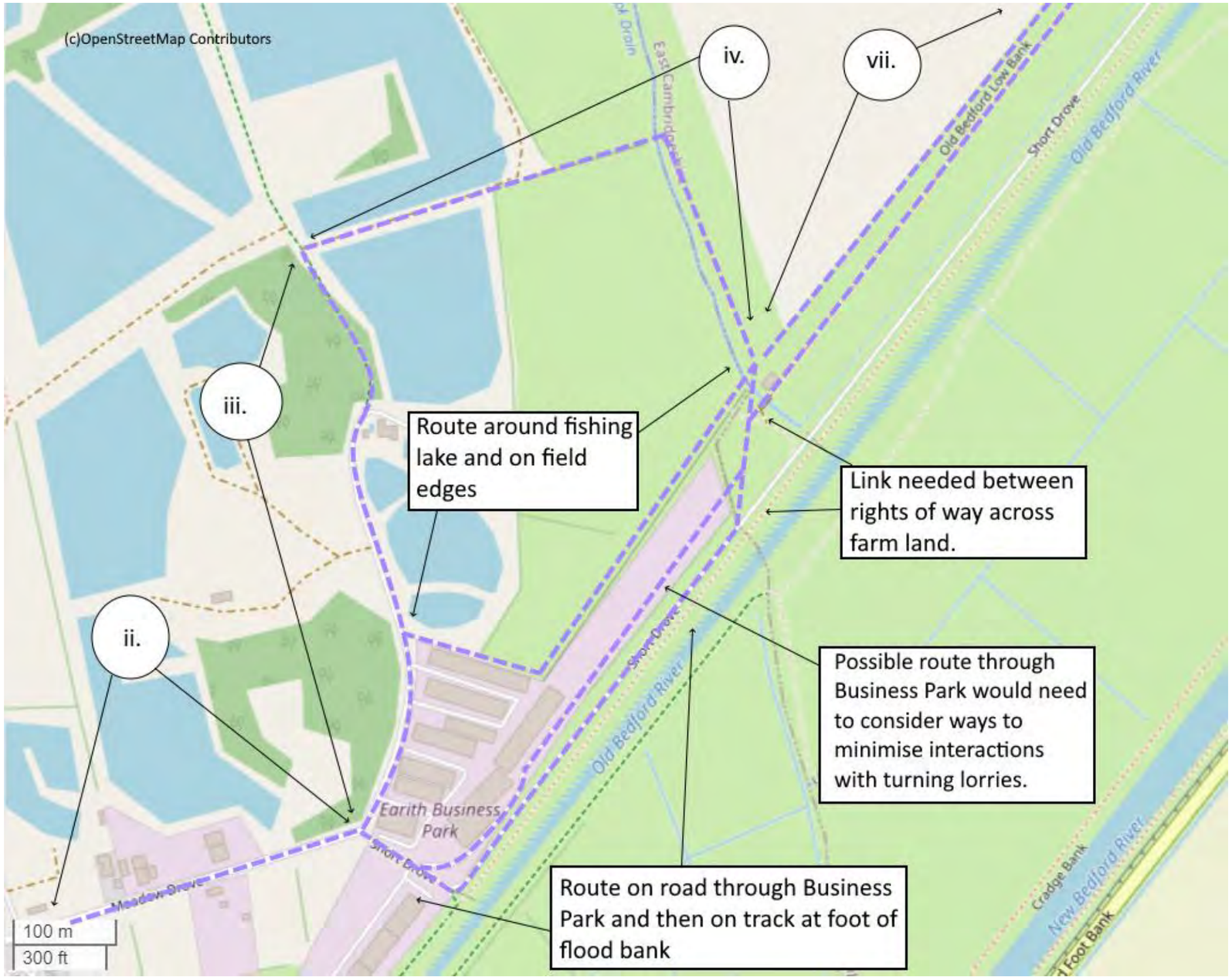
The obvious alignment for the route is to use the existing road through Earith Business Park that leads to a track along the foot of the flood bank in the Washes. Resurfacing the track to a width of 3m is necessary. Bollards may be needed to prevent parking on the track and changes will be needed to a gate. This is known as Short Drove throughout and is presumably a historical route, but the route through the business park is a bridleway and the route along the foot of the flood bank is a public footpath, so the access rights are different. The difficulties with this route are in getting agreement for use of and changes to the public footpath. It passes through ecologically sensitive land, so further assessment is needed to check that it can be used. Also there is no connection using rights of way with the right of way that runs along the edge of the washes or with land adjoining the watercourse along the edge of the Washes. For this reason various other options have been considered and it is hard to be clear on the best alignment without more discussions with landowners and ecologists. These possible options are shown in Figure 7A5.5.

Figure 7A.5.1 View of Meadow Drove showing the start of Short Drove to the right.

Figure 7A.5.2 Some of Short Drove in the business park is a tarmac road, part is an unsealed track as above. This is bridleway.

Figure 7A.5.3 Short Drove- access track and public footpath at the foot of the flood bank.

Figure 7A.5.4 Land between fishing lake and business park that is a possible route, subject to survey and landowner's agreement.



vi.

There is a notable gap in the rights of way network between Short Drove and the Old Bedford Low Bank. The area is open and includes small farm buildings and a small bridge over a watercourse. The link needed is shown in Figure 7A.5.5, but the need for this and the routing is subject to the route agreed to link with Meadow Drove. . A 3m sealed path is needed and is subject to agreement with landowners. Security arrangements will need to be addressed and a new crossing of Cran Brook is likely to be needed.

Figure 7A.6.1 View from flood bank showing Short Drove in foreground and Old Bedford Low Bank in the distance on the left (to the left of the flooded field).

vii.

A public footpath runs along a low flood bank Old Bedford Low Bank) on the edge of the Washes from near Earith to join up with Bedingham's Drove near Sutton Gault. It is therefore an interesting alignment, but one that presents technical and ecological challenges combined with the challenge of making a good connection with Earith, as outlined in sections iv, v and vi.. At the time of visiting the path fields to the south-east of the flood bank were under water, but the path was mostly dry. The land beyond the flood bank and the watercourse is arable farmland and this would provide a similar route to one on the flood bank. This field edge alignment would need two bridges over field drains that feed into the main watercourse, but these would not be major structures.

Although the flood bank was generally above flood level at the time of visit there were locations were the path was wet and where significant works would be needed to change levels or realign the path so that it did not flood. There are also some gates on the route that will need replacing with suitable gates and cattle grids, if it is necessary to allow for grazing. The difficulties of delivering a route along the flood bank/ public footpath mean that it is unlikely to be a good option to progress and it would certainly appear that a better alignment would be on the field edge away from the Washes and parallel with the public footpath.

There appear to be water mains following the field edge alignment and further utilities checks are recommended before the exact position of any path is finalised.

. A 3m sealed path is needed and is subject to agreement with landowners.

Figure 7A.7.1 View along flood bank towards Sutton with flooded field to right and watercourse to left.

Figure 7A.7.2 View along flood bank towards Sutton with flooded field to right and watercourse to left showing technical challenges where width is constrained.

Figure 7A.7.3 View along flood bank towards Sutton with flooded field to right and watercourse to left showing potential route on field to left.

Figure 7A.7.4 View along flood bank towards Sutton with flooded field to right and watercourse to left showing potential route on field to left.

Figure 7A.7.5 View along flood bank towards Sutton with flooded field to right and watercourse to left showing potential route on field to left.

Figure 7A.7.6 View from flood bank showing watercourse and linking field drain. A potential field edge route along the other side of the watercourse would have to cross the drain.

Figure 7A.7.7 View along flood bank towards Sutton showing the public footpath as almost impassable.

Figure 7A.7.8 Viewback towards Earith along field edge with flood bank to the left. This would appear to be an easier option than any route on the flood bank.

viii.

The route could continue along the flood bank/ field edge for approximately 900m. Note that this route has not been surveyed. . A 3m sealed path would be needed and is subject to agreement with landowners.

ix.

The public footpath leads to a very quiet fen road, which could be suitable for use with a good surface. The route has not been surveyed, but Google Earth suggests that the road would need significant repairs and resurfacing. It is on a good straight alignment and this part is screened by trees in places, which is likely to be an advantage in terms of ecology.

Figure 7A.9.1 The road links with Bedingham's Drove at this location. (View towards Earith).

x.

A field edge track and public footpath leads from the Washes to the public highway/ Bedingham's Drove. Again there is evidence of utilities which need be checked before any path alignment could be agreed. A 3m sealed path is needed and is subject to agreement with landowners. At the approach to the public highway the route joins a farm access track and any surfacing would need to accommodate farm vehicles.

Figure 7A.1.10.1 View of field edge path towards Bedingham's Drove.

Figure 7A.10.2 Valve assumed to be for water supply adjacent to field edge path.

Figure 7A.10.3. The route would need to join a short length of farm track near the junction with the public highway.

xi- xviii.

See option A for these sections. The route would be the same for Options A and B.

Figure 7A.13.1 A good year round solution is needed for the Causeway. The road leads into Sutton, where changes are also needed.

Option B Summary	
Comparative Length	7.3km along the B1381 or 24.5 km via Chatteris if A 1123 is flooded. 9.9km for Option B. A relatively direct option, but detours on minor roads.
Likely estimated cost	• Works in Earith. • Works in Sutton. • 2 new 4m bridges crossing the Drains. • The Causeway/ bridge widening work. • 3.3 km new 3m wide sealed path • Biodiversity net gain costs may be high.
Engineering difficulties	Changes to the causeway at Sutton Gault are a major challenge, especially if the existing support structures cannot be re-used. It is also possible that any partial changes will necessitate replacement of the whole existing structure. A challenging new signalised junction in Sutton will need further design work. Building on the existing flood bank/ public footpath would be very difficult so is not recommended. The field edge alternative includes two new small bridges.
Ecological issues	Major issues to resolve. See Chapter 9.
Land ownership issues	Land ownership appears to be mostly one landowner, apart from near Earith where land ownership looks complicated and there are a number of options that will need to be progressed for the route to develop,
Other issues	Some utilities are evident along the route. The route may flood. The causeway is an attractive feature in its own right and potential destination particularly in winter.
Overall	A direct attractive route but the public footpath alignment looks too difficult so a field edge option would be needed.

Option C

Similar to Option B this option starts at Earith High Street and then follows the Washes, within the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) protected habitat area. The route mostly follows an existing track which would need surfacing. The track is used for maintenance of the area and it is therefore an obvious option. This track links up with the Causeway and Sutton in the same way that Options A and B do. The ecological sensitivity of this area means that this obvious route may not be deliverable and detailed discussions are needed with RSPB, Environment Agency and Natural England to further consider the feasibility of the route and whether it would be possible to obtain the necessary planning approvals.

The route is described in sections as indicated in Figure 7C.1.

i.

Refer to Option A.

Figure 7C.1.1 Colne Lane at the junction with Earith High Street, which is a challenging environment for walking and wheeling.

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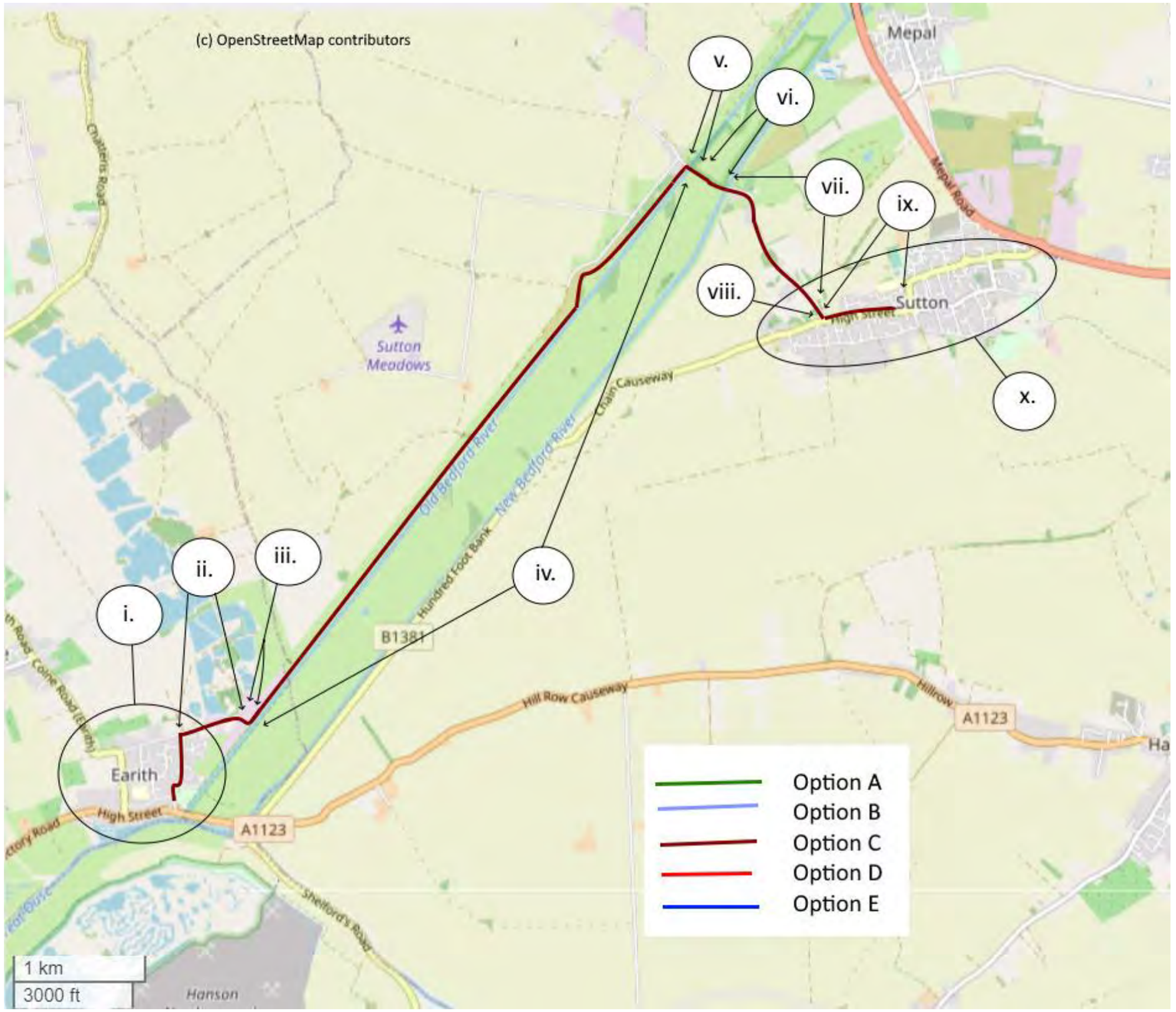


ii.

Refer to Option A.

Figure 7C.2.1 The route would use Meadow Drove to the left and enter Earith Business Park at this junction.

iii.

The obvious alignment for the route is to use the existing road through Earith Business Park that leads to a track along the foot of the flood bank in the Washes. This is known as Short Drove throughout and is presumably a historical route, but the route through the business park is a bridleway, which is partially surfaced as a road and partially surfaced but not sealed, so surfacing works are required and changes are needed to a gate.. Resurfacing the track to a width of 3m is necessary, and any surfacing work should be robust enough to accommodate traffic from the business park. Bollards may be needed to prevent parking on the track.

Figure 7C.3.1 The route through this part of Earith Business Park needs few works.

Figure 7C.3.2 This bridleway/ access track from Earith Business Park to the Washes needs surfacing and new access arrangements.

iv.

An access track runs along the foot of the flood bank from the edge of Earith to near Sutton. It is in variable condition and could be ridden on a mountain bike, but is only suitable for a few to use. In summer it was in better condition than in winter when it was wet, puddled and slippery. The route is believed to be used for access for maintaining the land and the flood defences and is a public footpath throughout. Its use would need agreement of the landowners and consent for works to provide a smooth durable sealed surface of 3m. The existing track is approximately 3m and is of variable condition as can be seen from photos. A full survey would be needed if the option is to progress.

Figure 7C.4.1 The track/ footpath in summer, near Earith Business Park.

Figure 7C.4.2 The track/ footpath in summer.

Figure 7C.4.3 The track/ footpath seen from the flood bank top in winter with puddles.

Figure 7C.4.4 The track/ footpath in summer with gate. Suitable access for all would be needed.

Figure 7C.4.5 The track/ footpath in summer.

Figure 7C.4.6 The track/ footpath in summer.

Figure 7C.4.9 The track/ footpath in summer.

Figure 7C.4.12 The track/ footpath in summer seen from The Causeway with gate. For access for all the gate would need changing.

Figure 7C.4.7 The track/ footpath in summer.

Figure 7C.4.10 The track/ footpath in summer.

Figure 7C.4.13 View from the track/ footpath junction with the Causeway towards Sutton.

Figure 7C.4.8 The track/ footpath in summer with gate. Suitable access for all would be needed.

Figure 7C.4.11 The track/ footpath in summer near The Causeway.

v.-x.

Refer to Option A. The route over this section would be the same for Options A, B and C.

Figure 7C.10.1 The route needs to reach the centre of Sutton, so works are needed along the Causeway and in Sutton.

Note that photos are arranged in order from Earith towards Sutton.

Option C Summary	
Comparative Length	7.3km along the B1381 or 24.5 km via Chatteris if A 1123 is flooded. 8.9km for Option C.
Likely estimated cost	• Works in Earith. • Works in Sutton. • The Causeway/ bridge widening work. • 8m bridges crossing the Drains. • 5.5 km new 3m wide sealed path on the track/footpath. Biodiversity net gain costs may be high.
Engineering difficulties	Changes to the causeway at Sutton Gault are a major challenge, especially if the existing support structures cannot be re-used. It is also possible that any partial changes will necessitate replacement of the whole existing structure. A challenging new signalised junction in Sutton will need further design work.
Ecological issues	Major issues to resolve. See Chapter 9.
Land ownership issues	Land ownership appears to be entirely RSPB and Environment Agency but that needs confirming.
Other issues	The existing access track is used for maintenance so any works need to accommodate possible major works traffic. There may be some risk of the route flooding. The causeway is an attractive feature in its own right and potential destination particularly in winter.
Overall	A very appealing option and more direct than Options A and B, but can only be achieved if the necessary ecological approvals can be given including for the challenging ecology.

Option D

Option D runs on the opposite side of the Washes to Options A, B and C and again involves construction within RSPB land. A major challenge with the route is the way that it would leave Earith and it is hard to see how major construction across the Washes can be avoided. This is likely to be extremely sensitive ecologically.

When the route reaches the B1381 it follows the public right of way on the bank on the eastern side of the new Bedford river, facing ecological considerations similar to Option B and Option C. The route then leaves the flood bank to follow the B1381 into Sutton on field edges, which are privately owned. Access into Sutton from this direction is tricky, due to limited highway space and buildings adjoining the road. The route would continues along Sutton High Street on road.

The route is described in sections as indicated in Figure 7D.1.

i.

For Earith see Option A.

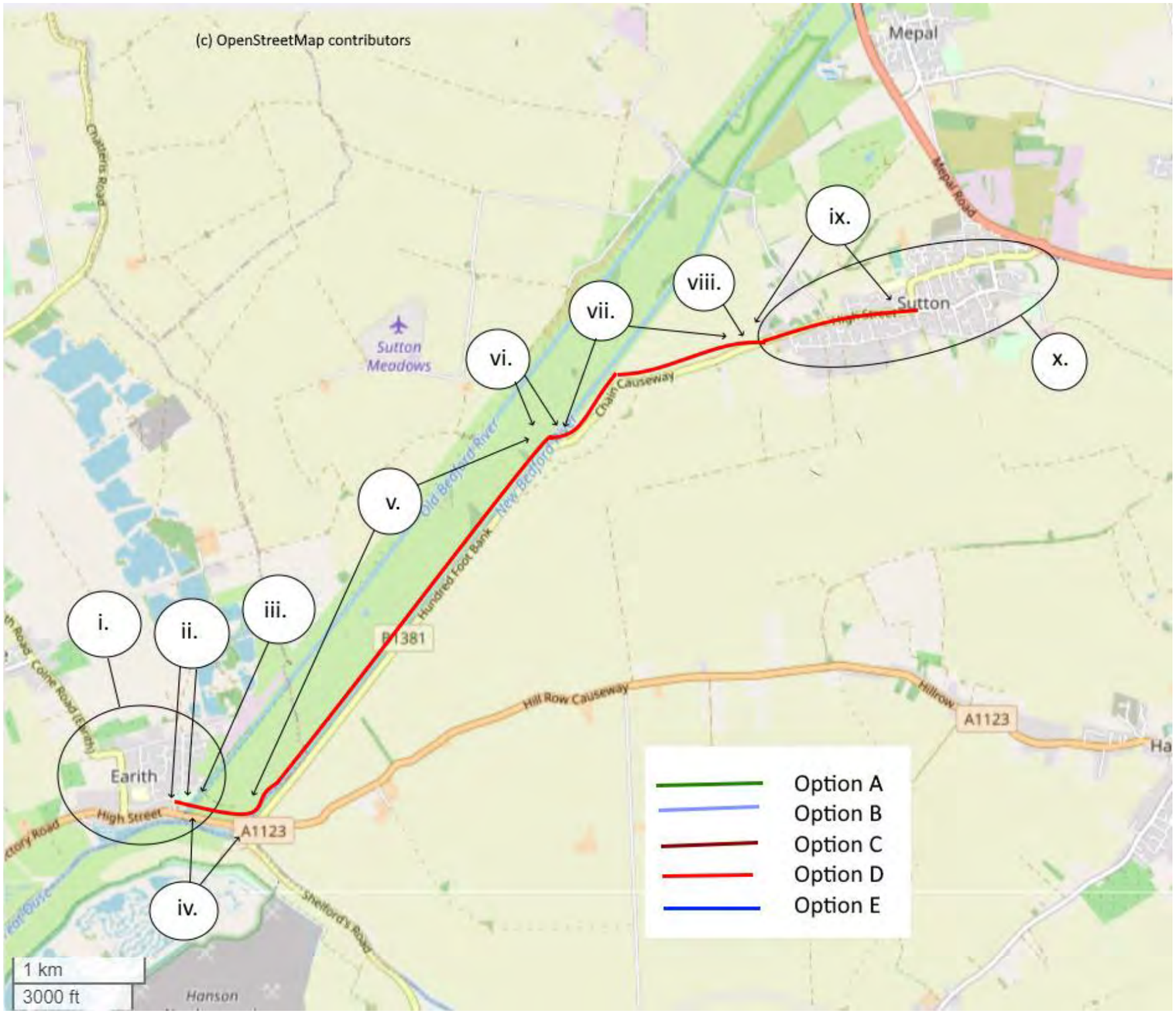


Figure 7D.1 Option D

ii. Between Bridge End and the A1123 Old Bedford River crossing there is a wide green space where a segregated cycleway could be built, subject to landowners' agreement and the necessary consents.

