

Cambridge Sports Lakes Comments – Landscaping

Further to my site walk with Michael Garraway on 19 January I am supportive of the project, but there are a few issues which the drawings do not address...

General Landscape

- Landscape appears very uniform –there is room for far more variation.
- While recognising that this is primarily designed as a sports area, many visitors will not be participants/spectators, and so the larger areas of open space not allocated for sport (up to 3Ha each) need a planned purpose and character rather than just being buffers between events areas.
- Car parking – May be better to have fewer but slightly larger and better-controlled car parks as areas between will come under pressure, particularly while vegetation is establishing. Also, all will be visible while until the tree cover is established.
- Some of the proposed slopes are steep particularly between the railway and the storage lake. Forestry commission do not advise establishment on slopes of more than 1 in 4 so terracing may be needed in some areas (not just for viewing)
- Landform should be given careful thought as much will appear bald for some years. Thought should also be given to what kind of planting will exist while the proposed coniferous planting is establishing. – conifers will not be offering any wind diffusion for the first 20 years or so. This is a two or three stage landscape.
- There should be some mention of an Art strategy – perhaps Art as landform?
- Good existing features eg hedgerows adjacent to Car Dyke must be retained – on a site of this scale there will be enough flexibility to achieve this.

Storage Lake – Reservoirs Act

- The proposed water level of the storage lake will be approximately 1.0m above the existing ground level and about 2.5m (according to flood storage calculations?) above the water level of the competition lake.
- This may bring it under the reservoirs act and so possibly restrict the landscape treatments to the bunds – ie no trees or planting.
- After speaking to Environment Agency engineers last week it seems that the decision on this will be down to the ‘Panel engineer’ who has not yet been appointed. Michael Garraway is confident that a full landscape will be achievable, as has been the case at other sites, but the scheme would obviously look much different if the engineers decide otherwise.

Storage Lake – Biodiversity, Recreation and Angling

- Presently the lake is shown as a simple form with a proposed depth of 4m, with areas allocated for angling and as a ‘quiet zone’.

- Even at a sketch stage the lake should offer far more than this – the biodiversity drawing states that there will be a variety of aquatic habitats, so the scheme should show - in principal – how this will be achieved eg - lake form which will separate high and low use areas, create a range of aquatic and marginal habitats, varied water depths, opportunities for a variety of recreation etc. Apart from anything else the land and lake form must be sufficiently interesting to hold the scheme together until the planting establishes itself. Scalloping the bank as suggested will not be enough.
- I understand that storage lake has no set volume or surface area other than to be large enough to top up the competition lake as required. If this is the case then I would also suggest that the surface area be reduced slightly – Say from 12Ha to 10Ha. And this gained land given over to low key recreation/habitat creation. This will give an opportunity to create places which are 'off-route' – not the case with most spaces on the site.
- Who are the target users for the lake? Will it be private clubs/syndicates (Carp/trout fishing etc who may pay a lot for exclusive use) or general public access, with children encouraged to the water etc. A lake designed for one will look very different to the other.

Off-Site Landscaping

- I would welcome the provision of off site planting and management to integrate the scheme into the landscape. This will be particularly important if there are problems with the 'reservoir' bunds. Perhaps this could also include additional/extended treatments to the new perimeter drains