

# Executive Summary

This is the final Feasibility Study Report for Landscape East, one of four successful entries to a competition run by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) to produce an iconic symbol for the East of England.

The focus of Landscape East is the Bridge of Reeds, a dramatic sculpture inspired by the wind blown reeds and flights of birds of the East of England landscape. Located on the A14 pan-European highway, the bridge will be linked by the Wicken Drove, a new network of cycle and footpaths to the wonderful landscapes of the region. The project may also include a sustainable visitor centre.

The client team for the project is the Greater Cambridge Partnership, the National Trust, and Marshall of Cambridge.

The main topics investigated as part of the feasibility study are as follows:

- The focus of Landscape East is the 'Bridge of Reeds', a dramatic new landmark for the East of England inspired by the locally distinctive motif of wind-bent reeds and flocks of birds. The preferred option for the location for the bridge is over the A14, on the line of a disused railway, north of Fen Ditton, to the east of Cambridge.
- The route of the 'Wicken Drove' cycle and footpath has been mapped out in consultation with Sustrans and Cambridgeshire County Council. This will connect the Bridge of Reeds to Wicken Fen via Anglesey Abbey, making use of the existing network of Public Rights of Way, and linking to the Wicken Ring cycle routes. Some additional land acquisition will be necessary to connect the Bridge to these routes, and the landowners have been approached. The initial route connects Cambridge, via the Bridge of Reeds, into the existing public rights of way to the north of the A14, leading onto Horningsea Road.
- Several locations for the possible future 'Gate' Visitor Centre, have been identified. The preferred location is in the vicinity of the existing High Ditch Road railway bridge. The building will incorporate the latest sustainability principles, in keeping with the aims of the project team and of EEDA.
- The timetable for the project aims to start construction of the bridge in 2008, after an initial fund-raising and design stage. It is proposed to carry out the project in three separately viable and distinct phases, as follows:
  - Phase I - The Bridge of Reeds, with the initial section of the Wicken Drove connecting the bridge to existing rights of way. This phase may also include enhancement of the existing visitor building within the Park and Ride facility on Newmarket Road.



- Phase II - Remaining length of the Wicken Drove, linking the existing rights of way across the fens from the Bridge up to Wicken Fen. Depending on the funds available, this phase could be completed over several years.
- Phase III - The Gate Visitor Centre. The visitor centre could be sited in the vicinity of the railway bridge on the cycle route to the south of the A14. The centre will be built with sustainable principles in mind.
- Support for the project has been received from the Highways Agency and the County and District Councils, and several other letters of support from key stakeholders have been received.
- The Bridge of Reeds, Wicken Drove and the Gate Visitor Centre all require the acquisition of land, and initial approaches have been made to the landowners. Our property advisors have ascertained that a considerable proportion of the required land is readily available for purchase for the project. The land at the location of the proposed bridge and the connections to the existing rights of way is owned by Quy Estates, with whom negotiations are proceeding. A meeting has been held with a Trustee of the Estate and further negotiations will be instrumental in securing the release of the land. A range of options will be put forward to encourage land release but compulsory purchase may have to be considered in some cases.
- A marketing communications strategy has been prepared for the initial stage of the project, which aims to create public awareness and to achieve support. This includes press releases, the distribution of an explanatory leaflet, and a press visit to the project area on conclusion of the feasibility study.
- The preliminary cost estimate indicates a cost for Phase I of approximately £7 million at today's prices.
- A strategy to take this project forward to construction is proposed. Fund raising is key, and for continuity of momentum it is important that the project team is retained. A charitable limited company will be formed as the project delivery organisation to raise funds, promote the project and manage the construction work. EEDA's support for this is paramount.