Figure 7D 2.1 View from Old Bedford River bridge towards Bridge End. A path could be built on the grass to the right to link with Bridge End.

iii.

The A1123 crosses the River Delph/ Old Bedford River on a bridge that is approximately 10m in width, with little scope to narrow the carriageway. The road carries over 10,000 vehicles per day according to DfT traffic data. (The latest figure was 10590 vehicles per day in 2019, which included just 29 cycles). A new count could be done, but it seems likely that it would be over the 10,000 limit that results in a critical fail in LTN 1/20 if cyclists have to share the carriageway with traffic. Even if the level were just below 10,000 using the road would still be intimidating for most. The footways are narrow and there appears little scope to move the carriageway so a new dedicated bridge is needed. Ideally this should be a cycling only bridge of 4m width linked to the path in section ii. with a span of approximately 40m.

Figure 7D 3.1 View towards Earith of the bridge and footway. There is little scope for reallocating road space.

Figure 7D 3.2 View of the river, where a new bridge would be needed.

iv.

The A1123 crosses between the two major rivers on each side of the Washes on slightly raised land. The road can flood, but the major issue is the traffic volume that makes it unsuitable to use the roadspace for cycling as in section iii. There is limited verge space and the land adjacent to the road is more likely to flood than the road. The only good solution would be a very long causeway across the Washes, with a major new bridge across the New Bedford River as in iii.. The causeway and bridge would need to be 4m wide and would be very expensive. It also would have to pass through a very sensitive environment and cope with flooding. An equivalent structure was built across the flood plain in St Neots and opened in 2011. A new structure would need to be wider (4m not 3m) and longer than St Neots. The St Neots scheme cost £3.1 million and this updated to current costs and for the bigger structure would be nearly £10million. As well as the ecological challenges there is also an important historic monument to the north of the A1123 and work is needed to check whether any works would impact on this structure. It is therefore very uncertain that a new structure would get consent.

Figure 7D 4.1 View of the A1123 looking towards Earith. A causeway would have to be in fields to the right.

Figure 7D 4.1 View of the Willow Bridge at St Neots.

Figure 7D 4.1 View of the Willow Bridge at St Neots, crossing the flood plain.

Figure 7D 4.1 View of the Willow Bridge crossing the River Great Ouse at St Neots. For a route following the A1123 there are two major rivers to cross.

v.

A public footpath runs along the top of the flood bank that runs between the New Bedford River and the B1381. This path was very overgrown at time of visit and was not walked in total. However it is clear that there would be major challenges in constructing a 3m wide sealed path on the bank top. Any works would need agreement of Environment Agency and there would be a risk that Environment Agency need to make changes to the flood defences in future. There are also major concerns regarding ecology. A substandard route along the banktop may be possible but this is not recommended.

Figure 7D 5.1 View of the bank top from near the A1123 looking north-east.

Figure 7D 5.1 View of the bank top with 3m tape just visible. Looking towards Earith. The bank is only just over 3m wide so any edge detail would be very difficult for a3m path.

vi.

At the point where the B1381 turns away from the Washes there is an informal ramp from the banktop down to the roadside. This ramp will need major works to form a ramp at maximum gradient of 1:20 for a 3m sealed path.

Figure 7D 6.1 A new ramp would be needed on this bank.

Figure 7D 6.2 A new ramp would be needed on approximately where this informal path is.

vii.

A new 3m sealed path could be built on field edges following the B1381 from the new ramp to the edge of Sutton, subject to agreeing this with landowners and planning consent, which will have to address the significant ecological issues. Traffic volumes and speeds are too high for cyclists to use the road and there is no highway verge space suitable for a new path set well back from the carriageway, so private land would be needed.

Figure 7D 7.1 View along B1381 towards Earith. For this option a new path would need to be in field edges to the right.

Figure 7D 7.2 View along B1381 towards Earith. For this option a new path would need to be in field edges to the right and would have to finish near this area.

viii.

On the edge of Sutton fields end and there is no obvious solution for continuing the route along the B1381 apart from using the road. A traffic count in 2008 showed 5100 vehicles daily on the B 1381 and only 3 cycles. A 30mph speed limit starts at the edge of Sutton and this could be changed to 20 mph. Whatever onward provision there is it is clear that there will need to be some form of gateway added on the edge of Sutton as an interface between any on road cycling provision and off road provision. It will be particularly important that there is provision for cyclists heading from Sutton to turn right. Detailed design and further consultation will be needed, but a new signalised crossing may be needed in this challenging area.

Figure 7D 8.1 A gateway feature and safe crossing is needed in this area on the edge of Sutton. The view is towards Earith and for this option a new path would need to be on field edges on the right beyond the trees.

ix.

The B1381 runs through Sutton and anyone cycling in Sutton will have to use it at some point. Given the traffic levels as highlighted in section viii cycling on the road is not a good option, but there is little choice. There is an existing 20mph limit in Sutton and it is recommended that it is extended, but that may be particularly challenging at the entry to Sutton from Earith, known as The America, where the nature of the road is quite different to the road within Sutton. It is recommended that further work is done to look at traffic calming features, the possible implementation of cycle lanes and all possible measures to make a more cycle friendly environment. Additional traffic counts are likely to be needed to check on changes since 2008.

Figure 7D 9.1 View of The America towards Earith. The removal of centre lines and new cycle lanes is one option to consider, but traffic speeds are a concern.

Figure 7D 9.2 Sutton High Street where an extension of the 20mph limit would be beneficial.

x.

Refer to Option A.

Option D **Summary**	
Comparative Length	7.3km along the B1381 or 24.5 km via Chatteris if A 1123 is flooded. 7.3km for Option D A direct route.
Likely estimated cost	• Works in Sutton • Works in Earith • A new bridge across the Washes near the A1123. • A new 50m ramp for accessing the bank. • 5.8 km new 3m wide sealed path. • Biodiversity net gain costs may be high. • Sutton gateway feature
Engineering difficulties	Extremely challenging to build a major causeway and major bridges following the A1123. Extremely challenging to build a good 3m wide path on the existing flood bank.
Ecological issues	Consent for construction on Washes and flood bank likely to be very difficult.
Land ownership issues	Very difficult to get agreement for paths in sensitive areas and to get an agreement with Environment Agency may be difficult.
Other issues	Heritage consent needed for works on Washes.
Overall	A direct, but very difficult option. Hard to see it being achievable.

Option E

This option has the same major challenge of Option D in terms of finding a good route across the Washes that is parallel with the A1123. The route then starts following the B1381 on the north-western side before crossing to the south-eastern side at a dedicated crossing. The proposed route would then have to follow field edges (subject to agreement) and potentially a byway all the way to Sutton entering Sutton along The Row, which is a quieter road than the High Street, but with some gradients.

The route is described in sections as indicated in Figure 7E.1.

i.

Refer to Option A.

ii-iv.

Refer to Option D.

Figure 7E4.1 A route following the A1123 will be very challenging. View towards Earith.

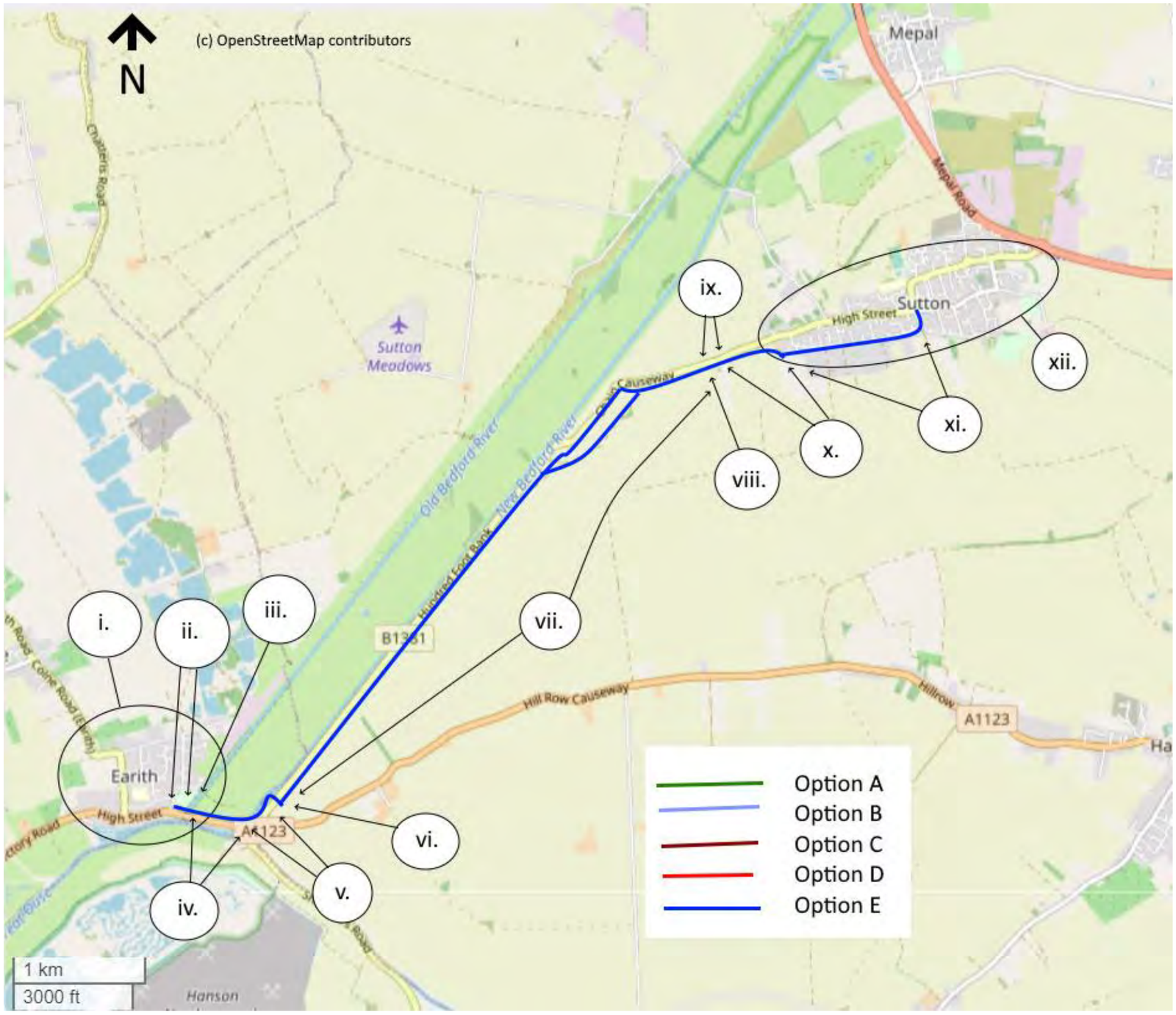


Figure 7E.1 Option E

v.

If a route can be achieved across the Washes it will need to continue along the edge of the flood bank and parallel with the B1381. There appears to be space for a route to ramp down from near where the public footpath meets the A1123 to follow the B1381 away from the road. The land was overgrown at the time of visit and could not be surveyed.

A new 3m wide sealed path would need to continue to a suitable crossing point over the B1381.

Figure 7E 5.1 A new path would need to ramp down from this position towards the trees on the right.

Figure 7E 5.2 View from the trees seen in Figure 7E5.1. towards the A1123. A new path would need to be behind the hedge on the far side of the road.

vi.

Traffic volumes and speeds on the B1381 are a concern and a new safe crossing is needed on the edge of housing at Earith Bridge along the B1381. This is likely to have to be a signalised crossing to link two off road paths either side of the B1381. The best location appears to be just outside the current 30 mph limit where there is a small layby and access to a utilities site. The exact position and detailed design will need to be agreed and topographical surveys and speed counts will be needed. Hedgerows will need to be removed.

Figure 7E 6.1 A new safe crossing is needed in this area (view towards A1123).

Figure 7E 6.2 A new safe crossing is needed in this area (view towards Sutton).

vii.

A traffic count in 2008 showed 5100 vehicles daily on the B 1381 and only 3 cycles. It is a very uncomfortable road to cycle along and new provision is needed away from the road. There is not adequate space in the highway verge and for this option a route on field edges to the south-east of the road is feasible, subject to landowners agreements and getting the necessary consents including addressing ecological issues. Near where the B1381 turns away from the Washes there is a short length of byway that could be used instead of field edges and this is a definite option to consider given that it already has rights for use by walkers, cyclists and equestrians. There are no properties along the road from the edge of Earith Bridge until Galls Drain close to Sutton and no obvious physical challenges with construction if a route can be agreed.

Figure 7E 7.1 View along B1381 towards Earith. A new path would need to be in field to the left for this option.

Figure 7E 7.2 View along B1381 towards Earith. A new path would need to be in field to the left for this option.

Figure 7E 7.3 View along B1381 towards Earith. A new path would need to be in field to the left for this option.

viii.

At Galls Drain the route meets a watercourse and a property, There is no space besides the existing road bridge and a new bridge will be needed to link field edge with highway verge. The bridge would be close to farm buildings and will need landowners consent and will potentially involve removing at least one tree so this is challenging, but necessary for the route.

Figure 7E 8.1 View along B1381 towards Sutton A new bridge would need to be to the right of the road and the existing road

ix.

Beyond Galls Drain any new route would need to run between the B1381 and the private properties that are set back from the road. There is a wide verge and potential to construct a 3m shared path there but the highway boundary is uncertain and it may be necessary to obtain private land for the path. Certainly there will need to be engagement with the residents in the area. For a 60 mph road the path should be at least 2.5m from the carriageway edge

Figure 7E 9.11 View along B1381 towards Earith A new path would need to be in the verge to the left set back as far as possible.

x.

Between the farm buildings at ix. and The Row in Sutton it would be possible to follow field edges along the edge of the B1381 and behind a property as indicated in Figure 7E10.1. This would need landowners agreement for a 3m sealed path. A junction detail would need to be agreed at the point where the route joins The Row, but there is an existing access that could be used and speeds should be low on a bend.

Figure 7E 10.1 Map showing possible alignment subject to agreement.

Figure 7E 10.2 The route could join The Row near the property in the background subject to agreement.

.xi.

The Row runs parallel with the B1381 and in many ways is a better approach to Sutton than being on the busier road. With a 20 mph limit the road should be suitable for use by cyclists with minimal changes and it has links to Sutton High Street, The main disadvantage with the route is that it is at a lower level than Sutton High Street and therefore involves a climb up to the High Street.

xii.

For Sutton see Option A.

Option E Summary	
Comparative Length	7.3km along the B1381 or 24.5 km via Chatteris if A 1123 is flooded. 7.4km for Option E. A direct route following the road.
Likely estimated cost	• Works in Sutton • Works in Earith • A new bridge across the Washes near the A1123. • New Signalised crossing at Earith Bridge. • 5.8 km new 3m wide sealed path. • Biodiversity net gain costs may be high. .
Engineering difficulties	The biggest challenges may be the crossing structure on the Washes if that were to happen, due to needing to protect habitats, heritage assets and flooding issues. A new signalised crossing and a challenging bridge over Gall Drain are also issues.
Ecological issues	Major issues for any works on the Washes,
Land ownership issues	Needs agreement of landowners. Some land is part of County Council rural estate but not all.
Other issues	There is an ancient fort on the Washes and heritage consent may be needed for works. Use of The Row introduces gradients which are significant.
Overall	This is a direct option and appears more achievable than option D but still very difficult to see how it could be delivered.

8. Land Ownership Information

The most complicated part of the development of any new route is likely to be the need to get landowners' agreement. Time and funding need to be allocated for this and if necessary, the Local Authorities need to be willing and able to use Statutory Powers to deliver the proposed routes. This should however be a last resort. The aim should be to build good relationships with all landowners. In this case RSPB and Environment Agency own important land parcels, but there are gaps that need to be filled. It will also be important to secure enough land to allow for required path width and adequate clearance alongside the path. If equestrian usage is part of the proposal there will need to be additional land to allow for a different surface and space for equestrians if they are not to share the surfaced path.

Ownership searches have been focused on land to the north-west of the Washes because of the difficulties of delivering Options D and E. Some of the land to the north of Earith is in the ownership of quarrying companies and the Washes themselves are understood to belong to RSPB and Environment Agency.

Option A appears to be largely deliverable on land belonging to Mick George Ltd and R.A. Latta Farms Ltd. Their ownership includes farmland and was detailed in recent planning applications, which are publicly available. A land plan can be seen in Figure 8.1.

Option B would involve the same landowners as Option A, but will also need to involve landowners near Earith Business Park.

Option C is believed to be in the ownership of RSPB and Environment Agency.

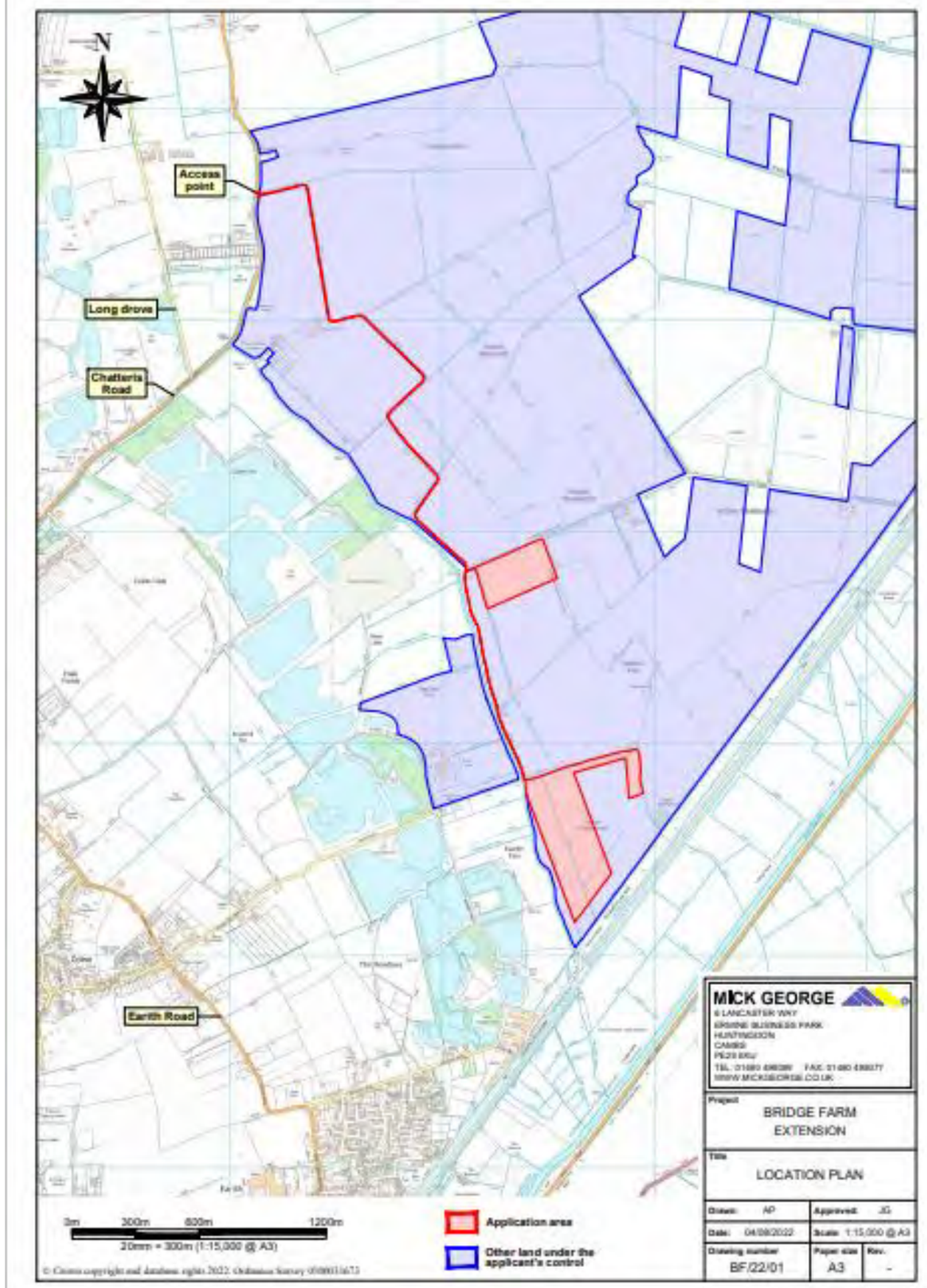


Figure 8.1: Location Plan from 2023 planning application for construction of reservoirs near Earith. The blue boundary shows land under the control of the applicant (Mick George Ltd and R.A. Latta Ltd). © Crown Copyright and Database Rights 2024 Ordnance Survey Licence Number 100023279.

Figure 8.2 shows the Land Registry map, relevant for Options A, B and C, with a close up of the Earith area in Figure 8.3. It highlights the plethora of landowners found along the route. It is anticipated that there would be a number of landowners involved if Option D or E were to progress and certainly there are numerous different fields besides the B1381. The Polygons detail private land ownership agreements. Roads can be assumed to come under the Local Authority's jurisdiction, but highway boundaries do need to be checked in this case with Cambridgeshire County Council as part of 'Highways maintainable at Public Expense. The prefix 'CB' in all the Title Numbers listed below also refers to Cambridgeshire.

Data has been obtained from the HM Land Registry website, a non-ministerial government department (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry), which was uploaded into ArcGIS Pro to produce the map. Sustrans has more detailed information on each polygon, and this will need to be the basis for further work which will involve contacting landowners and liaising with them to understand their needs and implications of new works.

