



# Great Fen Action Plan 2011 – 2016

## Taking forward the vision of the Great Fen Masterplan

This document shows what will be happening in the **Great Fen** over the period 2011-2016.

The Great Fen *Masterplan* sets out the vision of the **Great Fen**. This is:-

*“A restored Fenland landscape providing a rich variety of habitats for people and wildlife, now and in the future”*

The Vision has **four Aims**. These may take 50 years to fulfil. **The Action Plan 2011 – 2016** shows steps along the way. These steps are expressed as actions to fulfil the four Aims.

We do not have the resources to do everything at once therefore actions have to be put in order of importance. Some actions are legal requirements (Statutory obligations). Some actions are desirable, things we would like to do within the long term vision when resources or opportunities allow, but may not have a date set against them. Other actions (such as fundraising) will continue all the time.

The Great Fen is happening as the result of people and organizations working together to solve problems and make change happen.

The Great Fen is delivered by:



Bedfordshire  
Cambridgeshire  
Northamptonshire  
Peterborough

Registered charity number: 1000412



LOTTERY FUNDED

For more information on the Great Fen see [www.greatfen.org.uk](http://www.greatfen.org.uk)

## **The Four Great Fen *Masterplan* Aims**

### **Aim One – Natural Environment and Landscape**

*To create a new, resilient, fenland landscape which delivers major wildlife benefits and achieves high standards of sustainability*

**The Great Fen will create a new landscape for wildlife and people that, once established, will endure for the long term.**

### **Aim Two – Social and Community**

*To create an accessible, inspiring and tranquil environment for recreation, education, health and well being*

**The Great Fen will be for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone who lives, works or visits within it.**

### **Aim Three – Economic/promotion**

*To contribute to the diversification and development of the local community consistent with environmental and social objectives.*

**The Great Fen will help local communities develop and prosper.**

### **Aim Four – Climate change adaptation and mitigation**

*To plan, design and manage the Great Fen to benefit climate change adaptation and mitigation.*

**The Great Fen will help wildlife and people to live within and manage a changing environment.**

**Aim One – Natural Environment and Landscape**

**The Great Fen will create a new landscape for wildlife and people that, once established, will endure for the long term.**

*To create a new, resilient, fenland landscape which delivers major wildlife benefits and achieves high standards of sustainability*

<b>Aim One</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Land Ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase land within the Great Fen as opportunities and resources allow</li> </ul>	On going
<b>Land Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek management agreements that achieve project aims with landowners/tenants within the Great Fen</li> <li>• Continue to manage The National Nature Reserves (Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen) according to their Management Plans and statutory responsibilities.</li> <li>• Write Management Plans for restored land within the Great Fen.</li> <li>• Deliver environmental benefits of land within Agri-environment schemes (for example, arable reversion and water vole habitats)</li> <li>• Record Great Fen land and property holdings on a Land Terrier.</li> </ul>	<p>On going</p> <p>2011 – 2016 and on going</p> <p>By 2013 on going</p> <p>By Dec 2012 and on going</p> <p>By end 2012</p>
<b>Land Restoration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish mosaic of new fenland landscapes including reed bed and open water, marshy fen, wet pasture, dry pasture, wood pasture, woodland pockets.</li> </ul>	On going

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake Landscape engineering works where appropriate to create new habitat areas (for example, shallow scrapes at New Decoy Farm to create open water for wading birds)</li> <li>• Create a new reed bed within the Great Fen</li> <li>• Establish 650 ha of grassland across the Holmewood Estate</li> </ul>	<p>Some by 2013 and on going</p> <p>By December 2013</p> <p>By December 2013</p>
<p><b>Hydrology and water management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The processes by which water is moved around and carried through the Great Fen will be understood and directions of flow of field drains mapped</li> <li>• Phase Two work on Great Fen hydrology by Atkins and the CEH will be completed</li> <li>• The nature of movement of water through the soil will be understood</li> <li>• Install control structures or wind pumps in some areas of the Holmewood Estate. This will allow for more effective management of water levels.</li> <li>• Alter the shape of ditches to provide more room for wildlife as well as draining land and making water available for restoration and agricultural irrigation</li> </ul>	<p>On going</p> <p>December 2011</p> <p>On going</p> <p>2012</p> <p>March 2012</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage water levels as appropriate and desirable for benefit of the National Nature Reserves and land under restoration.</li> <li>• Plan, cost and deliver protection of property and land against changing water levels as necessary.</li> <li>• Contribute to water resource management in the Middle Level System.</li> </ul>	<p>On going</p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>
<p><b>Ecological surveying, monitoring and delivery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write and agree Great Fen Natural Environment Management Principles in the following areas: habitat creation – principle and practice; grassland management and livestock; water management (including ditch and reed bed management); pest control; introduction/reintroduction/translocation of species; management of trees, shrubs and osiers; research, survey and monitoring; plant and animal diseases.</li> <li>• Survey of and research into ecology of mosquitoes will be completed and analysed. It can then be used to influence the management of habitats for wildlife and people</li> <li>• Complete base line species surveys within the Great Fen target habitats/landscapes</li> <li>• Establish Monitoring and data recording regimes within target habitats/landscapes which will enable us to develop and share an understanding of the long-term changes on the Great Fen.</li> </ul>	<p>By 2013</p> <p>By 2012</p> <p>By 2014</p> <p>By 2013</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver habitats which benefit many birds, animals and plants of national importance (National Priority Species) such as: Lapwing, Redshank, toads, newts, grass snakes, Water Vole, Otter, and bats including Barbastelle, Noctule and Pipestrelle</li> </ul>	On going
<b>Infrastructure Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start Audit of Great Fen infrastructure and assets. Location of Great Fen watercourses, bridges, buildings, and structures mapped on new geographical information system and condition surveys started.</li> </ul>	By end 2011
<b>Historic environment features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify what is special about historic buildings, structures, landscapes and archaeology of the Great Fen and help people to learn about and enjoy them</li> <li>• .Take Archaeological advice before drainage or building work.</li> </ul>	On going  On going