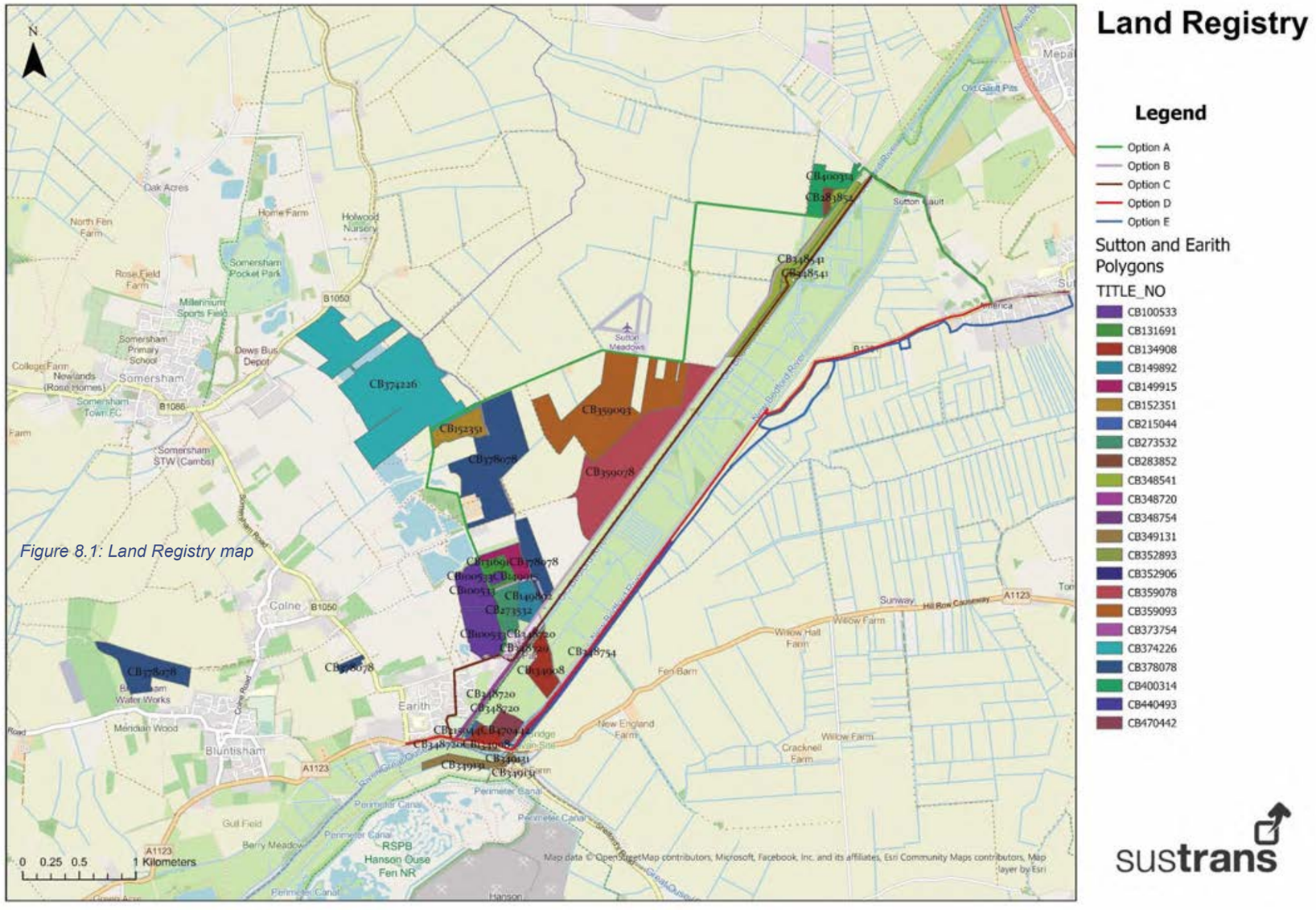


Figure 8.1: Land Registry map

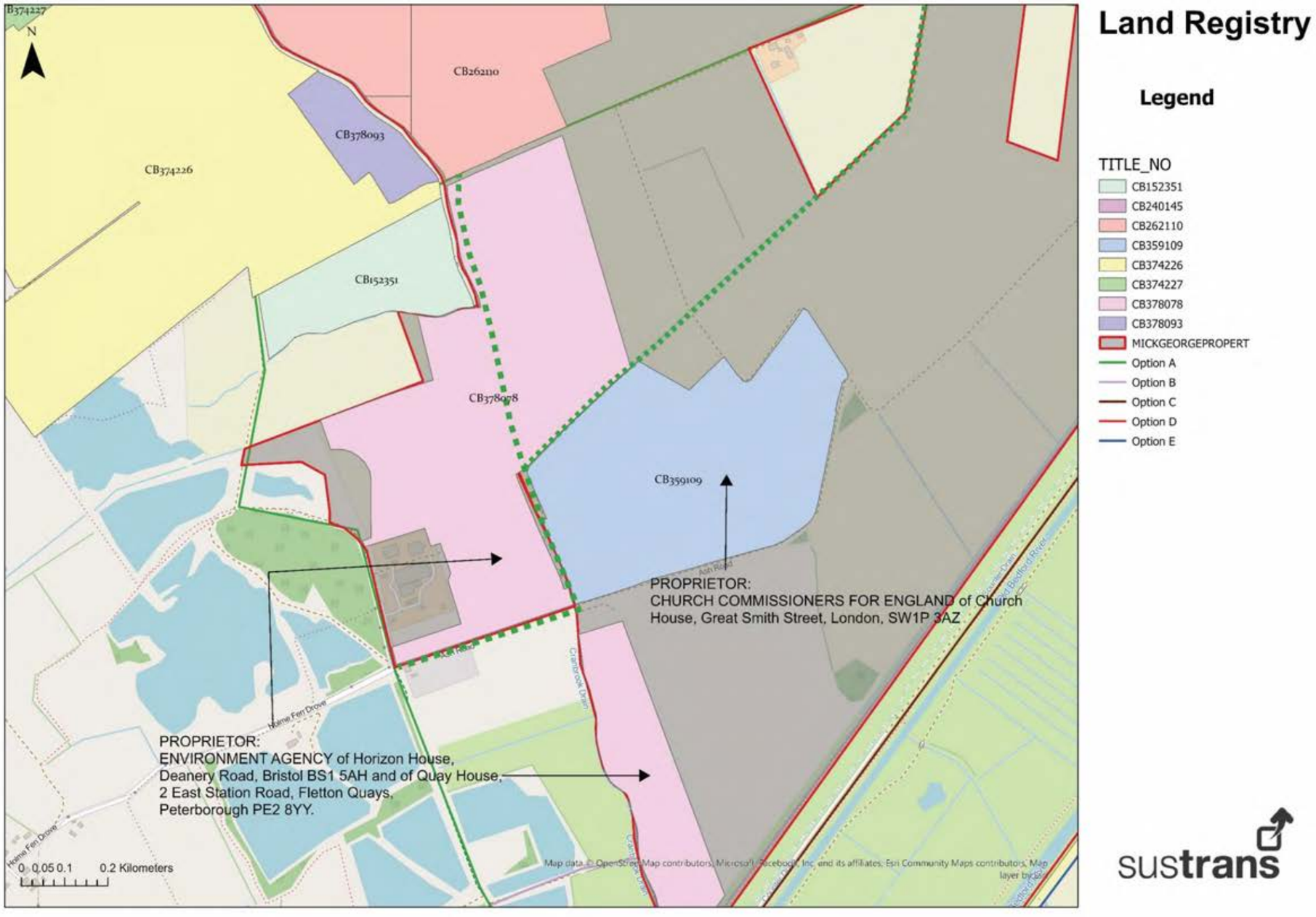


Figure 8.3: Land Registry map near Earith

9. Ecological assessment

Ecology Chapter Sutton to Earith 24/01/24

Scope and limitations of ecological assessment

Hannah Lewis MCIEEM (Sustrans Ecologist) has undertaken a desk based assessment of the likely ecological impacts and constraints for five main route options between Sutton and Earith in East Cambridgeshire. This is a high level assessment only, based on data obtained from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre in November 2023 and freely available online datasets[1] in January 2024. No site visit has been conducted and a full report has not been prepared.

Scheme viability and route comparison

There are significant ecological constraints for all route options. Options B, C and D have the highest risk of not being viable. This is due to habitat loss within the Ouse Washes (an internationally important designated site), disturbance to the internationally important bird populations and high biodiversity net gain costs. Options A and E are more likely to be viable due to their lower BNG costs and location predominately outside the Ouse Washes site. However Option A is within a Goose and Swan Impact Risk Zone and Option E includes a new proposed bridge within the site. Both may require significant survey, assessment and mitigation to enable them to progress. Although more likely to be permitted, it is possible that the costs may outweigh the benefits.

Early consultation is recommended with Natural England to determine whether any of these routes may be permitted with appropriate levels of survey and mitigation. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) should also be consulted for those route options within their landholding.

9.1 Designated Sites

The Ouse Washes is an internationally important site situated between Sutton and Earith (Figure 9.1). This is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Both the SAC and SPA are linear sites but have differing eastern boundaries. The SPA is between 500m and 620m wide in the study area but the SAC is only 60m to 210m wide.

Routes A, D and E cross over the SAC via existing infrastructure with no additional construction proposed within the SAC and no impacts are anticipated. Routes B and C, however, are situated within the SAC corridor for approximately 5.4km. The SAC is designated for its population of Spined Loach *Cobitis taenia*. Whilst the watercourses in the SAC will not be directly impacted, the habitat loss will encroach upon the riparian zone and there may be potential for indirect impacts on the watercourse from construction and habitat loss. A scoping assessment should be undertaken to determine the likelihood of impacts in consultation with Natural England.

The SPA is designated for its nationally important breeding bird populations and its internationally important overwintering bird populations. Routes B and C are within the SPA boundary for approximately 5.4km and Route D is within the SPA for 4.3km. Sub-options of E may be within or adjacent to the eastern edge of this site for 3.7km. Route A only crosses this site along the alignment of the Causeway, although improvements to the existing raised walkway will be required.

B, C, D and E will result in habitat loss within the SPA. These are situated on the Low Bank, Middle Level Barrier Bank and South Level Barrier Bank SSSI units. Each of these banks, which are narrow linear units, are described as refuges for grazing winter ducks when the washes are flooded. Path construction along these banks would result in the loss of grazing habitat and disturbance and displacement of birds on these features. B, C or D may result in a permanent loss of a significant proportion of this refuge within the SPA. Significant survey and mitigation, the cost of which may be disproportionate to the priority of the scheme, would be required to progress these options. The impacts from the sub-option of E along the SPA edge are likely to be lower than A-C given the roadside location, however, Options D and E include a potential new bridge to be constructed over the Hundred Foot Drain. The design and construction of this will need to be carefully controlled to avoid negative ecological impacts. It is anticipated that the replacement of The Causeway raised footway for Routes A, B and C could re-use the existing piers, but to widen it may require the loss of some screening vegetation between it and the wash, which could result in disturbance to birds in that location. An option to provide passing places only would reduce the risk of impacts as these could be sensitively located.

The remainder of Route A and some Route E sub-options are situated outside the SPA, but are adjacent to fields that could be used by overwintering wildfowl. Route A passes through the Natural England Goose and Swan Impact Risk Zone and a number of swans were recorded in a field adjacent to this route during the site visit by Sustrans engineers. These populations are protected in the landscape surrounding the SPA and disturbance to them even outside the SPA boundary would contravene current legislation.

A scoping assessment will be required to determine the level of risk in relation to the SPA for all routes. This will take into account the existing disturbance, screening, distance from the SPA and bird usage data. If a risk is identified, then a full Habitat Regulations Assessment will be needed. Surveys over multiple years may be required to determine usage of the fields by wintering and breeding birds.

New lighting in this landscape is unlikely to be accepted by Natural England. If lighting is desired, the need for this would need to be fully evidenced and impacts on birds, bats and invertebrates assessed, likely using multiple years of nocturnal bat and bird activity surveys. A lighting scheme would need to be designed by a specialist in lighting ecologically sensitive locations.

Berry Fen is the only other statutory designated site within 1km of the proposed routes. This is 700m from the nearest section of off-road path proposed with limited habitat connectivity. No impacts are anticipated on this. Five County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are situated within 1km of the proposed routes, four of which are situated on or adjacent to route options.

- Routes D and E are situated on road adjacent to the Great River Ouse CWS, but it has been proposed to build a new bridge

[1] Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre (Website accessed January 2024) Magic Map Application (*defra.gov.uk*)
Woodland Trust (Website accessed January 2024) Ancient tree inventory *https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/tree-search.*

DEFRA (website Access January 2024) Main rivers map *https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/*
Buglife (Website Accessed January 2024) Important Invertebrate Areas map *https://www.buglife.org.uk/ourwork/Important-Invertebrate-Areas/*

East Cambridgeshire District Council (2018) East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2016 – 2036 Local Plan Examination Stage Interim Statement of Common Ground between: East Cambridgeshire District Council Natural England In relation to Matter 1, Q8-10

from the A1123 to the B1381 over Hundred Foot Drain, a tributary of the Ouse immediately north of the CWS.

- Route A is situated through Earith Gravel Pits CWS and will cross Old Bedford Low Bank Drains. The path follows existing tracks and byways and will only involve resurfacing with potential slight widening in both locations. Route B will also be in close proximity to both of these sites.
- Routes A-C will all be situated on road, past Hundred Foot Bank Swamp and Ditch CWS.

It is anticipated that major impacts on all these sites can be avoided through good design and by using best practice construction methods, but consultation with the Local Authority is recommended during the design process.

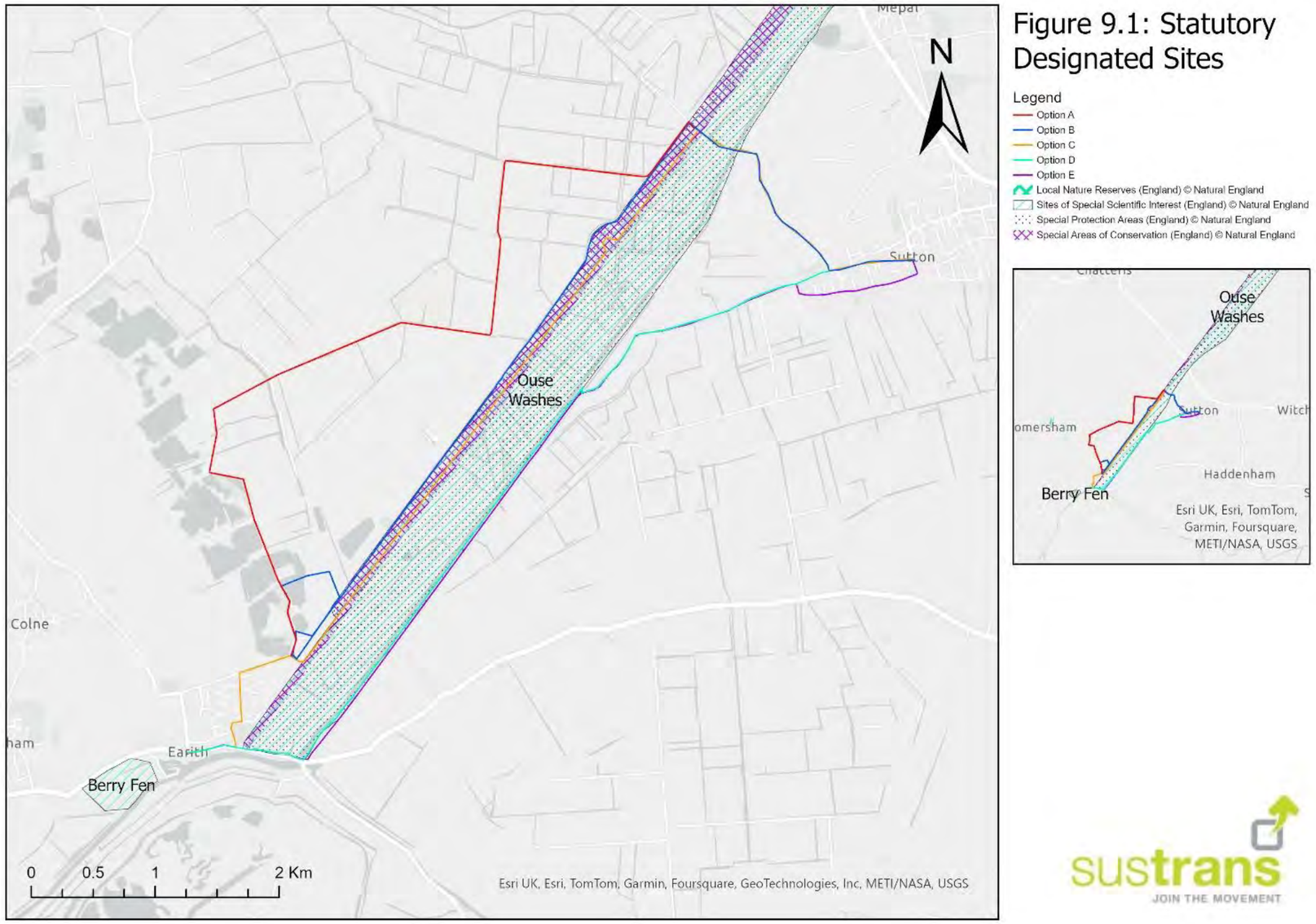


Figure 9.1: Statutory Designated Sites

Legend
- Option A
- Option B
- Option C
- Option D
- Option E
- Local Nature Reserves (England) © Natural England
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) © Natural England
- Special Protection Areas (England) © Natural England
- Special Areas of Conservation (England) © Natural England

9.2 Habitats

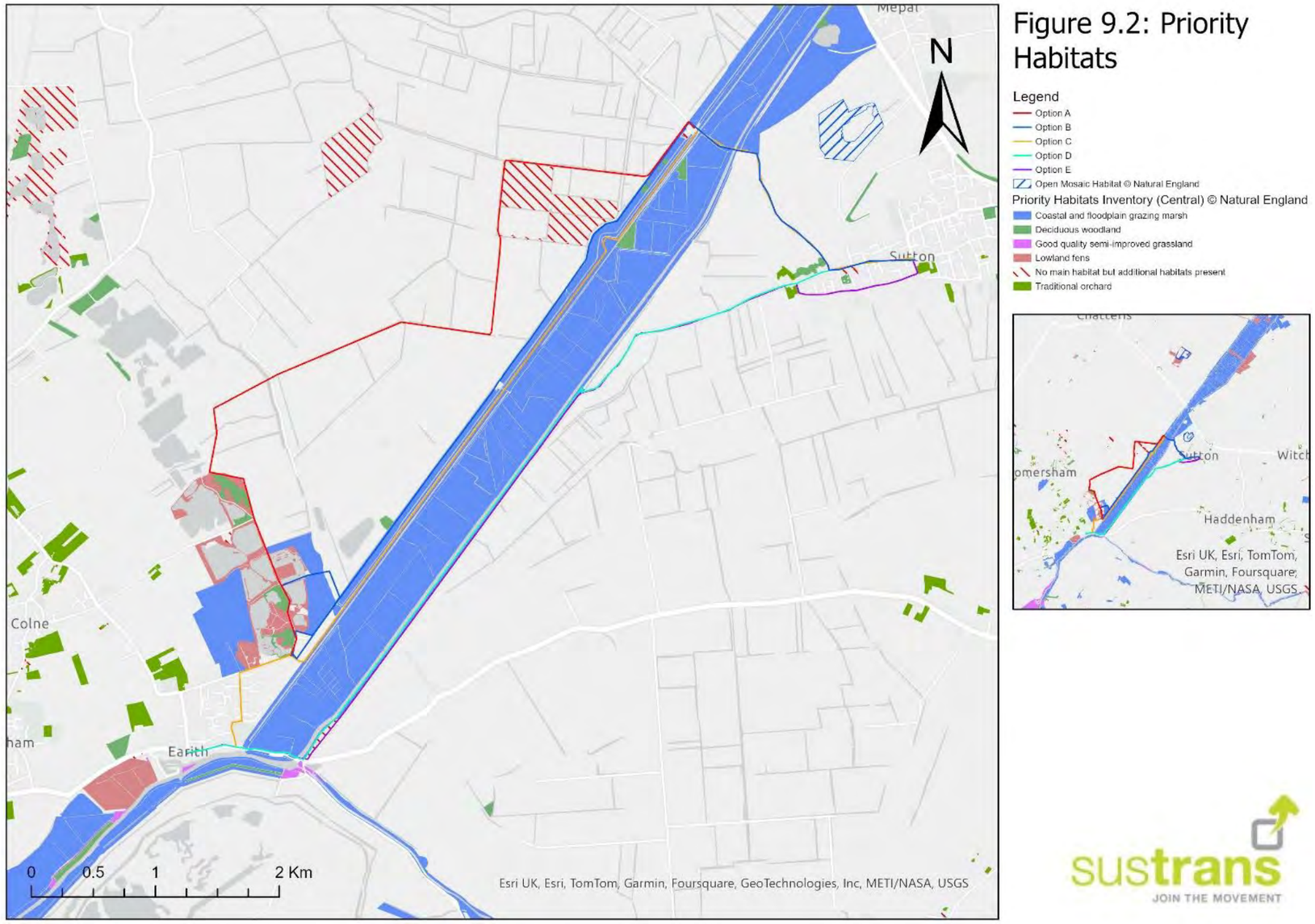
The only irreplaceable habitat (as defined by the NPPF[2]) mapped within 500m of the proposal was lowland fens around the lakes near Earith (Figure 9.2). Impacts on this habitat are considered unlikely. A notable crack willow tree was also mapped on the Ancient Tree Inventory 100m from the route within Sutton. No impacts are anticipated on this tree.

The Great River Ouse, New Bedford River (Hundred Foot Drain), Old Bedford River, Cranbrook Drain and Counter Drain are all statutory main rivers, but are not designated as priority rivers by Natural England. Routes B, C and D are situated alongside these for a significant distance (4.3km to 5.4km). Route A crosses Cranbrook Drain via an existing crossing and is situated adjacent to other field drains for approximately 3km. The proposals for Routes D and E include the construction of a new bridge over the Hundred Foot Drain immediately beside its connection with the Great River Ouse. All construction in close proximity or over watercourses has potential to cause impacts during construction through siltation or pollution events. In the long term, increased encroachment in the riparian zone can affect river condition, and an assessment of impacts will be required for Environment Agency consent.

Options B, C, D and one sub-option of E are all situated within mapped priority habitat (coastal and floodplain grazing marsh) and will result in a loss of this habitat, although habitat type and conditions should be confirmed based on a site visit. Option A is situated along byways and tracks between mapped priority habitats such as lowland fens and broadleaved woodland. It is anticipated that these can be retained and protected. Hedgerows, also a priority habitat, will be present throughout the landscape, but as routes A-D are existing rights of way, impacts on hedgerows are unlikely. Some sub-options of E, in the road verge, could include 300m of hedgerow removal.

The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy for routes B, C and D may be prohibitively costly and difficult to achieve due to the high level of priority habitats to be impacted and the proximity of the routes to watercourses for significant distances. Route A also crosses rivers and is situated by other field drains for the majority of its length, but primarily uses existing tracks and arable land and does not affect mapped priority habitats. The BNG cost of Route A may be relatively low.

Overall, Route A will have the least habitat loss as it is primarily situated on existing tracks and arable land. Consideration could be given to situating Route E in the arable field edges rather than the



[2] Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework

road verge to reduce the habitat loss associated with that Option.

Protected species

Great crested newts, nesting birds (including Schedule 1 species) and reptiles are present in the landscape and impacts on individuals are possible, depending on the route option selected. The likelihood of impacts on populations should be assessed based on a site survey. Route A is likely to have the lowest impact on these species groups due to it utilizing existing tracks and cropland.

The watercourses are likely to contain otters and may support white-clawed crayfish and water vole. Impacts could be anticipated on these species for new crossings and where construction is close to watercourses, therefore further survey and assessment may be required for these species. For water voles, impacts can likely be mitigated under licence for new crossings relatively easily. Where longer stretches of path construction are within 5m of watercourses and ditches and cannot be re-aligned outside this zone, the impacts and mitigation requirements may be a significant project constraint.

Badger will likely be present in the landscape. Where the route crosses setts and cannot be diverted, mitigation will be required to avoid breaches in legislation. The cost and other implications of this for project feasibility depend on the sett type.

No trees or structures which may support bat roosts are likely to be removed but this is subject to detailed design. Bats may forage and commute along field boundaries and watercourses. Hedgerow loss (greater than 5m) is only anticipated for sub-options of E. Population level impacts on bat activity would only be anticipated if lighting were to be introduced. Lighting should be avoided due to impacts on bats and other sensitive wildlife at this location. The likelihood of population level impacts is otherwise low, but this requires confirmation based on site surveys.

Schedule 9 invasive non-native plant species may also be present in the landscape and could be spread by construction work. The risk of this impact must be assessed and avoided or mitigated.

Other notable species and assemblages

The Ouse Washes are part of the Fens Important Invertebrate Area. The designated sites are known to support notable plant and invertebrate species, particularly in association with ditches, but also other semi-natural habitats. An assessment of invertebrate habitat and risk, and a plant survey are recommended once preferred route options are identified. Lighting may have a significant risk to aquatic invertebrates and should be avoided in this location. No records of notable fungi or lichen species are provided but likelihood of presence should be assessed in a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA).

Common toad and notable mammals such as polecat, hedgehog, brown hare and harvest mouse are likely to be present in field margins and other semi-natural habitats. Impacts on individuals may occur but impacts on populations are unlikely. Mitigation measures should be included to protect these species. Notable fish species are likely to be present in watercourses and drains. Populations will need to be protected through best practice design and construction methods.

Next steps

Consultation with Natural England and RSPB is the next vital step to determine which of these options may be viable. A scoping assessment for preferred routes should be undertaken at an early stage in relation to impacts on the bird populations associated with the SPA to determine their feasibility. If impacts are likely, an appropriate assessment will be required in line with Habitats Regulations Assessment guidelines. This may require up to two years' worth of bird survey data from adjacent land.

The preferred options will also require a full PEA, with a site survey for a more accurate assessment of impacts on other habitats and species. Further species surveys likely to be required for statutory compliance include:

- Badger;
- Otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish where watercourses or field drains are impacted;
- Bat roost assessments where trees or structures are impacted; and,
- Reptile and bat surveys where habitat loss is identified as significant.

Nb: Great crested newt surveys will not be required if the District Level Licence is used.

An arboricultural assessment and tree protection plan are recommended and will be required for a planning application, as will additional surveys for notable species. This may include plant and invertebrate assessments. The PEA, SPA scoping assessment and all species assessments will need to be compiled into an Ecological Impact Assessment at this stage.

A biodiversity gain strategy will be required for planning permission to be granted. Early consultation is recommended with the Local Authority regarding measures proposed for the biodiversity net gain strategy. The biodiversity gain strategy should, where possible, strengthen the existing ecological network, enhance retained habitats and diversify the landscape.

To protect the nature conservation interest at the site, the detailed design (including temporary works areas) should:

- Maintain a sufficient buffer to protect adjacent watercourses, wetlands, hedgerows and woodland;
- Avoid important habitats and wildlife populations where possible;
- Allow continued wildlife movement along watercourses;
- Avoid impacts on watercourse flow and scour;
- Avoid lighting and fencing; and,
- Include biodiversity enhancements.

A Construction Management Plan will be required that includes measures to protect designated sites, retained habitats and protected and notable species. If present and if impacts cannot be avoided, licences may be required for work relating to badgers, bats, water voles, white-clawed crayfish and otters. The routes are all within green and amber risk zones for great crested newts and therefore the scheme can apply for inclusion within the District Level Licence if planning permission is required.

10. Inclusive engagement

10 Inclusive Engagement:

Inclusive engagement and communication are a creative process that starts with listening to a diversity of lived experiences and uses this understanding to develop more equitable projects and places that are healthier and happier for everyone. This process is not just about the built environment but applies to all aspects of the Mepal to Witchford project, from behaviour change, to research, systems, and communication. It starts with engagement, and consciously amplifies seldom-heard voices to inform a project's development. Fundamentally, it recognises that not everyone has the same opportunities in our society and seeks to prioritise concerns raised by marginalised groups. Inclusive design opens new ways of thinking about places and projects, creating projects that are ultimately more interesting and engaging for everyone.

This project has the potential to have a significant impact on people's everyday lives. This comes with a responsibility to be inclusive and ensure it creates healthier and happier places for everyone. This means work must be done to identify and prioritise the needs of people who are regularly excluded to ensure their needs and requirements are met. The feasibility stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has started the process of identifying the potential impacts of the project on people with protected characteristics. The EqIA (refer to appendix A) will be a live document that evolves alongside future stages of the Sutton to Earith project.

Figure 10.1 Sustrans visualisation which can be a tool for inclusive engagement.

"All urban design, including cycling, is not neutral, it either perpetuates or reduces social inequity."
Cycling for Everyone

The following principles will ensure that the Sutton to Earith and wider impacted communities are informed and involved in the project at all stages. Information will need to be shared and distributed in formats which consider the needs and preferences of different people (refer to Figure 10.1). There will be a focus on those who might have significant disadvantages, such as living on a low income or socially excluded as well as people with a protected characteristic. In recognition of the importance of listening to the diversity of lived experiences, when the project progresses, these principles will be refined in discussion with key stakeholders.

Across Sustrans, all our projects are guided by these inclusive principles.

A process led by **engagement**, where solutions are shaped by those impacted by the project. (see Figure 10.2)

Be flexible in approach – tailoring engagement activity and content to match the needs of the people taking part.

Proactively engage and involve people with different lived experiences at the start of the project to help shape all key elements of the programme from design to delivery.

Reflecting the diversity of lived experiences by developing **diverse, evolving, and responsive solutions,** and ensuring project delivery teams are diverse and representative, bringing in external support where necessary.

Running workshops in **community settings**, at convenient times to help inform people about the project. Where possible using venues which have step free access, disabled parking spaces, accessible toilets and are comfortable for everyone.

Figure 10.2 It is important to provide appropriate settings and opportunities for people to engage.

Communication materials and content will include imagery which reflects local populations, including disabled cyclists, older people, people using a variety of different cycles (refer to figure 10.3 Leamington).

An ongoing process of **learning, listening and reflection,** monitoring people's experience of projects, collating detailed evidence, and proactively seeking feedback to inform future work or changes to previous works.

When running an event in-person or online, as standard, we ask attendees in advance if there are any **additional support,** they require to help them take part. Reviewing the demographics to highlight any community groups whose feedback has not been captured yet.

Monitoring to review whether communication and engagement activity has reached a diverse audience and identify any community groups whose feedback hasn't been captured or considered.

The creative activity of developing new ways of working to provide not just equitable access, but **dignity and joy for everyone**.

As the project progresses running events with specific **lived experience groups**: children, young girls, visually impaired users. Dedicated materials to ensure they can meaningfully participate (use Lego with young people, tactile models for visually impaired users).

Lived experienced site visits for people in the community with lesser heard voices including wheelchair users, people who use a pram and older people.

Develop an **independent stakeholder group**, to review impact.

10.1 Evidence of Support

Sustrans has not undertaken community engagement as part of this study, but this is vital to developing and ultimately delivering a successful project.

A community engagement plan guided by the inclusive engagement principles could include:

- On-line consultation and poster, leaflet campaign.
- Consultation meetings across the project area.
- Presenting at Council meetings etc.
- The completion of Healthy Streets Audits for the villages. This can help engagement in the wider issues.
- In-depth discussion with landowners.

A Collaborative design process should be used to structure the engagement plan. This will help unpack overall route considerations in parallel with specific impacts and opportunities at different points along its length. Sustrans Age Friendly Tyburn project was a collaborative design project working with local residents to assess the area and develop trials that changed the environment to make active travel age friendly. (see Figure 10.2)

Sustrans developed a six-week adapted bikes programme with residents in Belfast. (see Figure 10.1.1) The programme was co-designed and aimed to increase the confidence and ability of riders with disabilities.

Figure 10.1.1 Sustrans bikes programme with residents in Belfast

10.2 Audit of Engagement Risk

At present we envisage that the major risks are likely to be:

- People who may object to restrictions or limitations on motorised traffic, including people who may engage in social media.
- People who use the existing Nature Reserve and other greenspaces and do not want to see any changes.
- Residents who may object to changes within the villages or on the roads in of Sutton and Earith.
- Landowners who do not want paths on their land because of security, financial or other concerns.
- Developers who may not want to deliver the quality of facility that is required.
- Any who may object to the ecological aspects of any work.
- Members of the local community, local businesses and other stakeholders who may be opposed to anything that might be seen as facilitating developments (if they are opposed to the developments).

10.3 Audit of Engagement Opportunity

As part of this study initial discussions have been held with representatives from the East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council regarding developments and further engagement is needed. In addition, it will be particularly important to engage with the residents of Sutton, the Fen Fishery and Earith who are the ones are most impacted by the proposed options. It will be vital to engage with all impacted guided by the inclusive engagement principles.

10.4 Community Engagement Plan

At this stage there has not been Community Engagement, although Sustrans regards this as vital for the success of the proposals.

The early stages of community engagement will need to start with East Cambridgeshire District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Parish Councils, so that the project can be directed by the wishes of the elected members, but this will need to be handled delicately, so that relations with landowners are not damaged. Landowners should know at a very early stage what is being proposed and need to understand that nothing is finalised yet and their wishes will of course be considered.

11.Equality Impact Assessment Summary

Sustrans is implementing an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process which starts at a project's inception. It is focused on ensuring all projects and services are created and completed in line with The Equality Act 2010 and Equality Duty. As a charity, while our Equality Duty responsibilities are not the same as those for public sector organisations, we aspire to take a lead in delivering best-practice inclusive projects. This links directly to Sustrans 'For Everyone' vision and NCN Principles.

The Equality Duty explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The EqIA has been guided by best practice guidance including LTN 1/20 and related research. This guidance and research have been linked to what is currently know about the location, Sutton and Earith's community, and the findings of this feasibility study. The Feasibility stage EqIA (refer to appendix A) is an initial step which will need to be regularly updated and refined as the project develops. The EqIA will help shape and be shaped by Sustrans Inclusive projects principles.

The following points are emerging from the feasibility stage EqIA as key considerations:

Inclusive engagement including collaborative design will help all sections of the community to unpack and shape the routes development, especially people with protected characteristics and seldom heard voices.

Behaviour changes activities that support people with the cost of cycling and ability will be needed. This will enable all sections of the local community, including those with protected characteristics to fully benefit from the proposed route and its link to local destinations.

Sections of the route will be shared with motor vehicles including farm machinery and could be intimidating for people with protected characteristics. The design of these sections should consider the viability of segregating motor vehicles from pedestrians and cyclists, and alternative routes through adjoining fields. If these options aren't viable, traffic speed and volume will need to be managed with 20mph speed limits, and changes to the carriageway (for example priority working, buildouts, psychological traffic calming).

Route design and linked public spaces will need to respond to engagement feedback, monitoring, and best practice guidance. This is to ensure the route including its controlled crossings, grade segregation and adjoining public spaces are coherent, safe, comfortable, and attractive for everyone.

Figure 11.1 – The Equality Act 2010

Figure 11.2 – Equality for those with protected characteristics

12. Key Stakeholder Engagement

The following organisations have been identified as stakeholders to develop the route options at the next stage. The list is not exhaustive. Where landowners are individuals, these have not been named.

- Cambridgeshire County Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Sutton Parish Council
- Earith Parish Council
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Combined Authority Peterborough and Cambridgeshire
- Local businesses
- Local Public Rights of Way Teams in Cambridgeshire
- Local cycle groups
- The Ramblers
- British Horse Society
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Cycling UK
- The Trails Trust
- East Cambridgeshire Access Group
- Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum
- Disability Advice Service
- All landowners along the preferred route alignments

Informal discussions with all stakeholders can give an indication of likely acceptance of the scheme and likely issues that will need to be examined more carefully at Detailed Design.

13. Planning application and other approvals

All the options will need planning approval for the off-highway construction works and will need highways approval and the appropriate orders for highway works.

Where new routes are not following appropriate rights of way or public highway legal agreements are likely to be needed with the landowners. These will need to grant rights for users and allow for construction and maintenance of new paths. The signatory for the legal agreements will need to be agreed at an early stage, but it is likely to have to be Cambridgeshire County Council or East Cambridgeshire District Council- budgets will need to be provided for this. There will also need to be consideration as to when and how statutory powers might be used if there is no progress in negotiations with landowners, but the aim should be to avoid this if possible. It is not possible to say at this stage exactly how much land will be needed or where exactly paths should be positioned. They will need to be positioned to suit landowners' requirements and community requirements.

There are significant ecological constraints for all route options. It is possible that none of these options will be viable, particularly Options B, C, D and E. This is due to habitat loss within the Ouse Washes (an internationally important designated site), disturbance to the internationally important bird populations and high biodiversity net gain costs. Routes A is the most likely to be viable due to the lower BNG costs and location outside the Ouse Washes site, but Routes B and C may be possible after significant survey, assessment, and mitigation. .

Early consultation is recommended with Natural England to determine whether any of the routes may be permitted with appropriate levels of survey and mitigation. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) should also be consulted for those route options within their landholding.

Planning Permission

The following planning considerations should be explored further prior to the next phase of design. It is important to determine whether planning permission is required for any route sections as early as possible, to avoid delays due to the planning process at later stages.

• Route sections using existing highways infrastructure (within the highway boundary) are less likely to require planning permission as the Highway Authority has permitted development powers for works on, or adjacent to the highway. This is dependent on the Local Highway Authority (or in some cases, Sustrans on behalf of the Local Highway Authority) delivering these works. This should be assessed again at outline design stage once delivery mechanisms are known.

• Resurfacing, widening or other alterations to an existing path may require planning permission depending on factors including the status of the path (PRoW, permissive path etc.), the extent of works proposed, land ownership and who is carrying out the work. For example, if the local authority is carrying out the work, they may be able to rely on the permitted development rights afforded to them as a local authority, and therefore not require an application for planning permission. However, if Sustrans wish to widen a privately owned path, this would likely require planning permission. This can only be confirmed once further details of the proposed development and delivery mechanisms are known and should be assessed again at outline stage.

In addition, it is important to consider how a path and other features will be constructed and maintained. Space will need to be allowed for a site compound for construction and access routes and rights will need to be agreed for construction and maintenance vehicles and plant. All of these are matters that a skilled negotiator will need to consider, whilst developing a good understanding with landowners of the issues that are priorities for them.

Until discussions with landowners have progressed it is too early to be discussing planning details with the planning authority, but at the appropriate time pre-app discussions should be undertaken with some key stakeholders such as East Cambridgeshire District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to understand the issues that might come with an application and to inform the work likely to be needed at the Detailed Design stage.

14. Cost estimates

At this stage costs are very approximate, based on estimated costs/ m or estimated unit costs. The highway works have the highest range of costs, because little is known about the construction of the existing carriageway or the services within the highway. Traffic management can also be a highly variable cost. The costs of all works in both Sutton and Earith have been estimated, but without detailed design, because these works are important for the success of other works. These works would be a valuable investment in the local communities and are needed even without the link between the two settlements.

Each option comes with its own set of considerations and caters to specific needs. That is why the prices appears vary. For option A - C The Causeway section is one of the most significant parts of the route and the enhancement of this part of the route could be a real highlight of the area, whereas for option D and E It is clear that changes for the A1123 causeway are needed for this option to be a viable route but detailed surveys, design work and consultation are needed.

Item	Item description	Unit	Low cost per unit	High cost per unit	Quantity	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
	Works in Earith (not including A1123)							
Earith 1	Tightening junctions	Item	£10,000	£25,000	10	£100,000	£250,000	
Earith 2	Improved crossings	Item	£15,000	£30,000	20	£300,000	£600,000	Raised tables, zebras etc.
	Works in Earith					£400,000	£850,000	

Table 14.1: Estimated costings for works in Earith.

Item	Item description	Unit	Low cost per unit	High cost per unit	Quantity	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
	Works in Sutton							
Sutton 1	Tightening junctions	Item	£10,000	£25,000	20	£200,000	£500,000	
Sutton 2	Major junctions	Item	£100,000	£150,000	2	£200,000	£300,000	Bury Lane and Ely Road roundabout
Sutton 3	Improved crossings	Item	£15,000	£30,000	40	£600,000	£1,200,000	Raised tables, zebras etc.
Sutton 4	Ely Road cycleway and roadspace reallocation	Linear m	£250	£500	560	£140,000	£280,000	Needs detailed design
	Works in Sutton					£1,140,000	£2,180,000	

Table 14.2: Estimated costings for works in Sutton.

Item	Item description	Unit	Low cost per unit	High cost per unit	Quantity	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
	Option A							
1	Tightening junctions	Item	£10.000	£25.000	1	£10,000	£25,000	Bedingham's Drove/ the Causeway junction tighten. Road space needs to be reallocated and kerblines tightened. Difficult traffic management.
2	New bridge crossing	M	£10.000	£16.000	10	£100,000	£160,000	A new 10m bridge crossing Cran Brook Drain. Length unknown. (10m is estimate).
3	Surfacing existing road	M	£150	£250	1000	£150,000	£250,000	Bedingham's Drove resurfacing work 200m. Meadow's drove 800m
4	New path Meadow Drove to Meadlands Main Drove	M	£150	£250	2300	£345,000	£575,000	
5	The causeway bridge widening work.	m2	£1,000	£2,952	180*25%*4	£180,000	£531,360	Replace 25% of the total width (180m) at 4m and 75% (low cost based on widening section of the bridge, high cost assumes the construction of a new bridge. Costs assume existing support structure retained and does not need replacing.
6	The causeway bridge widening work.	m2	£1,000	£2,952	180*75%*1.5	£202,500	£597,780	Replace 75% of the total width (180m) at 1.5m (note as above). Costs assume existing support structure retained and does not need replacing,
	Option A					£987,500	£2,139,140	
7	**Works in Sutton**					£1,140,000	£2,180,000	
8	**Works in Earith**					£400,000	£850,000	
	Option A Total					£2,527,500	£5,169,140	Biodiversity Net Gain costs extra

Item	Item description	Unit	Low cost per unit	High cost per unit	Quantity	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
	Option B							
1	New bridge crossing	m2	£1,000	£2,952	8*5*2	£80,000	£236,160	2 new 8m long 5m wide bridges crossing the Drains.
2	Resurfacing the existing path	M	£150	£250	3300	£495,000	£825,000	3.3 km new 3m wide sealed path on the track/footpath. Biodiversity net gain costs may be high.
3	Tightening junctions	Item	£10.000	£25.000	1	£10,000	£25,000	Bedingham's Drove/ the Causeway junction tighten. Road space needs to be reallocated and kerblines tightened. Difficult traffic management.
3	Surfacing existing road	M	£150	£250	200	£30,000	£50,000	Bedingham's Drove resurfacing work 200m.
4	The causeway bridge widening work.	m2	£1,000	£2,952	180*25%*4	£180,000	£531,360	Replace 25% of the total width (180m) at 4m and 75% (low cost based on widening section of the bridge, high cost assumes the construction of a new bridge. cost based on works of St Neots bridge. Assume 50% cost increase since 2011)
5	The causeway bridge widening work.	m2	£1,000	£2,952	180*75%*1.5	£202,500	£597,780	Replace 75% of the total width (180m) at 1.5m (note as above)
	Option B					£997,500	£2,265,300	
6	**Works in Sutton**					£1,140,000	£2,180,000	
7	**Works in Earith**					£400,000	£850,000	
	Option B Total					£2,537,500	£5,295,300	Biodiversity Net Gain costs extra

Table 14.4: Estimated costings for Option B

Item	Item description	Unit	Low cost per unit	High cost per unit	Quantity	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
	Option C							
1	New bridge crossing	m2	£1,000	£2,952	8*5	£40,000	£118,080	A new 8m long 5m wide bridges crossing the Drains
2	Resurfacing the existing path	M	£150	£250	5500	£825,000	£1,275,000	5.5 km new 3m wide sealed path on the track/footpath. Biodiversity net gain costs may be high.
3	Tightening junctions	Item	£10.000	£25.000	1	£10,000	£25,000	Bedingham's Drove/ the Causeway junction tighten. Road space needs to be reallocated and kerblines tightened. Difficult traffic management.
4	The causeway bridge widening work.	m2	£1,000	£2,952	180*25%*4	£180,000	£531,360	Replace 25% of the total width (180m) at 4m and 75% (low cost based on widening section of the bridge, high cost assumes the construction of a new bridge. cost based on works of St Neots bridge. Assume 50% cost increase since 2011)
5	The causeway bridge widening work.	m2	£1,000	£2,952	180*75%*1.5	£202,500	£597,780	Replace 75% of the total width (180m) at 1.5m (note as above)
	Option C					£1,273,000	£2,522,220	
6	**Works in Sutton**					£1,140,000	£2,180,000	
7	**Works in Earith**					£400,000	£850,000	
	Option C Total					£2,926,000	£5,552,300	Biodiversity Net Gain costs extra

Table 14.5: Estimated costings for Option C

Item	Item description	Unit	Low cost per unit	High cost per unit	Quantity	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
	Option D							
1	Earthwork regrading to form ramps	M	£400	£600	50	£20,000	£30,000	A new 50m ramp for accessing the bank.
2	New Path	M	£150	£250	5800	£870,000	£1,450,000	5.8 km new 3m wide sealed path on the track/footpath. Biodiversity net gain costs may be high.
3	New major causeway across the Washes	m2	£10,000	Use St Neots Willow Bridge	540	£5,400,000	£10,000,0000	Width at Earith would be 4m. Length of Earith = 540m includes 2 major bridges. (High cost based on St Neots bridge cost of £3.1 million upgraded for inflation and increased length and width. Assume 50% cost increase since 2011)
4	Sutton gateway feature	Item	£50,000	£100,000	1	£50,000	£100,000	Entering Sutton gateway feature.
5	Works in the America	Item	£100,000	£150,000	1	£100,000	£150,000	Road space needs to be reallocated and kerblines tightened. Difficult traffic management.
	Option D					£6,440,000	£11,730,000	
5	**Works in Sutton**					£1,140,000	£2,180,000	
6	**Works in Earith**					£400,000	£850,000	
	Option D Total					£7,980,000	£14,760,000	Biodiversity Net Gain costs extra

Table 14.6: Estimated costings for Option D

Item	Item description	Unit	Low cost per unit	High cost per unit	Quantity	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
	Option E							
1	Surfacing path	m	£150	£250	5800	£870,000	£1,450,000	4km new 3m wide sealed path on the track/footpath. Biodiversity net gain costs may be high.
2	New major causeway across the Washes	m2	£10,000	Use St Neots Willow Bridge	540	£5,400,000	£10,000,0000	Width at Earith would be 4m. Length of Earith = 540m includes 2 major bridges. (High cost based on St Neots bridge cost of £3.1 million upgraded for inflation and increased length and width. Assume 50% cost increase since 2011)
3	40m bridge Chain Causeway	m2	£1,000	£2,952	160	£160,000	£472,320	40m long 4m width bridge crossing chain causeway
	Option E					£6,430,000	£11,922.32	
3	**Works in Sutton**					£1,140,000	£2,180,000	
4	**Works in Earith**					£400,000	£850,000	
	Option E Total					£7,970,000	£14,952,320	Biodiversity Net Gain costs extra

Table 14.7: Estimated costings for Option E

Item description	Low total cost	High total cost	Notes
Sutton works	£1,400,000	£2,180,000	Table 14.1. Common for all schemes included in costs for each option below.
Earith works	£253,000	£489,000	Table 14.2 Common for all schemes included in costs for each option below.
OPTION A	£2,527,500	£5,169,100	Table 14.3.
OPTION B	£2,537,500	£5,295,300	Table 14.4.
OPTION C	£2,926,000	£5,552,300	Table 14.5.
OPTION D	£7,980,000	£14,760,000	Table 14.6.
OPTION E	£7,970,000	£14,952,320	Table 14.7.

Table 14.8: Estimated costings for all options

These figures have been used in the business case to consider the cost benefit ratio of the various options. Options A, B and C all have similar costs and route choice is likely to be based on deliverability and directness. Option A does appear to be the most ecologically feasible option because this involves minimal works and disturbance on the protected habitat, but it is also the least direct Option. Options D and E cannot be compared easily with Options A-C because Options D and E include a new major causeway across the Washes that the other options do not include.

Options D & E have huge costs and would also be extremely difficult to deliver and this appears to rule them out.

15. Predicted Usage and Cost Benefits

There is little data on travel between Sutton to Earith, with Census and school data showing no or very little travel between the two for work or school. Given the current condition of the B1381 the level of cycling on that road is also believed to be very low. Given the lack of data some estimates have had to be made, but it is hard to estimate suppressed demand, given the very low usage at present.

The Propensity to Cycle Tool has been considered to get an idea of potential usage. The tool was designed to assist transport planners and policy makers to prioritise investments and interventions to promote cycling. It answers the question: “where is cycling currently common and where does cycling have the greatest potential to grow?”, but it has to be used with care.

The tool uses 2011 census data to get information on local populations and local modal shares of journeys to work and uses school data to get information on school travel. It uses mapping data to get information about trip distances and geography. The tool is focused on journeys to work and school, because this is the data that is collected, so it does not allow for leisure and other activities, which is a problem in this case.

The tool uses various scenarios such as “Go Dutch” whereby it assumes that the infrastructure and modal share are like a Dutch case, adding in factors for hilliness, which will deter usage. For East Cambridgeshire’s case there is no reason to see why Dutch levels of cycling could not be achieved. The tool also uses an “Ebike” scenario, which assumes that the use of Ebikes and Dutch style infrastructure will significantly increase the range and number of cycle trips. Ebikes may be particularly relevant here given the distance between Mepal and Witchford.

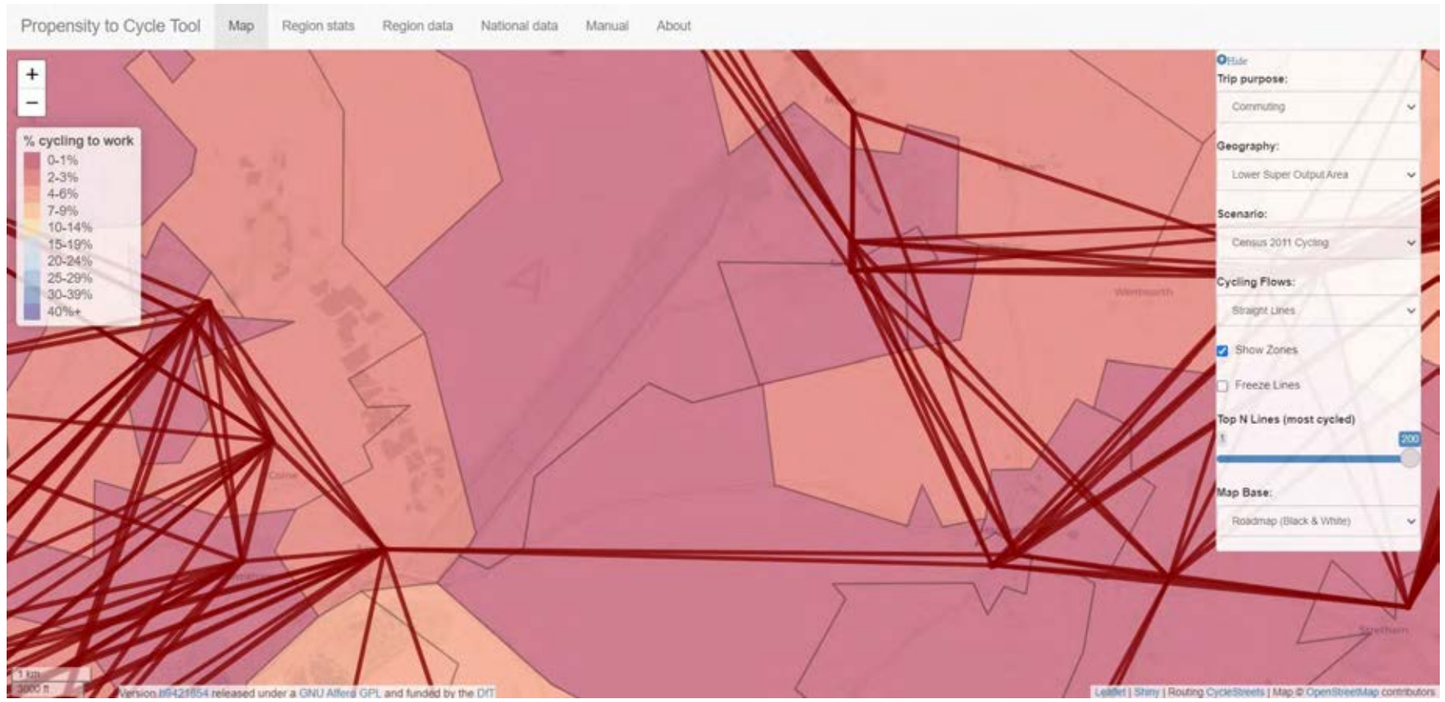


Figure 15.1 – PCT GoDutch potential usage

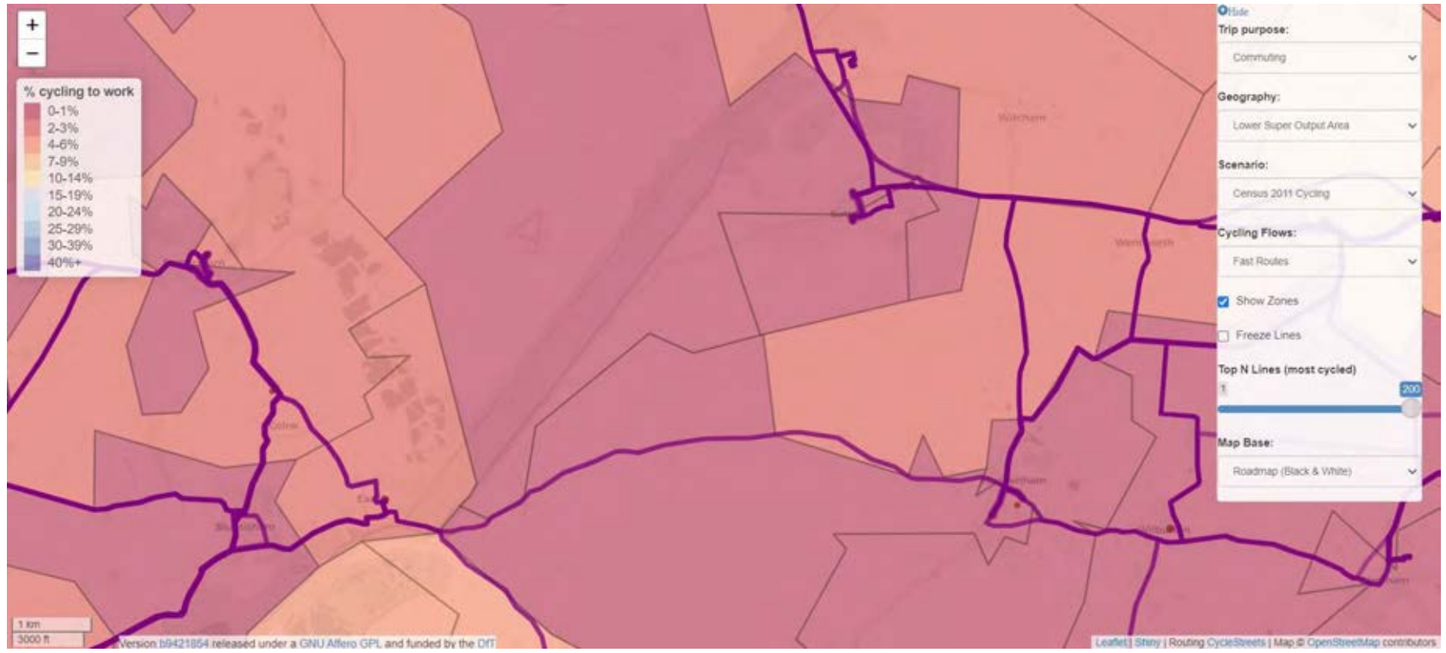


Figure 15.2 – PCT GoDutch potential usage

Under the “Go Dutch” scenario the tool highlights several interesting issues:

— The tool assumes that there will be no cycling activities between Sutton and Earith, taking into account the current status. However, there may well be a demand for a direct link between Sutton and Earith, particularly given the sense that the two are isolated from each other, despite being relatively close. Currently the primary access between Sutton and Earith is via the B1381, as it represents the most direct route, and the tool assumes that individuals will opt for the most direct path. Additionally, the tool assumes that the route will be upgraded to meet "Dutch" standards throughout. It can be anticipated that both of the options could enhance the potential usage of the route.

— The tool shows that the higher ranked faster routes are all within Earith or Sutton where in reality most cycling will be.

— The tool only shows commuting trips, so would exclude trips to leisure destinations and many of the uses for instance of the Great Ouse River washes, which is known to have appeal for leisure journeys from Sutton and Earith.

The Propensity to Cycle Tool uses 2011 census data but there has been some change in the area since then, notably:

— Population increases in both Sutton and Earith.

— Changes in the number of jobs and people based at the Fen Fishery, Earith Business Park (no data).

In general the routes between Sutton and Earith are very difficult to gauge usage. Anecdotally there was not much sign of usage when routes were surveyed, but there was some activity in the Sutton Gault area. It is hard to argue that any route options have big potential as a commuter route between Sutton and Earith, but with a good quality route it could also make an excellent leisure cycling route between the two communities.

For walking there is potential in increasing walking, particularly along the Washes, but this is some distance from both communities. The greatest potential for walking however appears to be between Sutton and Sutton Gault, due to the attractive nature of the area and the special situation when the Washes are in flood and the road closed to motorised traffic.

Other factors to consider for this route include:

- The difficulties of accessing any destinations along the A1123 in Earith and beyond Earith. This is very hard to resolve, because of traffic levels on the A1123.
- The difficulties of accessing sites such as Elean Business Park near Sutton, although this could be resolved with a new crossing of the A142.
- The very significant impact of flooding in the area, the isolation that this can bring and the potential changes in the situation due to Climate Change.

On the latter point it is noted that the A1123 is sometimes closed meaning that the only vehicular alternative becomes a large diversion via Chatteris, so compared to this all 5 options considered would be much shorter and more direct than the road alternative assuming that the route option is not impacted by flooding. Those most directly impacted by the closure of the A1123 are likely to be residents of Earith Bridge wanting to get to Earith and residents in Earith who would benefit from the traffic reduction and improved walking and cycling conditions in Earith.

To assess value for money of the various options it is necessary to compare costs with changes in usage, with increases in active travel being given cost benefits in terms of health benefits, congestion etc. Option costs have been estimated in Chapter 14; these costs have a wide range at this early stage of scheme development. For usage there is no clear background data and estimates of existing and predicted usage have been made. Whilst the absolute values are in doubt it is reasonable to make assumptions about the merits of the different options.

For cycling and walking it is assumed that all of the route will be along the new infrastructure given that the works include changes in Sutton and Earith and the distances involved are above average walking and cycling distances.

Given the lack of data from the Propensity to Cycle Tool estimates have been made of usage. These assumptions are open to challenge and the analysis will benefit from more data, but assumptions are set out in the following tables.

Item description	Existing usage (cycling)	Predicted usage (cycling)	Notes
OPTION A	10	40	Only usage at present would be on the edges of Earith and near Sutton Gault.
OPTION B	10	50	Slightly higher predicted usage because more direct than Option A.
OPTION C	20	60	Most obvious route and a direct route so likely to have highest usage.
OPTION D	10	50	Only usage at present may be on A1123 near Earith. More attractive leisure route than Option D so higher predicted usage.
OPTION E	10	40	Limited leisure usage and no intermediate destinations.

Table 15.1 Estimates of cycle usage

Item description	Existing usage (walking)	Predicted usage (walking)	Notes
OPTION A	10	20	Less attractive for walking than cycling because lot of route is on road.
OPTION B	10	50	Typically walking and cycling levels similar on off-road routes.
OPTION C	20	60	Typically walking and cycling levels similar on off-road routes.
OPTION D	10	50	Typically walking and cycling levels similar on off-road routes.
OPTION E	10	40	Typically walking and cycling levels similar on off-road routes.

Table 15.2 Estimates of walking usage

Other ways of assessing potential demand include on-line tools such as Widen My Path, however the number of entries on this in this area is low. There are many comments in Ely and the comments between Mepal and Witchford are generally consistent with issues raised in this study. Nevertheless, it is useful check to ensure that issues raised have been considered in this study.

An extract from Widen My Path is shown in Figure 15.3, As indicated by the comments, there is a demand for a cycleway between Sutton and Earith.

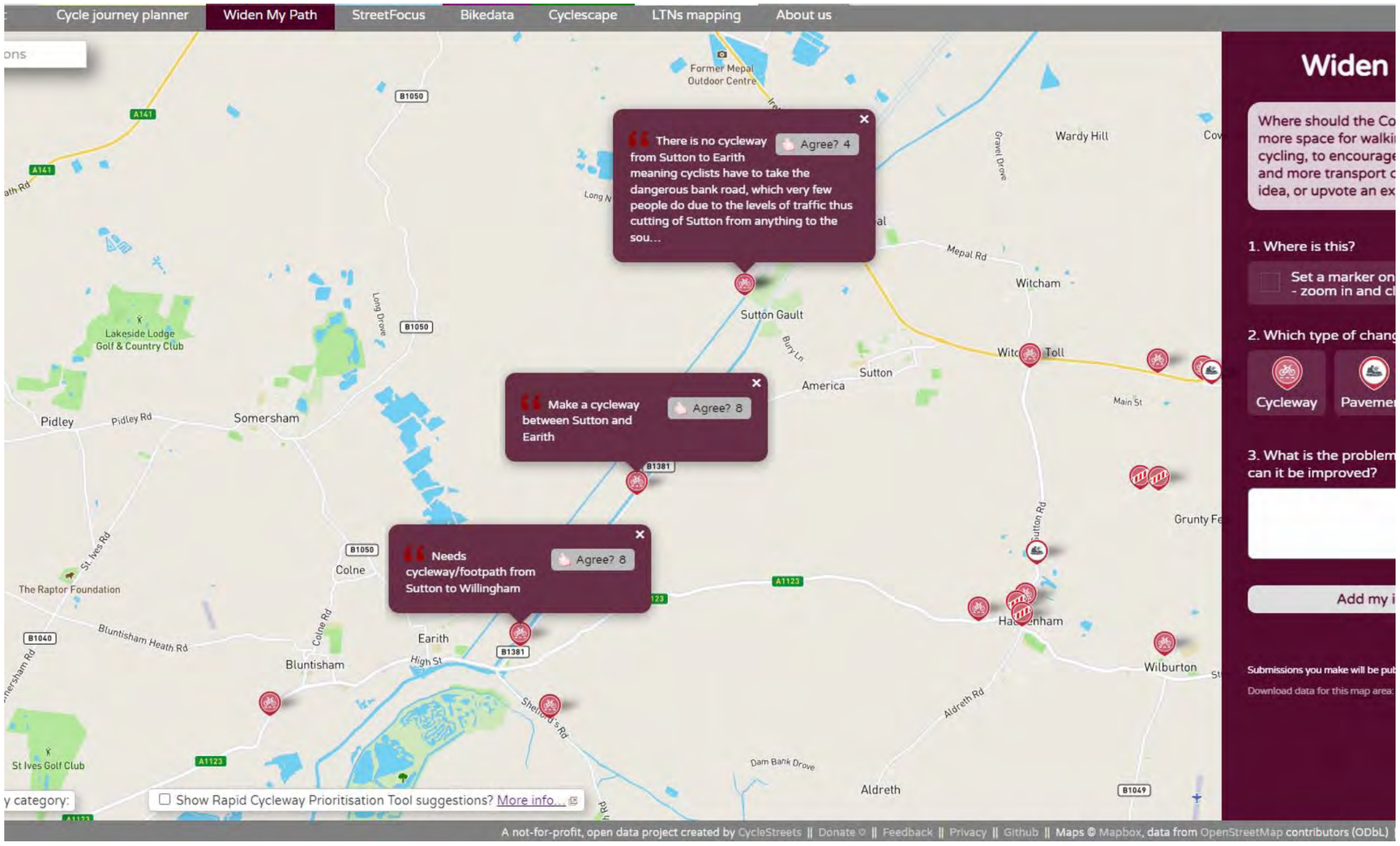


Figure 15.3 Widen My Path extract

Business Case

In order to assess value for money of the various options it is necessary to compare option costs with changes in usage, with increases in active travel being given cost benefits in terms of health benefits, congestion etc. Option costs have been estimated in Chapter 14; these costs have a wide range at this early stage of scheme development and Biodiversity Net Gain costs will need to be added on top. For usage there is no clear background data and best estimates of existing and predicted usage have been made. These assumptions are open to challenge and the analysis will benefit from more data, but assumptions were set out in Tables 15.1 and 15.2.

The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) has been determined using the AMAT tool from the Department for Transport. An AMAT (Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit May 2023 version) analysis has been done using various scenarios and data as referenced earlier. The results are in the Table 15.3. Further analysis and data are needed to assess Benefit Cost Ratio for these but two key points should be noted:

- The BCR of these works is weak, apart from works in Sutton and Earith themselves. It will be even weaker when Biodiversity Net Gain costs are added, but could be higher if there is better evidence about potential usage.

- The Business Case has been analysed for all options and on this basis it is hard to justify any option. The BCR for options A,B,C is stronger than for Option D and E because costs are lower, Option D and E includes a new major causeway across the Washes that the other options do not include.

Item	Item description	Capital	Annual maintenance	Usage change	Notes on usage	AMAT BCR
Option A	**Low cost**	£2,527,500	£126,000	10 before 40 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.2**
Option A	**High cost**	£5,169,100	£258,000	10 before 40 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.1**
Option B	**Low cost**	£2,537,500	£127,000	10 before 50 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.2**
Option B	**High cost**	£5,295,300	£264,000	10 before 50 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.1**
Option C	**Low cost**	£2,926,000	£146,300	20 before 60 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.2**
Option C	**High cost**	£5,552,300	£278,000	20 before 60 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.1**
Option D	**Low cost**	£7,980,000	£399,000	10 before 50 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.08**
Option D	**High cost**	£14,760,000	£738,000	10 before 50 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.04**
Option E	**Low cost**	£7,970,0000	£398,500	10 before 40 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.08**
Option E	**High cost**	£14,952,320	£747,616	10 before 40 after	No evidence to base figures on so this is an estimate – see Tables 15.1 and 15.2.	**0.04**
Sutton Works	**Low cost**	£1,400,000	£70,000	No data	BCR is likely to be good given that most trips will be local and within the local communities.	Should be good
Sutton Works	**High cost**	£2,180,000	£109,000	No data	BCR is likely to be good given that most trips will be local and within the local communities.	Should be good
Earith Works	**Low cost**	£253,000	£11,750	No data	BCR is likely to be good given that most trips will be local and within the local communities.	Should be good
Earith Works	**High cost**	£489,000	£24,450	No data	BCR is likely to be good given that most trips will be local and within the local communities.	Should be good

Table 15.3 BCR calculations for each route option assuming major changes, but excluding Biodiversity Net Gain costs

16. Construction and Maintenance

Any works on the highway will need traffic management and will need suitable facilities for construction or maintenance staff and a site compound for equipment and materials storage.

Construction and maintenance considerations:

Works in Earith.

Works on the roads and at junctions in Earith will need a traffic management plan and suitable site compounds within the village. It should be possible to find suitable locations for a site compound on the public highway, which will need the appropriate orders.

Works in Sutton.

Works on the roads and at junctions in Sutton will need a traffic management plan and suitable site compounds within the village. It should be possible to find suitable locations for a site compound on the public highway, which will need the appropriate orders.

Bridge works at Sutton Gault for Options A,B & C.

Any changes to the existing Causeway will only be possible when there is no flooding, so winter working is not recommended. If The Causeway is open to motorised traffic, traffic management will be necessary and it is recommended that the road is closed to through traffic for the duration of the works. Access for construction should be possible along the road and any site compound will need to be outside the flood zone and most sensitive ecological locations.

Works along the Washes, field edges or rights of way for Options A, B and C.

Any works outside the towns and villages will need to be accessed from local roads and where possible using existing farm access routes if that can be agreed with landowners.

For the construction of reservoirs near Earith new access tracks had to be formed from Chatteris Road near Somersham, so access for construction in remote areas will be a major part of any planning application and land negotiations, particularly for Options A and B.

Access fields and along rights of way will though be particularly challenging in bad weather and will need to be carefully considered in terms of timing. Construction should ideally take place in drier summer weather. Working in remote areas will also be a potential risk for staff, so this will need to be carefully planned.

Maintenance access can easily be forgotten but regular access will be needed along routes for sweeping and vegetation management and less frequently for surface maintenance and enhancements and this should be part of all discussions pertaining route development.

Option C would appear to be the easiest route to construct, because it uses an existing access track so there is already a route and a firm base. The challenge with this option will be in terms of ecological impact on the surrounds to the track, so it is likely that a site compound and materials storage will need to be outside the most sensitive areas- perhaps at Earith Business Park, meaning that construction vehicles will have long distances to travel.

Works along the B1381 for Options D and E

The proposed works are generally away from the carriageway or involve new crossings of the B1381, so the major issue will be ensuring suitable access arrangements for construction vehicles and staff. This will have to be planned as part of detailed designs and will need to be agreed with landowners as part of the negotiations. Conditions are likely to be difficult in winter if the ground is very wet, so timing will be important.

Temporary access routes may need to be built as part of scheme delivery. Working in remote areas will also be a potential risk for staff, so this will need to be carefully planned.

Works along floodbank for Option D

Working on the floodbank will be very challenging and carries significant risk particularly when working at the edges of the bank. This work should not be progressed without agreeing a safe working plan.

17. CDM and Design Risk

17.1
Construction Design Management

Construction Design Management (CDM) forms part of the Health and Safety on construction sites and starts much earlier in the process than people understand.

Under CDM 2015 regulations Move More Glossop would be acting in the Client role, and as such they have obligations to fulfil. As it is unlikely that Move More Glossop is aware of the duties involved, they are summarised in this report section. Sustrans is currently acting in the Principal Designer role. The duties are highlighted in CDM documentation under Regulation 4 and are listed below for clarity.

PART 2 Client duties

(1) A client must make suitable arrangements for managing a project, including the allocation of sufficient time and other resources.

(2) Arrangements are suitable if they ensure that—

(a) the construction work can be carried out, so far as is reasonably practicable, without risks to the health or safety of any person affected by the project; and

(b) the facilities required by Schedule 2 are provided in respect of any person carrying out construction work.

(3) A client must ensure that these arrangements are maintained and reviewed throughout the project.

(4) A client must provide pre-construction information as soon as is practicable to every designer and contractor appointed, or being considered for appointment, to the project.

(5) A client must ensure that—

(a) before the construction phase begins, a construction phase plan is drawn up by the contractor if there is only one contractor, or by the principal contractor; and

(b) the principal designer prepares a health and safety file for the project, which— (i) complies with the requirements of regulation 12(5);

(ii) is revised from time to time as appropriate to incorporate any relevant new information; and

(iii) is made available for inspection by any person who may need it to comply with the relevant legal requirements.

(6) A client must take reasonable steps to ensure that—

(a) the principal designer complies with any other principal designer duties in regulations 11 and 12; and

(b) the principal contractor complies with any other principal contractor duties in regulations 12 to 14;

(7) If a client disposes of the client's interest in the structure, the client complies with the duty in paragraph (5)(b)(iii) by providing the health and safety file to the person who acquires the client's interest in the structure and ensuring that that person is aware of the nature and purpose of the file.

(8) Where there is more than one client in relation to a project—

(a) one or more of the clients may agree in writing to be treated for the purposes of these Regulations as the only client or clients; and

(b) except for the duties specified in sub-paragraph

(c) only the client or clients agreed in paragraph (a) are subject to the duties owed by a client under these Regulations;

(c) the duties in the following provisions are owed by all clients— (i) regulation 8(4); and

(ii) paragraph (4) and regulation 8(6) to the extent that those duties relate to information in the possession of the client.

This project is currently set to develop a feasibility study, and therefore many of the requirements of Regulation 4 may not necessarily apply in full at this stage.

A Design Risk Register is included over leaf for reference at this stage in the project development.

17.2 Design Risk Register

Please refer to (Figure 1.1, the Design Risk Register) for a comprehensive overview of design-related risks. Any works on the highway will need traffic management and will need suitable facilities for construction or maintenance staff including a site compound for equipment and materials storage. Works away from the highway will require suitable site compounds and access from the road network.

Ref	Area	Observation	Action required?
1	Who are the CDM duty holders?	Client- East Cambridgeshire District Council Designer- Sustrans	
2	Has this been recorded?	In Teams	
3	If Sustrans is the client has the principal designer been appointed?	N/A	
4	If Sustrans is the client has the principal contractor been appointed?	N/A	
5	If Sustrans is not the client, are we satisfied that the client is aware of their duties?	Not entirely certain	Advise client about their duties
6	Have you checked that the project team have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience?	Partially, Sustrans has the skills but we are unsure about the client's skills	Advise client about their duties
7	Has pre-construction information been produced?	Not yet	
8	Has the pre-construction information been issued to the appropriate parties?	N/A	
9	Has a design risk assessment been completed?	Yes but will need updating as the project progresses.	Update risk assessment
10	Is the design risk assessment appropriate?	At this stage, yes	Update risk assessment
11	How have residual risks been communicated?	They will be referred to in the study	
12	Has the construction phase plan been produced?	N/A	
13	Are adequate welfare facilities provided on site?	N/A	
14	Has the health and safety file been produced?	N/A	

	Designer	Sustrans
	Client	East Cambridgeshire D.C.
	Author	NB CQ (Sustrans)
	Date	03/01/24
Risk ID number	**Description**	**Response**
1	**All construction works carry risk. Is work necessary?**	**Need for new provision, because existing routes do not comply with standards such as LTN 1/20, but works could be avoided with reductions in traffic volumes and speeds on B1381 so this should be given serious consideration.**
2..	**Works near roads carry risks.**	**Road closures and traffic management will be needed and cannot be avoided so should be carefully considered throughout design process.**
3	**Works near the B1381 carry risks.**	**Any work along B1381 will involve work near high volumes of traffic so careful planning and management will be needed. Crossing the B1381 and A1123 is a major issue for local people so needs to be addressed.**
4.	**Works on flood bank carry risks.**	**This would rule out Option D unless a safe working arrangement can be agreed.**
5. .	**Works in rural areas carry risks, including farm and quarrying activities.**	**Sufficient land needs to be agreed for safe working and maintenance and contractor to be alerted to all potential risks, by designer as project progresses. Time of year will be important for rural works and this needs to be considered early so that there is a suitable timetable.**
6.	**Flood risk and construction during winter.**	**Construction work may need to be taking place in dry weather.**
7.	**Bird disturbance**	**It was evident during survey work that large numbers of birds use the area at certain times. The scheme should not disturb the birds, but equally the birds could disturb the construction activities, so will need to be carefully coniseidered.**
8.	**Inadequate provision made for site compounds and facilities.**	**This needs to be a key task as part of land negotiations.**
9.	**CDM needs to be considered in choosing preferred options.**	**CDM has been a significant factor but will need to be considered further as options are reviewed.**
10.	**Community Engagement Risks**	**Risk Assessments will need to be completed and acted upon for events and activities.**
11.	**Design and surveying risks**	**Risk Assessments will need to be completed and acted upon for site visits, surveys and design work. This is a particular concern where there is no footway.**

18. RAG Report

	Project title	Sutton to Earith Feasibility Study	**Date RAG report initiated**	**03/01/24**	**Project Manager**	**MP**
	Client	East Cambridgeshire D.C.	**Date of current edition**	**03/01/24**	**RAG Author**	**CQ**

Risk ID number	Description	Assigned to:	Date assigned:	Current situation (RAG)	Potential mitigation	Mitigation risk (RAG
1	**Route uses private land and agreement cannot be reached with all landowners in time to deliver project.**	**ECDC**	**02/01/24**		**Skillful negotiations with landowners should help and use of statutory powers is also possible.**	
2	New causeway following A1123 between Earith Bridge and Earith cannot be agreed.	C**CC**	0**2/01/24**		R**emove Options D and E or omit causeway**	
3	Reallocation of road space not agreed in Sutton and Earith, so route not LTN 1/20 compliant and access to/from Sutton and Earith is restricted.	**ECDC / CCC**	**02/01/24**		**High level of community engagement, including with businesses needed to come up with solutions.**	
4.	Signalised crossing or junction not agreed for the crossings of B1381, so some people will be deterred from using new provision.	**ECDC**	**02/01/24**		**High level of community engagement and discussions with County Council needed to come up with solutions.**	
5.	Route may use rights of way and County Council agreement not obtained for works.	**ECDC / CCC**	**02/01/24**		**Early discussions with Rights of Way team.**	
6.	Use of field edges not agreed due to ecological or other concerns.	**ECDC / CCC**	**02/01/24**		**Further surveys may be needed particularly for exposed routes as identified in Chapter 9. This could be hard to mitigate. Risk is red until these have happened successfully.**	
7.	Use of RSPB routes not agreed due to ecological or access concerns.	**ECDC/CCC**	**02/01/24**		**Early discussions needed with RSPB and Natural England. Risk is red until these have happened successfully.**	
8.	New bridge designs cannot be agreed.	**ECDC/CCC**	**02/01/24**		**Early discussions needed with County Council to clarify their requirements.**	
9.	Option B The Fen Fisheries may hold no will to accommodate cycling and walking provision.	**ECDC/CCC**	**02/01/24**		**Need to engage with the Fen Fisheries.**	
10.	Maintenance plan cannot be agreed.	**ECDC/CCC**	**02/01/24**		**Needs to be agreed and required standards set at an early stage.**	
11.	Funding not obtained.	**ECDC**	**02/01/24**		**Looks very difficult to justify scheme from BCR. May need to consider issues around isolation and tourism for funding.**	
12.	Planning consents not obtained.	**ECDC**	**02/01/24**		**Follow recommendations in Ecology Study and use these to inform design and route selection. Undertake pre-app discussions and ensure all issues addressed. On highway options would not need planning permission so give these serious consideration.**	

19. Conclusions

The routes considered are shown in Figure 19.1. None of the options is easy, but traffic conditions between Sutton and Earith are daunting and enough to put off all but the most confident cyclist and walker, so there is no easy option at present. The two communities feel isolated from each other, but they are close together and should be a reasonable cycling distance apart.

There are significant ecological constraints for all route options, particularly Options B, C, D and E. This is due to habitat loss within the Ouse Washes (an internationally important designated site), disturbance to the internationally important bird populations and high biodiversity net gain (BNG) costs. Route A is most likely to be viable due to the lower BNG costs and location outside the Ouse Washes site, but may still require significant survey, assessment and mitigation to enable it to progress.

As well as ecological challenges there are major financial challenges. None of the options are cheap and some are very expensive. Predicted usage is also low because there is little data on travel between the two communities, the population density is low and there are no significant intermediate destinations between the two settlements. It has been very hard to predict usage, but the predictions that have been made show low Benefit to Cost Ratio and certainly it is hard to justify expenditure on routes in this area when compared with other areas of higher population density.

The strongest arguments for the works are therefore likely to be in relation to reducing isolation and tourism potential, particularly in the winter when the area is flooded and the landscape is very special.

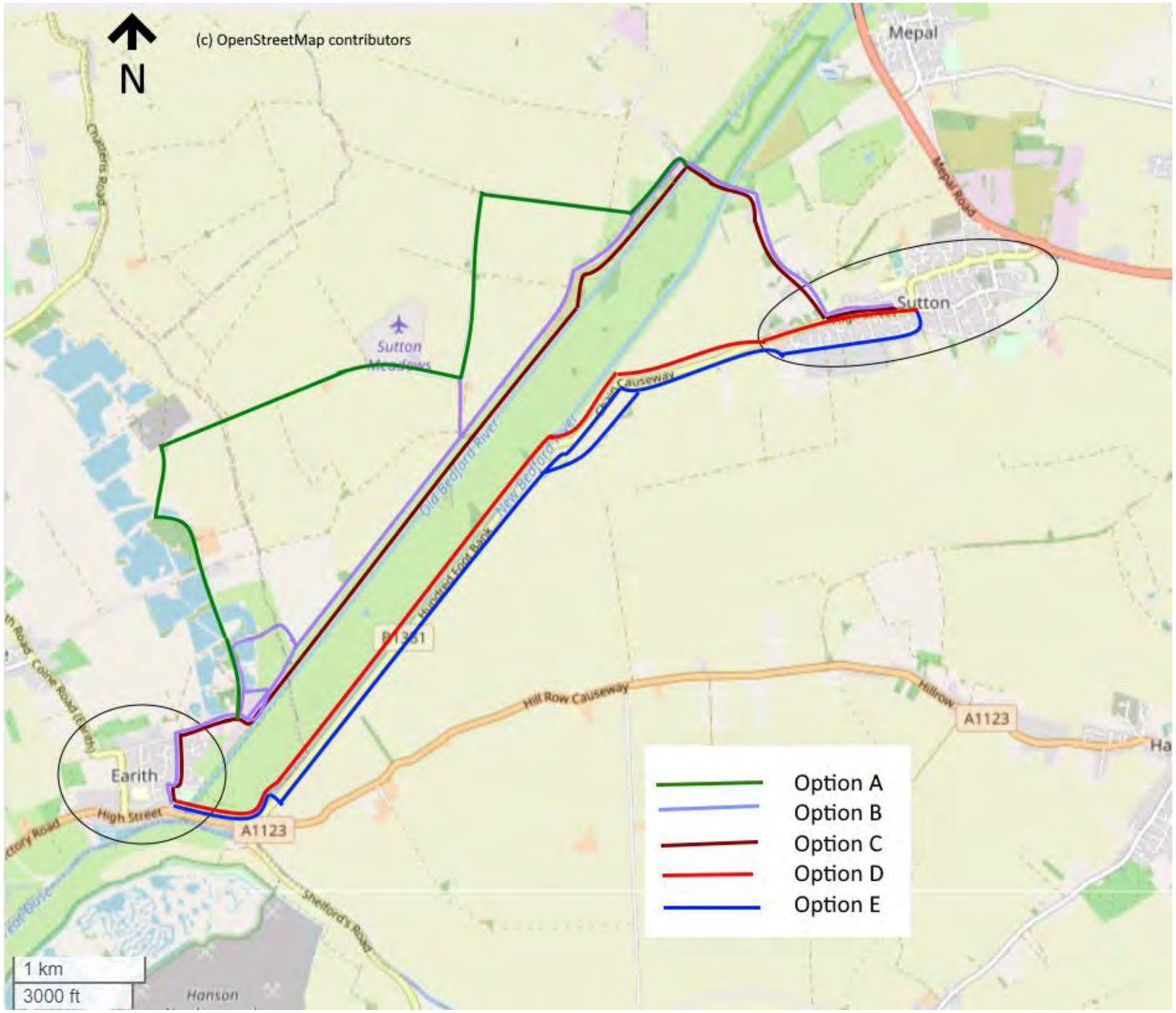


Figure 19.1 Route options considered in the study.

Points to note about the options:

Option A: Starting from Earith High Street this route heads north on residential and industrial roads before joining a bridleway that passes a number of fishing lakes, where there are major surfacing issues. The route needs a new link across private land and across Cran Brook, to link up with Meadland's Main Drove and Bedingham's Drove. This leads to the Causeway at Sutton Gault and eventually into Sutton.

The route is remote and generally quiet. It is the least direct option, but it avoids many of the challenges associated with other options and may be the most feasible option, if land agreements are possible and if the ecological challenges can be addressed.

Option B: Option B starts out in the same way as Option A, from Earith High Street heading north on residential and industrial roads, but then the route turns towards the Washes and follows a drainage channel on the boundary of the Washes and the adjacent arable land. The route continues parallel with the Washes with a sub-option of using Bedingham's Drove as in Option A or continuing along the edge of the Washes before joining up with Option A nearer the Causeway, from where it continues into Sutton.

Option C: Similar to Option B this option starts at Earith High Street and then follows the Washes, within the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) protected habitat area. The route mostly follows an existing track which would need surfacing. The track is used for maintenance of the area and it is therefore an obvious option. This track links up with the Causeway and Sutton in the same way that Options A and B do. The ecological sensitivity of this area means that this obvious route may not be deliverable and detailed discussions are needed with RSPB, Environment Agency and Natural England, to further consider the feasibility of the route and whether it would be possible to obtain the necessary planning approvals.

Option D: Option D runs on the opposite side of the Washes to Options A, B and C and again involves construction within RSPB land. A major challenge with the route is the way that it would leave Earith, and it is hard to see how major construction across the Washes can be avoided. This is likely to be extremely sensitive ecologically.

When the route reaches the B1381 it follows the public right of way on the bank on the eastern side of the New Bedford River, facing ecological considerations similar to Option B and Option C. The route then leaves the flood bank to follow the B1381 into Sutton on field edges, which are privately owned. Access into Sutton from this direction is tricky, due to limited highway space and buildings adjoining the road. The route would continues along Sutton High Street on road.

Option E: This option has the same major challenge of Option D in terms of finding a good route across the Washes that is parallel with the A1123. The route then starts following the B1381 on the north-western side before crossing to the south-eastern side at a dedicated crossing. The proposed route would then have to follow field edges (subject to agreement) and potentially a byway all the way to Sutton entering Sutton along The Row, which is a quieter road than the High Street, but with some gradients.

A summary of the issues raised by the study for the options is in the table adjacent:

	Ecology	Land	Directness	Cost	Overall
OPTION A	May be the best option	Needs private land	Least direct	High	Feels to be the most achievable.
OPTION B	May be 2nd best option	Needs more private land than Option A	Less direct than C	High	An option if C not achievable.
OPTION C	Needs more studies	RSPB and Environment Agency so most likely linked to ecology.	Direct	High	The obvious route but needs more studies and may not be achievable.
OPTION D	Very challenging.	Needs private land	Direct	Very high	Appears too difficult to deliver, so rule out.
OPTION E	Very challenging.	Needs private land.	Direct	Very high	Appears too difficult to deliver, so rule out.

Table 19.1 Summary of issues with Options.

All options present notable challenges, including substantial ecological constraints and the potential necessity to agree routes on non highway land. To implement these routes successfully, there might be a need to employ Compulsory Purchase Powers. There will certainly be a need for further ecological studies and additionally, many proposed works are situated in areas prone to flooding, making Environment Agency consent another pivotal consideration.

Further studies will be expensive and may need to take place over a long period, so if any route is to progress it will need significant investment, with no guarantee of any successful outcome.

Given the high costs there may be merits in reducing the scheme quality and costs, but in some ways this would mean little change on the existing provision and few benefits, so this study has not given this detailed consideration, rather focusing on schemes that comply with LTN 1/20, that would be useful for all and that could be eligible for transport funding. Certainly, Option C can be used at present in dry conditions (although without rights to cycle over the whole length), but it is not accessible for all and making no changes would do little to remove barriers between the two communities. Even if no works were done and the route was promoted as it is, it is still expected that ecological considerations would have to be addressed.

There is undoubtedly tourism potential in this area and in particular with the Washes so this is also another area that could be studied further.

Overall given the relatively small populations of both Sutton and Earith the usage of any new cycling and walking infrastructure between the two communities will not be high, but the distances are manageable with good provision and the communities are isolated from each other, so there are reasons to progress at least one route. However it is hard to justify expenditure in this area, when compared to other locations where potential Benefit Cost Ratios are much higher.

20. Appendix

Appendix A. Equality Impact Assessment

sustrans JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Purpose

This tool is to help colleagues to deliver inclusive projects.

It does this by:
- **Focussing attention** by providing a series of prompt questions and areas for consideration. These are tailored to the type of project you are working on.
- Providing a library of **resources and data** relevant to different characteristics. This will guide project teams to develop responses that are informed by best practice and existing research.
- Listing practical examples of inclusive **community engagement** and what **responsive solutions** might look like.

This tool is designed to encourage new ways of working, rather than to assess projects that have already been developed. It encourages an approach that balances both desk-based research and targeted engagement.

When?

The tool should be **used at the initial stages of a project's development** to shape the scope of work.

It should guide the development of solutions from the outset, and be **re-visited** as the project develops.

Importantly, it must also be **reviewed at the end of the project** to learn lessons to inform future work.

Who?

The tool should be completed by the Project Manager and reviewed by the Project Sponsor.

The tool should also reflect community engagement undertaken by the project, amplifying voices of those with lived experience of the topics explored.

Why?

It will support teams to take inclusivity into account at the outset of a project. It will also provide evidence to stakeholders on how the project team has considered different characteristics in a project's development.

This Equality Impact Assessment process is focused on ensuring all projects and services are created and completed in line with the Equality Duty.

As a charity, while our Equality Duty responsibilities are not the same as those for public sector organisations, **we often receive public funding or work in public spaces, and we have committed to delivering inclusive projects**.

Important considerations

When completing the tool, it is critical that an **intersectional** approach is taken. That is understanding that people often experience amplified and particular disadvantages by experiencing **multiple characteristics simultaneously.**

It can be helpful to consider how:
- Particular groups with multiple characteristics are likely to be impacted by the project
- Some impacts may affect multiple characteristics, or affect different characteristics in different ways
- Some solutions may provide benefits for multiple characteristics

For **particularly small projects**, it may not be appropriate to complete all the sections, or develop in depth community engagement.

As a minimum, you should complete the **Focussing Attention** tab and consider how to **amplify under-represented voices** in your work.

All projects should **monitor their impact** on those with protected and other characteristics. Project monitoring should be developed using standard approaches to demographic data collection as developed by RMU.

Project Information

Project Name	Sutton to Earith (14631)
EqIA Version & Date	V1: Completed 05-01-24 (Feasibility)
Project Sponsor	Martin Philpott
Project Manager	Martin Philpott
Completed By	Jolina Irish and Chiu Qu
Sustrans Approach	**Transforming routes and spaces**

The project type selected will populate the tool with information relevant to that area of work.

Sustrans Approach	Product	Examples
Transforming routes and spaces	- Neighbourhood traffic reduction - Low traffic and protected routes - Safe, appealing streets and public spaces - Timed traffic-free streets - Integration with public transport and micro-mobility - Traffic-free routes	- Improving NCN routes - Expanding NCN routes - Improving access to the NCN - Active travel strategies - Area-wide through traffic exclusion interventions - Area-wide improvement interventions
Building active travel habits and practices	- Community model shift: children and adolescents - Community model shift: adults - Moving goods.	- Schools walking, wheeling, and cycling skills interventions - Workplace walking, wheeling and cycling interventions - Integrating walking and cycling with rail - Big walk and wheel - Active travel challenges - Led walks and rides - Social prescribing - Bike maintenance skills - Cycle hubs - Hire and pool bike schemes
Supporting professionals and decision makers	- National, regional, and local strategies to achieve modal shift - Data and insight on attitudes, behaviours, and infrastructure - Resources and advice for delivery projects - Professional training	- Professional training and upskilling - Standard setting and quality assurance

Brief Project Description:

This project has been commissioned by East Cambridgeshire District Council who are looking to improve local facilities and want to progress plans for cycling and walking routes, so that when opportunities becomes available, they can bid for funding. The existing National Cycle Network (NCN) does not make a direct connection between Sutton and Earith.

Most people at present who want to cycle between Sutton to Earith will have to use the B1381, which is too busy and fast, and the road width is too narrow to expect anyone apart from the most confident cyclists to use it. Multiple route options and alignments have therefore been considered, with relevant linkages to nearby settlements and destinations such as Earith business Park and Holme Fen Fishery. All options have their advantages and serve slightly different purposes. There is also a strong case for significant changes within Sutton and Earith themselves.

Project Objective:

The aim of the project is to identify and describe current problems and propensity to walk and cycle in the area, identify at least one high quality route that can be delivered between Sutton to Earith and rank the route options in terms of benefits and costs. there are currently no villages between Sutton to Earith but links to other settlements and destinations have been considered to establish the merits of incorporating them into any new route between Sutton and Earith.

Focussing Attention

This tab provides prompt questions and areas for consideration that are intended to focus attention on inclusivity at the outset of a project. The information is informed by research on each characteristic based on the project type selected.
It is not exhaustive, 100% universal, or context-specific. It is important to consider how people with multiple characteristics often face amplified disadvantages.

Characteristic or Protected Characteristic	**Prompt Questions** (Populated based on project type)	**Areas for Consideration** (Populated based on project type)	**Potential Impact** (Summarise potential project impacts in response to the prompt questions and areas for consideration)
People experiencing (and/or at risk of) high deprivation	*Does the project area include areas of deprivation as mapped on the SIMD/IMD? How does the project ensure that people living in areas of deprivation are direct beneficiaries?*	*Location of interventions, trip generators, perceptions of safety, access to essential services, transport poverty*	Please refer to the Resources and Data tab which details the impacts of this project.
Disability	*How will the route be accessible and navigable by disabled people? Will it help them travel independently, and with greater dignity including features such as tactile paving, dropped kerbs, and accessible public toilets?*	*Access barriers, surfaces, level changes, perceptions of safety, navigation, resting opportunities, public toilet facilities, calm, legible environments, distances between likely trip generators, public transport accessibility, taxi/car access, pavement widths, dropped kerbs, tactile paving, signage/wayfinding*	
Race	*How can the project be culturally relevant to migrants and people of colour who live or work in the local area? How will the project respond to the needs of migrants and people of colour? How will the route feel by those who experience racism, especially after dark?*	*Perceptions of safety, histories of race-related crime, welcoming public spaces reflecting diverse communities, likely trip generators, demographics of area, venues and public spaces that reflect diverse communities*	
Sex	*Does the project support an area-wide approach for those who are making multi-stop journeys (more likely taken by women), rather than just A-B routes? Will the route feel safe for women or non-binary people, especially after dark? Is it well-overlooked and well-lit?*	*Perceptions of safety, infrastructure that supports trip chaining or multi-stop journeys*	
Age	*Will the public spaces support play and/or regular seating and resting opportunities? How will the project support the needs of people across age groups, especially those ages most overlooked in transport planning - children, teenagers and older people?*	*Distances between likely trip generators, resting and play opportunities, navigation, public toilet facilities, perceptions of safety, level changes*	
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	*Have LGBTQIA+ related hate crimes been reported in the area? How do LGBTQIA+ people feel about their safety on the route? How have the area's public spaces been designed to feel safe and welcoming to LGBTQIA+ communities?*	*Locations of LGBTQIA+ venues, histories of LGBTQIA+-related hate crime, celebrating queer heritage and identity, welcoming public spaces reflecting diverse communities*	
Pregnancy and maternity	*Is the area welcoming to parents with babies or young families (e.g. does the area provide frequent opportunities for changing and feeding a baby)?*	*Resting opportunties, level changes, surfaces, access barriers, perceptions of safety, public toilet/changing facilities, dropped kerbs, surfaces, pavement widths*	
Religion or belief	*How can the project be culturally relevant to diverse religous groups or communities in the area? For instance, how will the project improve connectivity for places of worship or religious communities in the local area?*	*Perceptions of safety, location and access requirements of cultural and religious venues*	
Other marginalised groups	*How can this project benefit other marginalised communities (for example, homeless people, asylum seekers, current and ex-offenders)? Areas of consideration might include access to key services (e.g. GPs, Citizens Advice, libraries, food banks, warm banks)*		
Marriage and civil partnership	There is little evidence about marital/civil partnership status or relationship status and associations with wider active travel patterns.		

Community Engagement

This tab allows community engagement to be planned so that people with seldom-heard voices can be involved in a project's development. Not all characteristics need to be engaged for every project, and this should be proportionate to the scale of the project and the impact being explored. People with protected characteristics or experiencing deprivation should be reimbursed for their time and expertise. Targeted community engagement should be used to find local insights and fill gaps where you have not found answers in the evidence and resources. Ideally, the engagement team itself should also be diverse and reflect the groups you are seeking to engage with. It is important to take an intersectional perspective, by considering in particular, those experiencing multiple characteristics simultaneously.

Characteristic or Protected Characteristic	**Inclusive Community Engagement Examples** (Common to all project types)	**Community Engagement Plan** (What targeted engagement activities will you run? Activities may target multiple characteristics simultaneously)	**Budget and Resources** (What budget and resources are needed for those activities?)	**Confirmed Impact** (What has been learnt from the engagement activities about the positive and negative impacts of the project?)
People experiencing (and/or at risk of) high deprivation	*For example, seek to host a wide range of engagement types to suit those with more limited time and resources to attend*	The examples provided in this section will be used as a starting point when developing a detailed engagement plan in future phases of project development.		
Disability	*For example, organise a walk, wheel, or cycle with a local pan-disability group exploring the project, its potential and any existing barriers*			
Race	*For example, meet with Black Cyclists Network to discuss route and any specific barriers they may face in the area*			
Sex	*For example, hosting a walk specifically for women and non-binary people, to discuss the project in more detail*			
Age	*For example, organise a targeted engagement event at a local youth club, exploring design ideas with children and young people*			
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	*For example, developing engagement materials and visuals to be inclusive and ensuring venue is welcoming to all*			
Pregnancy and maternity	*For example, ensure that engagement drop in events include facilities for babies to allow carers to meaningfully contribute*			
Religion or belief	*For example, ensure that engagement events take place in venues and during times that are welcoming to all religions*			
Other marginalised groups				
Marriage and civil partnership	There is little evidence about marital/civil partnership status or relationship status and associations with wider active travel patterns.			

Planned involvement:
When the project progresses local people with protected characteristics will be engaged in the development and delivery of the project. This will require the implementation of the inclusive design principles and collaborative design process detailed in the feasibility report.

Stakeholder management group:
Representatives from a range of local groups will be invited to form a stakeholder management group. Stakeholder mapping will need to be done with community representatives that will be invited to participate, along with organisations who advocate for people with protected characteristics. The group will be engaged to co-define engagement principles and throughout the project as designs are refined and delivered. The table above includes examples of how local people could be engaged, and these ideas will be investigated further as the project progresses.

Engagement activity will be reviewed to identify the extent to which it engaged with a diverse audience and the approach will be discussed and agreed with the stakeholder group.

Resources and Data

This tab provides a library of resources and data relevant to the project type selected. This is to enable colleagues to identify what active travel barriers are experienced by people with different characteristics, or to identify particular demographics of an area such as a large young Sikh population. There are many relevant guidance documents already published across the industry. We all have a responsibility to be aware of resources and data to inform our project delivery.

Characteristic or Protected Characteristic	Guidance (Examples with hyperlinks common to all project types)	Data (Examples with hyperlinks common to all project types)	Sustrans Knowledge (Examples with hyperlinks common to all project types)	Area or Project-Specific Guidance (Enter links to area or project-specific guidance)	Area or Project-Specific Data (Enter links to area or project-specific data)	Evidenced Impact (Summarise potential project impacts informed by the resources and data)
People experiencing (and/or at risk of) high deprivation	*Closing the Divide. How to really level* *Health Equity in England* *Fairer Scotland Duty*	*Indicies of Deprivation* *Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020*	*Transport poverty research*	Guidance: •Department for Transport, Travel by car access, household income, household type, NS-SEC and mobility status NTS0702, 2018	(1) Sutton includes neighbourhoods in the country's 10% least deprived category, and Earith has neighbourhoods in the 20% least deprived category. (2) In England 25.8% of people did not own a car. This rate is at 9 % in Sutton and 5.8 % in Earith. (3) 40% of people from the lowest income have no access to a car (1) Indices of Depravation 2019 (2) Census 2011 (3) Government Foresight Report	**Possible Positive Impact:** People in Sutton and Earith experiencing higher deprivation are less likely to own a car, and therefore are more reliant on walking, cycling and public transport for their local journeys. Improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure will make these journeys safer. If the cycling infrastructure and safety of cycling improves more people may consider owning and using a bike for journeys they currently do via bus, taxi, and private car. This could be less expensive, give more independence and health benefits. This could lead to reduced traffic congestion and potentially lower environmental impact. **Possible Negative Impact:** People with reduced incomes may not have access to a bike, and therefore may not be able to utilise the cycling elements of the proposed routes. Deprived residents of rural areas reliant on a car may also encounter longer journeys which are more expensive.
Disability	*A Guide to Inclusive Cycling* *Pave the Way* *BS 8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Buildings - code of practice*	*Advice for local authorities considering hosting e-scooter trials* - -	*We must take practical steps to support people with mental health conditions to travel* *Disability History Month events* *Disabled Citizens Enquiry (yet to be published)*	Guidance: •Transport for All: Pave the Way •Wheels for Wellbeing: A Guide to Inclusive Cycling •Assessing the needs and experiences of disabled cyclists 2018' •Living Streets: Safer Crossings •Buildings Code of Practice BS 8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment •Sustrans: We must take practical steps to support people with mental health conditions	(1) Day-to-day activities are limited for approx 5.7% and 5.1% of people in Sutton and Earith respectively, which is less than the national average of 8.3%. The percentage of people with day-to-day activities limited a lot is slightly higher in Sutton (5.7%) compared to Earith (5.1%) and less than England average (3.6%) for the age range of 16 to 64. In both Earith and England as a whole, a slightly higher percentage of people (50.9% and 47.2%, respectively) have very good health compared to Sutton (46.9%). The percentage of households with one person having a long-term health problem or disability is similar in Sutton (21.6%) and Earith (22.5%) compared to England (25.7%). (2) Disabled people are 5 times more likely to be injured as a pedestrian than non-disabled people. (3) Sutton lies in the 30% least deprived neighbourhoods and the number in Earith is 40% in terms of health and disability (1) Census 2011 (2) Road Safety GB (3) Indices of Deprivation 2019	**Possible Positive Impact:** Accessible routes can result in easier local journeys and recreational opportunities for disabled people. This can lead to more independence including improved mental and physical health. Improvements to the routes which benefit everyone can further support disabled people. For example, resurfacing and widening the riverbank path, public rights of way along the River Delph. The new crossing bridge along A1123 in option D and option E, and improved path width with suitable surfacing can aid people using walking aids and mobility scooters. Potential for reduced noise pollution resulting from being away from traffic if avoiding the B1381 can benefit people with cognitive disabilities. This can aid disabled people to independently access local amenities as it becomes a safer route to use. The safer crossing provisions proposed benefits people with reduced mobility as they take longer to cross. Assessing the needs and experiences of disabled cyclists 2018', found that 75% of disabled people find cycling easier than walking. But inaccessible infrastructure prevents disabled people cycling. Better conditions can empower disabled people to cycle, especially those with balance issues and adapted bikes. **Possible Negative Impact:** If introduced infrastructure isn't carefully designed, it could result in reduced space and potential barriers for adapted bikes and mobility aids. Accessible access onto the greenway sections could cause nuisance access concerns for local people. Level changes will need careful consideration, to reduce any accessibility impacts. This includes the designing of ramps for bridge along the A1132. Some of the proposed on road routes may include grade segregation. The grade segregation options could be a barrier if they don't include accessible design elements such as dropped kerbs. Vulnerable users could be uncomfortable and intimidated by the shared use sections of the routes, especially if cycling volumes increase. The scheme's development may include traffic calming measures and changes to the carriageway width, along with an extension of the 20 mph limit in Sutton and introducing a 20 mph limit in Earith. The implementation of these solutions would see an increase in journey time by private car. The implication of this is more expensive and less direct trips for doctors, careers and others supporting people with protected characteristics, as well as those unsafe walking or wheeling. Sections of the route will be shared with motor vehicles including farm machinery for example the Meadlands Main Drove (option A), and this could be intimidating for older and younger people. The design of these sections should consider the viability of segregating motor vehicles from pedestrians and cyclists. The road width along the B1381 could still be an intimidating environment (Alternative routes away from the B1381 have been considered). Some of the route options aren't a direct route from Sutton to Earith so the time reaching either destination would be longer and may be an issue for vulnerable users.
	Cycling & Mobility: We have failed to engage in the conversation about racism *How racism impacts air quality and endangers life*	*Race Equality Think Tank* *Pedestrian casualities higher among BAME people*	*New report shows large unmet demand for cycling from ethnic minority and disadvantaged groups* -		(1) In terms of the white ethnic group, Sutton and Earith has a higher percentage of residents (97.6% and 98% respectively) than the England average (85.4%) The percentage of Indian residents in Sutton and Earith (both values are 0.1%) is significantly lower than the whole of England (2.6%). The percentage of Caribbean residents in both Sutton and Earith is similar (0.2% and 0.1%) which is lower than the whole of England (1.8%).	

Race	*Barriers of physical activity among Black and Minority Ethnic Groups in the UK*	-	-	Guidance: Sustrans: Unmet Demond for cycling from Ethnic Minority and Disadvantaged Groups	The percentage of Afrian residents in Sutton and Earith is also the same (0.1%) which is lower than the whole of England (1.1%) Overall, Sutton and Earith has a higher representation of White residents and a lower representation of Indian, African, and Caribbean residents than the whole of England. Sutton has a slightly lower representation of White residents compared to Earith and a higher representation of Bangladeshi, Caribbean residents and Mixed/multiple ethnic groups compared to Earith. (2) There is evidence that black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) are more likely to express concerns over safety and security (particularly after dark) than white groups. (1) Census 2011 (2) TFL, Understanding the Travel needs of London's diverse communities	**Possible Positive Impact:** An accessible and comfortable cycling environment should make cycling a more appealing mode of travel for ethnically diverse people. Ethnically diverse people are underrepresented in cycling for transport and exercise. **Possible Negative Impact:** There is evidence that black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) are more likely to express concerns over safety and security (particularly after dark) than white groups. These safety concerns will apply to the route options that have greenway sections with limited surveillance. As a result, these groups may choose to travel by private car and taxi due to safety concerns.
Sex	*Inclusive cycling in cities and towns.*	-	*Are we nearly there yet. Exploring gender and active travel*	Guidance: •Plan International UK: For Children & Equality for Girls •Sustrans Walking & Cycling Index	(1) Personal safety after dark is a concern for women (more so than for men) but during the day, these concerns are in line with those of men (2) Low level of crime deprivation (20% for Sutton & 10% for Earith) in these areas is an indication of a more safe neighbourhood for everyone. (1) TFL, Understanding the Travel needs of London's diverse communities (2) Indices of deprivation 2019	**Possible Positive Impact:** Segregation from motorised vehicles and an accessible improved walking and cycling environment could particularly benefit women, who are more likely to be walking with young children and prams. Women are less represented than men in cycling and this is partly because women are impacted by a more risk adverse attitude to mixing with traffic. Improved cycling infrastructure and motor vehicle free route sections could encourage more women to cycle. **Possible Negative Impact:** Women are more likely to be worried about personal safety and experience anti-social behaviour whilst travelling. A recent survey by Plan International UK found 66% of girls aged 14-21 in the UK have experienced unwanted sexual attention whilst in a public place. Sections of the proposed routes have limited surveillance and this could contribute to safety concerns. Sections of the routes will be shared with motor vehicles including farm machinery and could be intimidating for vulnerable users.
	Travelling in a Woman's Shoes	*Women's role in 'unpaid work'*	*Walking and Cycling through Menopause*			
	Safety in Public Spaces. Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People	*Sexual harassment in UK public spaces*	-			
Age	*"Age Friendly Places Making our*	*Loneliness in Later Life research by Age UK*	*Designing for Children & Young People*	Guidance: •World Health Organisation: Global Age-Friendly Cities •Age UK: Age-Friendly Places •National Library of Medicine: Ambient Air Pollution, Noise, & Late-Life Cognitive Decline & Dementia Risk •Sustrans: Enabling Independent Travel for Young People •Asthma+Lung UK: Why you should #DropOffSwitchOff at the school gates	(1) The age distribution of residents in Sutton, Earith, and England are similar. However, Earith has a lower percentage of adults age 20 to 29 whilst Sutton and England percentages remain similar. Sutton stands out with a higher (22.1%) proportion of residents aged 30 to 44 compared to the national average (20.6%) in England, while Earith lags behind at 18.8%. Younger demographics up till 44 Years of age are slightly higher in Sutton than in Earith. Earith has a slightly higher percentage of residents aged 65 and over (16.5%) compared to Sutton (15.1%). The age distribution is an important demographic factor that can be used to analyse the needs and demands of the population in different locations. The age demographic for Sutton and Earith is akin to England averages. (2) In the UK the most common cause of non-natural death for 5–14-year-olds is being hit by a vehicle. On minor roads serious injury is twice as likely, and three times more likely to kill a child cyclist. (3) In terms of income deprivation for older people, a small proportion of Sutton, concentrated in the south, lies in the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods with other parts lying within the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Earith lies amongst the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods with other parts (south of Great Ouse) lying within the 50% most deprived margin in the country. (1) Census 2011 (2) Sustainable Development Commission: Fairness in a Car-dependant Society & ICE Virtual Library (3) Indices of Deprivation 2019	**Possible Positive Impact:** <u>Children & Young People:</u> An increase in activity, including walking and cycling benefits children in reducing childhood obesity. Reduced danger from motorised vehicles should support independent active travel for young people. Due to their hight and developing lungs air pollution from vehicles has a significant impact on young people. Research has found that exposure to air pollution in early life can lead to later life health problems and a reduced quality of life. Sections of this route are off-road greenways, and other sections when on-road have low traffic volumes, reducing exposure to air pollution. The proposed routes have the potential to encourage both local residents and tourists to engage in cycling activities towards Holme Fen Fishery within Sutton and Earith. These route options prioritise safety considerations, particularly during flood activities. The proposed route will encrouage greater active travel amongst workers in the Earith Business park as Option B establishes a new link to it from Sutton to Earith. <u>Older People:</u> Older people are more likely to have dementia which can be made worse by vehicle noise pollution. Reducing traffic volumes, speeds and associated road danger proposed by this feasibility study will also benefit older people with disabling conditions including mobility issues and sensory impairments. Older people become less active which can impact there physical and mental health. Social isolation is a growing problem faced by older people. The greenway sections have the potential to encourage older people to travel actively and result in more regular social interactions. <u>Older & Younger People:</u> Accessible routes can improve conditions for walking and cycling, especially for those that need to use an adapted bike. **Possible Negative Impact:** If introduced infrastructure isn't carefully designed, it could result in reduced space and potential barriers for pushchairs, mobility aids and larger adapted bikes including family cargo bikes. Accessible access onto the greenway routes for everyone including adapted bikes, pushchairs, and people with mobility issues, could cause nuisance access concerns for local people. Level changes will need careful consideration, to reduce any accessibility impacts. Vulnerable users may feel uneasy and intimidated by shared-use sections, especially if there is a notable rise in cycling traffic. Sections of the route will be shared with motor vehicles including farm machinery and lorries and this could be intimidating for older and younger people. The design of these sections should consider the viability of segregating motor vehicles from pedestrians and cyclists. Older and younger people reliant on a private car or taxi for transport may face less convenient and more expensive journeys
	The future of transport in an Ageing Society	*The Role of Transport in Supporting a Healthy Future for Young People*	*Ageing better through active travel*			
	Thinking Cities: LGBTQ+ Urbanism: Reclaiming Space	*Stonewall data on LGBTQIA+ hate crime across the UK*	-		(1) Only 51% of people who identified their gender 'in another way' feel	**Possible Positive Impact:** Arup's 'Queering Public Space' report has identity principles to design public spaces, so they are more comfortable and inclusive for the LGBTQ+ community. There is scope to implement the findings of this report when designing this route and its adjoining spaces including the villages it passes through.
	Queering Public Spaces	-	-			

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	*Engaging transgender people*	-	-	Guidance: •Arup's 'Queering Public Space' •Sustrans: Communities Carving out a Space in Cycling that is Radical, Inclusive and Fun	welcome and comfortable walking or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood, compared to 65% of women and 67% of men. (2) Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows more than one in four trans people (28%) experienced crime in the year ending March 2020, compared with (14%) of people whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were registered at birth. (1) Sustrans Walking and Cycling Index (2) Office for National Statistics	The positive impact of implementing the findings of Arup's report will also result in inclusive places that benefit other protected characteristics. **Possible Negative Impact:** Sustrans Walking and Cycling Index learned that only 51% of people who identified their gender 'in another way' feel welcome and comfortable walking or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood, compared to 65% of women and 67% of men. The sections of the routes have limited surveillance and this could contribute to safety concerns. Transgender people are more likely to be the victim of crime (28%), compared with people who identity as the same sex they were registered with at birth (14%). People who identify as LGBTQ+ may choose to travel by private car and taxi due to safety concerns. These journeys may become less convenient due to the proposed speed and volume reduction interventions.
Pregnancy and maternity	*Bumps and bicycles: Women's experience of cycle-commuting during pregnancy* *Cycling Cities for Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers* -	*Behavioural analysis of postnatal physical activity in the UK* - -	*Tips for cycling during pregnancy* - -	Guidance: •RCOG: Position Statement-Outdoor air pollution and pregnancy in the UK •Sustrans: Tips for Cycling During Pregnancy •Sustrans: Bumps and Bicycles-Women's Experience of Cycle-Commuting During Pregnancy	(1) At least one in three babies are growing up in areas of the UK with unsafe levels of particulate matter, the most dangerous pollutant for our health. (2) The NHS says that keeping active can make you less likely to experience problems later in your pregnancy and when you're in labour. (1) UNICEF, A breath of toxic air: UK children in danger (2018) (2) NHS Exercise in Pregnancy	**Possible Positive Impact:** Less stressful route sections due to being traffic free and linked with the natural environment can help support a healthy pregnancy. Pregnant people and unborn children can be adversely affected by air pollution. Parents and carers with prams and young children will benefit from an accessible walking and cycling environment. Parents and carers using cycles and cargo bikes for family journeys will benefit from an accessible route. A safer walking and cycling environment could encourage more families to walk and cycle for local journeys. **Possible Negative Impact:** If introduced infrastructure isn't carefully designed, it could result in reduced space and potential barriers for pushchairs and larger bikes including family cargo bikes. Accessible and inclusive access onto the greenway sections for everyone including adapted bikes, pushchairs, and people with mobility issues, could cause nuisance access concerns for local people. Level changes will need careful consideration, to reduce any accessibility impacts. The route proposals also include grade segregation, and if widths and gradients aren't designed to Equality Act guidance they will be a barrier. Vulnerable users could be uncomfortable and intimidated by the shared use sections, especially if cycling volumes increase. Sections of the route will be shared with motor vehicles including farm machinery and this could be intimidating for pregnant women. The design of these sections should consider the viability of segregating motor vehicles from pedestrians and cyclists.
Religion or belief	*Inspiring and enabling Muslim women to cycle*				(1) Christianity is the most widely practised religion areas, with England having 59.4%, Sutton having 61.4%, and Earith having a slightly higher percentage of 62.5% of its population following Christianity. Other types of religion such as Muslim is significantly lower in Sutton and Earith when compared to England averages. The percentage of people who do not follow any religion in bothe Sutton and Earith are slighlty higher than the England averages. (28.8%, 29% and 24.7% respectively) (1) Census 2011	No specific impacts have been identified at this stage of the project.
Other marginalised groups	*Car parking for care experienced people* *Cycling for homeless people case study*	-	*Sustrans in Rural Scotland - Overview*	DFT are currently developing the Future of Transport: rural strategy, when released this strategy could help shape the future development of this project.	(1) Overall, 89 of the 141 cyclists killed in 2020 died on rural roads (63%). This compares to 60% in 2019, and 54% on average between 2015 and 2019. (1) Road Safety GB	The projects development will need to consider the active travel infrastructure requirements of the rural and migrant workers.
Marriage and civil partnership	There is little evidence about marital/civil partnership status or relationship status and associations with wider active travel patterns.					
Cross-cutting inclusivity resources			*Walking for Everyone* *Cycling for Everyone* *Walking and Cycling*			

Responsive Solutions

After examining the resources and data, and if possible speaking to those with lived experience, you will be in a good position to develop responsive solutions. While the impact on all characteristics should be considered, it is also sometimes appropriate to primarily focus the project response on particular characteristics only. Consider how solutions may apply to different characteristics simultaneously, or particularly support those with multiple characteristics.

Negative Impact	**Cost of Cycling and Ability:** Although purchasing and maintaining a bike is less expensive than a motor vehicle, and can be cheaper than public transport, people with less income may struggle to own and maintain a bike. Residents with protected characteristics and migrant workers living near the route may experience a lack of cycling confidence and ability. The routes proposals include sections where cyclists will mix with vehicles including farm machinery, this could increase levels of anxiety preventing some vulnerable people using it. These impacts will restrict people with impacted characteristics use of the routes cycling infrastructure and the benefits of cycling.
Characteristics Disproportionately Impacted:	Age (Young/Old), Disabled, Social Economic Status, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race and Ethnicity

Actions to be Explored	Expected Outcome
Develop a programme to help low income residents with the affordability of purchasing, maintaining, and storing cycles.	Increased numbers of low income residents enjoying the benefits of cycling and utilising the routes Infrastructure.
Develop and promote programmes which help disabled residents to purchase, maintain and store adapted or electric bikes.	Increased numbers of disabled residents enjoying the benefits of cycling and utilising the routes Infrastructure.
Develop and promote programmes which provide a safe and comfortable environment for residents with protected characteristics to learn cycling skills and raise awareness of the route.	Increased numbers of residents with protected characteristics enjoying the benefits of cycling and utilising the routes Infrastructure.

Negative Impact	**Safety and Barriers to Using Walking and Cycling infrastructure:** Several protected characteristics flagged that walking and cycling accessibility and personal safety concerns are a potential barrier to using infrastructure, resulting in: - Being disadvantaged if they still prefer to make these journeys by motor vehicles due to safety concerns when the route is implemented - Using walking and cycling infrastructure they feel uncomfortable and unsafe using Poorly designed layout and function of walking and cycling infrastructure can be a disproportionate barrier for several protected characteristics.
Characteristics Disproportionately Impacted:	Age (Young/Old), Disabled, Race and Ethnicity, Pregnancy and Maternity, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment

Actions to be Explored	Expected Outcome

Where the route will be shared with motor vehicles including farm machinery, this could be intimidating for people with protected characteristics. The design of these sections should consider the viability of segregating motor vehicles from pedestrians and cyclists, and where possible consider routes through adjoining fields. If these options aren't viable, traffic speed and volume will need to be managed with 20mph speed limits, and changes to the carriageway (for example priority working, build-outs, psychological traffic calming).	The LTN 1/20 guidance which incorporates Equality Act requirements will need to be applied to the proposed grade segregation, and the bridge enhancement along the Causeway, making them inclusive points along the route.
Ensure walking and cycling infrastructure incorporates required elements for safety including maximising informal surveillance, appropriate lighting, and inclusive wayfinding signage. Signage should also include warnings of unavoidable restrictions which affect people with protected characteristics. Including sections of the route which have steep gradients. Also details of local amenities should be included on wayfinding signage.	Residents with protected characteristics which highlighted personal safety concerns, being comfortable to walk and cycle. A reduction in taxi and private car journeys which are a result of safety concerns.
Inclusive engagement with residents and migrant workers to explore existing barriers, safety concerns and to shape design proposals.	An improved route with more people able to access local destinations by walking and cycling.
In response to monitoring and engagement ensure that the walking and cycling infrastructure has capacity for any active travel volume spikes (For example Earith Primary School), and manages cycling speeds and plans for future demand.	A walking and cycling infrastructure which has capacity for spikes in active travel volumes and manages cycle speeds. This will help maintain a public realm environment which is safe and inclusive, in alignemnt with LTN 1/20. This includes minimising the amount of shared use paths.

Negative Impact	**Public Spaces Not Designed for Everyone:** The development of the route will link Sutton with Earith and provide access to the natural environment. However, if the resulting route and adjoining environment isn't improved following inclusive design principles, people with protected characteristics are less likely to use it. The negative impacts of this could include: •Social isolation •Less likely to use walking and cycling infrastructure •Feeling uncomfortable and unsafe in public spaces •Less likely to benefit from the mental and physical health benefits of green spaces and active travel
Characteristics Disproportionately Impacted:	Gender, Health and Disability, Age, Pregnancy and Maternity, People experiencing high deprivation

Actions to be Explored	**Expected Outcome**
Ensure that the route, its adjoining spaces, and access points are designed inclusively following best practice guidance. Examples of guidance to incorporate: - Arup: Queering Public Space - World Health Organisation: Global Age-Friendly Cities - Age UK: Age-Friendly Places - Transport for All: Pave the Way - The Equality Act 2010 - LTN 1/20 - Buildings Code of Practice BS 8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment - Sustrans: We must take practical steps to support people with mental health conditions - Healthy Street Assessments	A safe and inclusive environment, that is welcoming for all people, so they can benefit from and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor spaces and active travel.
Inclusive engagement with local people to explore existing barriers, safety concerns and to shape design proposals.	

Further Actions:	
If the negative effects cannot be changed by the removal of barriers and changes to the project, list the reasons why	The project is currently at a feasibility stage, and the mitigation described will help address the negative impacts on protected characteristics. The mitigation and impacts have been identified from researching other schemes and related best practice guidance.
If impact is unclear what action is required?	This EqIA will need to be revisited as the project develops, as new impacts may emerge, and the projects inclusivity will need to respond to future engagement and monitoring results.

Monitoring, Updates & Sign Off

In this section summarise how you will monitor project impacts, including the performance of responsive solutions, and provide details of any changes and additions to your projects inclusivity.

Project Sponsors: Review and sign off this EqIA including changes which impact protected characteristics.

Monitoring	
Summarise how you will monitor the inclusive impact of the project	A monitoring plan for the project will need to be developed and implemented in response to the following requirements: - To establish that the projects development is inclusive. This will need to include monitoring of attendance and how design decisions are responding to feedback. If data reveals that activities and design development is not being shaped by a specific protected characteristic, the engagement approach will need to be changed. - Baseline monitoring to understand current journeys which can be used to guide design development and understand the impacts of any trials. - Perception surveys to understand existing concerns and aspirations. Also used to gain feedback on design proposals and behaviour change activities. - Monitoring at all stages of the collaborative design process including the projects legacy and long term impacts on everyone including those with protected characteristics.
If impact is unclear what action is required?	This EqIA will need to be revisited as the project develops, as new impacts may emerge, and the projects inclusivity will need to respond to future engagement and monitoring results.

Provide details of any changes and additions to your projects inclusivity	**Date of update:**

EqIA Outcome: Project Sponsor Decision	
No major change ☐	*If this is selected, you are confirming that the EQIA demonstrates the proposal is robust and there is no possible adverse impact on this characteristic. You must demonstrate in the justification that all opportunities to promote equality have already been taken.*
Continue the project ☐	*If this is selected, you are confirming that the EqIA identifies possible adverse protected characteristic impact or missed opportunities, but the scheme can be justified. If this is selected, you must set out the justifications for continuing with the scheme in terms of proportionality and relevance.*
Adjust the Project ☐	*If this is selected, you are confirming that the EqIA identifies possible adverse protected characteristic impact or missed opportunities which suggest the scheme needs to be adjusted. If this is selected, you must set out the reasons why an adjusted scheme is required. For example, to remove unjustifiable barriers or address opportunities that cannot be missed on the balance of proportionality and relevance.*
Stop the Project ☐	*The scheme shows actual or possible unlawful protected characteristic discrimination. It must be halted or significantly changed. If this is selected, you must set out the reasons for halting the scheme or significantly changing it to avoid unlawful discrimination.*
Project Sponsor Justification/Comments (Including Updates)	

Learning and Reflection

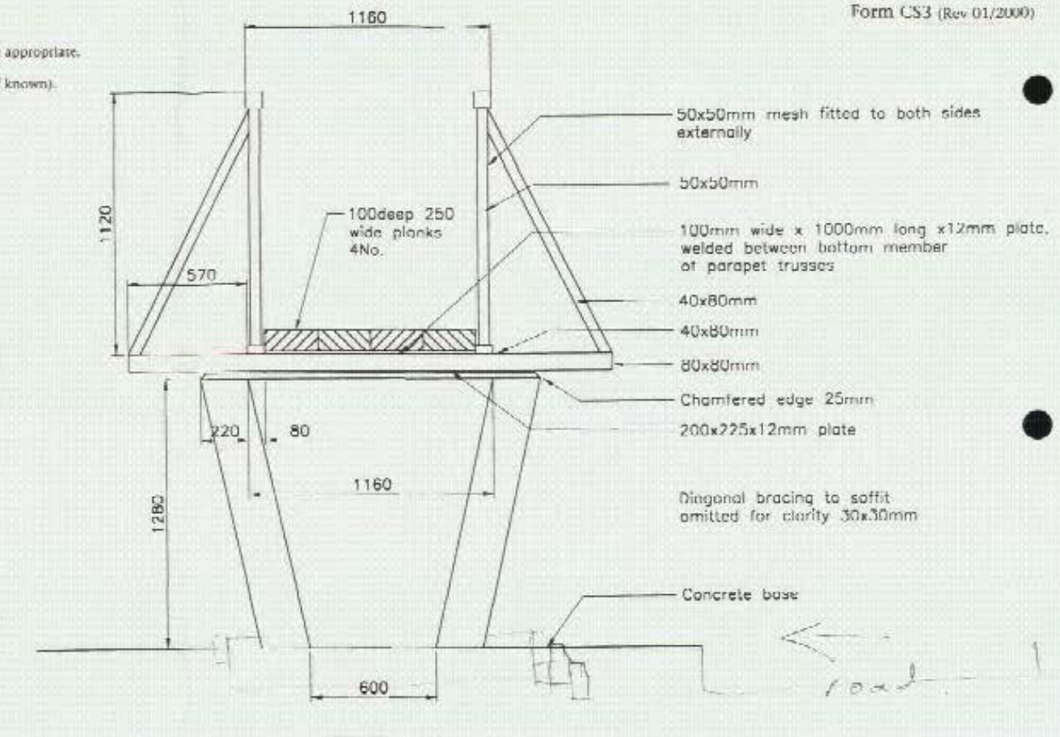
This tab documents the lessons learned from this project and reflections more widely. For example, did the project fill gaps in knowledge through its community engagement that were not available from existing resources and data? Were there any unforeseen negative impacts? How could collective knowledge be improved by further research? How have groups with multiple chracteristics been considered?

Characteristic or Protected Characteristic	Learning (Summarise the lessons learned from this project)	Reflection (Summarise any areas that require further research not specific to this project)
People experiencing (and/or at risk of) high deprivation		
Disability		
Race		
Sex		
Age		
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Religion or belief		
Other marginalised groups		
Marriage and civil partnership	There is little evidence about marital/civil partnership status or relationship status and associations with wider active travel patterns.	

Appendix B. Sutton Gault Cambridgeshire County Council ref 427797 , drawings and notes from County Council. (3 pages).

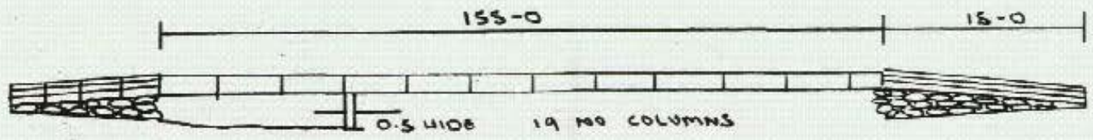
Components, Dimensional Elevation, and Cross Section Of Structure
Indicate all materials of construction, e.g. steel, wrought iron, cast iron, concrete, brick, stone, etc.
Indicate roadway, pavement, and verge widths of the reference road and also of the crossing road where appropriate.
Indicate span lengths (stating skew or square), headroom, and parapet type.
Indicate type and position of bearings and joints. Indicate all service ducts/apparatus (and ownership if known).

Form CS3 (Rev 01/2000)



SECTION

Scale 1:20



Form CS3 (Rev 01/2000)

NAME OF BRIDGE SUTTON GAULT FOOTBRIDGE BRIDGE No. 427 797 NATIONAL GRID REF TL 427 797

LOCATION OF BRIDGE SUTTON GAULT PARISH SUTTON

Road Name THE CAUSEWAY

BRIDGE OWNER CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE PRODUCED OCTOBER 2001
DATE UPDATED

Road Classification No.

~~*Region Railway~~
~~Canal~~
~~River~~
~~Road~~

FOOTPATH ~~Road~~ *over FLOOD PLAIN ~~under~~

Date of Construction

Is Bridge scheduled as an Ancient Monument? Y / N

Name of Navigation and/or Drainage Authority

Design Office

Railway Bridge No. N/A

Names of statutory undertakers having services on bridge

Is River Tidal navigable [ ] (tick box)

*Delete as necessary

Min Headroom Clearance N.BOUND/W.BOUND N/A; S.BOUND/E.BOUND N/A

Design Loading

Special loading/restriction

Other loadings, i.e. Assessment

Construction Details

Deck Materials (e.g. Insitu PSC) FABRICATED STEEL & TIMBER

Type of Construction (e.g. Solid Slab) STEEL TRUSS

Form of Deck (e.g. Propped Cantilever) SIMPLY SUPPORTED

End Supports (e.g. Skeleton Abutment) MASS ABUTMENTS

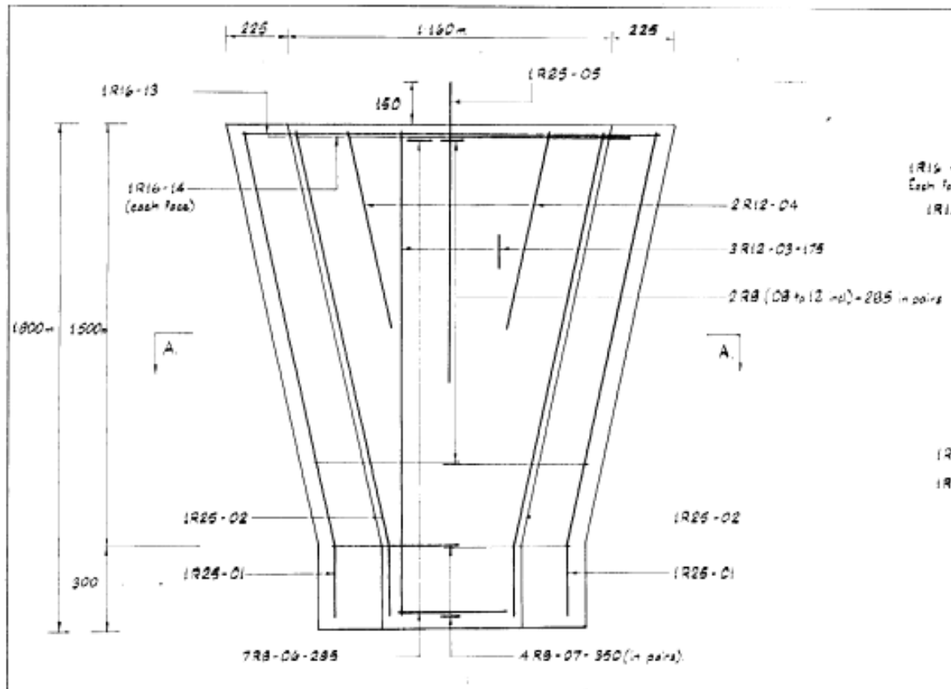
Intermediate Supports (e.g. Slab Wall) VEE COLUMNS CONCRETE

Nature of Foundations (e.g. Caissons)

	Manufacturer	Type
Joints		
Bearings	N/A	STEEL PLATE
Parapets		STEEL TRUSS MEMBERS
Waterproofing	N/A	N/A
Prestressing System	N/A	N/A
Paint System: Parapet		
Internal		
External		

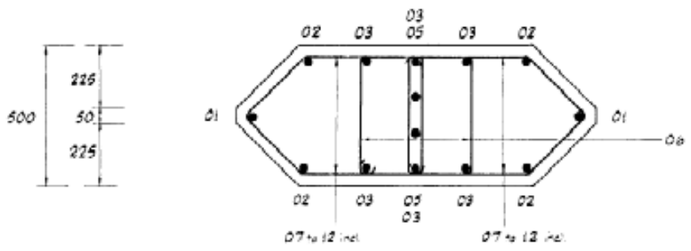
Site Plan 1:2500 (Indicate Angle of Skew and a North point)

Colour Photograph(s) of Structure Elevation



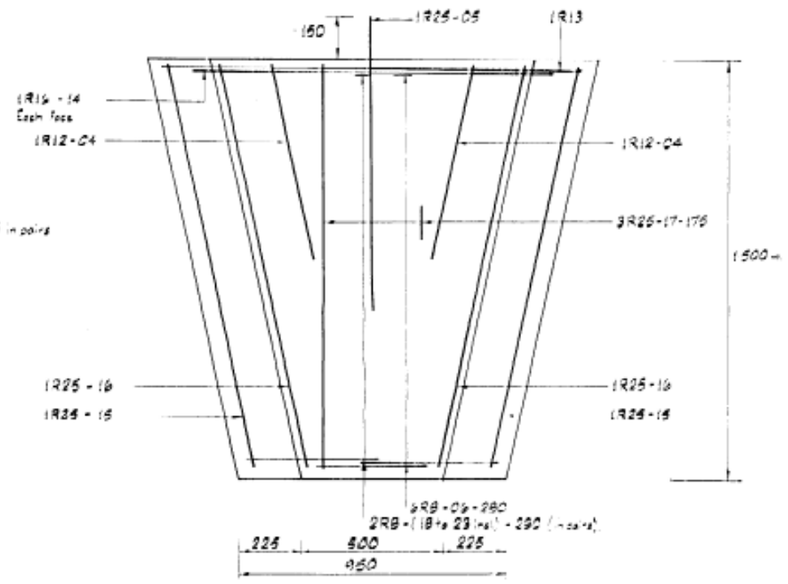
COLUMN A

SCALE : 1/10



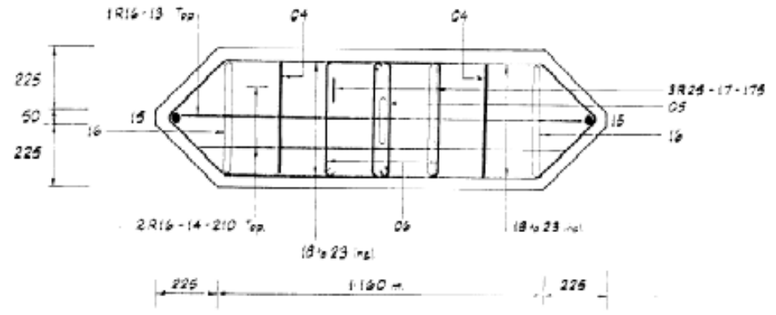
SECTION A - A

SCALE : 1/10



COLUMN B

SCALE : 1/10



PLAN ON TOP OF COLUMN B

SCALE : 1/10

(Top reinf. in column A similar)

NOTES.

1. Concrete finishes to formed & unformed surfaces to be class F2. Surface of bottom 0.5 m of column to be roughened by mechanical means.
2. Cover to be a minimum of 40 mm.
3. Top edges of column to be chamfered 25 mm x 25 mm.
4. Concrete to columns to be class 30/20 manufactured with sulphate resisting Portland cement.
   Minimum cement content 360 kg/m³
   Maximum freshwater/cement ratio 0.50 by weight.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SUTTON GAULT FOOTBRIDGE
PIER COLUMNS

SCALE : AS SHOWN | DATE : JAN' 1993

CORRESPONDENCE FILE No. S 149

SURVEYED BY: | DRAWN BY : C.B. | DESIGNED BY : R.T. | CHECKED BY:

BRIAN OLDRIDGE
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION
CAMBRIDGE.

DRAWING No. J546/10