## Aim Two – Social and Community

**The Great Fen will be for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone who lives or works within it or who visits it.**

*To create an accessible, inspiring and tranquil environment for recreation, education, health and well being*

Aim Two	Action	Timescale
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree priorities for developing new access routes for walkers, cyclists and riders within and into the Great Fen.</li> </ul>	2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Bus routes, park and ride scheme, and car parks as opportunities allow.</li> </ul>	On going
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council linking Great Fen to national RoW networks</li> </ul>	On going
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop self-guided trails for Ramsey Heights, Woodwalton Fen and Holme Fen</li> </ul>	By 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue creation of self-guided trails, themed walks and health walks in Great Fen and develop them for land under restoration e.g. Corney's Farm, New Decoy Farm, Old Decoy Farm.</li> </ul>	By December 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to deliver access improvements (such as level footpath surfaces, rest places on trails, accessible boardwalks and dipping platforms, all terrain mobility scooter, portable hearing loop, allocated disabled parking spaces) as practical and appropriate throughout the Great Fen</li> </ul>	On going

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the Great Fen web site accessible to everyone through options such as large print and audio.</li> <li>• Great Fen Access Zones will be established on the ground and managed to benefit the different types of activity and access planned for each.</li> </ul>	<p>2012</p> <p>2016</p>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and disseminate a list of key research needs for the Great Fen</li> <li>• Secure Budget for match funding research grants</li> <li>• Continue to establish links with educational organizations to promote the Great Fen to schools and colleges e.g. CEES, NAFSO, ASE</li> <li>• Provide professional development opportunities for school and university teachers and student teachers</li> <li>• Develop educational packages in partnership with other education providers</li> <li>• Continue to offer school education and outreach programmes focussed on heritage of Great Fen</li> <li>• Develop downloadable education resources</li> </ul>	<p>December 2011</p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p> <p>2013</p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p> <p>2012</p>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Great Fen Stakeholder Forum (or forums) to discuss progress and opportunities with local people and organizations.</li> </ul>	<p>By December 2011</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Great Fen Local Group to offer volunteer opportunities and support the Great Fen</li> <li>• Continue to provide a range of Great Fen volunteer opportunities, and recruit, train and support volunteers</li> <li>• Continue programme of Community events, walks and talks in the Great Fen and outreach visits outside the Great Fen and encourage volunteers to take lead roles</li> <li>• Continue Greenwatch Youth Group and Wildlife Watch Children's Group and encourage volunteers to take lead roles</li> <li>• Continue Great Fen Oral History Project and encourage volunteers to take lead roles</li> </ul>	<p>April 2011</p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>
<b>Interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work in partnership with sensory impairment organizations to produce interpretation that is accessible to all.</li> <li>• Continue to install interpretation panels at appropriate points in the Great Fen</li> </ul>	<p>on going</p> <p>on going</p> <p>2011</p>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch new Great Fen website and social media links</li> <li>• Review Great Fen Communications Strategy and resources.</li> <li>• Replace existing Farm signs across Great Fen with signs bearing Great Fen name and emblems; add new signs where needed.</li> <li>• Develop Great Fen branding for goods and services originating in</li> </ul>	<p>September 2011</p> <p>December 2011</p> <p>2011 and on going</p> <p>2014</p>

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**Aim Three – Economic/promotion**

**The Great Fen will help local communities develop and prosper.**

*To contribute to the diversification and development of the local community consistent with environmental and social objectives.*

<b>Aim Three</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Business development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write Business Plan for Great Fen. This will seek to maximize economic development opportunities for the Great Fen and local people and businesses.</li> </ul>	2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to explore new possibilities</li> </ul>	2012 and on going
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop partnerships and identify new opportunities with local business and business organizations e.g. Ramsey Initiative</li> </ul>	On going
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold pilot Great Fen open day/business development day</li> </ul>	2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore commercial opportunities for Great Fen recreational activities (e.g. canoe hire, power boating, cycle hire, horse riding, and geocaching) as they arise.</li> </ul>	On going

<b>Business Development for Farming Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build links with individual farmers and farming community through personal contact and NFU.</li> <li>• Host Great Fen/NFU open day/ business development day once a year for farming community.</li> <li>• Discuss diversification and business development opportunities for Great Fen farmers on one to one basis as opportunities arise.</li> </ul>	<p>On going</p> <p>Start 2011</p> <p>On-going.</p>
<b>Visitor services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement phased visitor services within the Great Fen</li> <li>• Open first Great Fen Information Point at Half Way Farm Barn</li> <li>• Prepare plan for delivering the Great Fen Visitor Centre</li> </ul>	<p>On going</p> <p>2011/2012</p> <p>2012</p>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Great Fen tourism strategy and plan</li> </ul>	<p>By 2014</p>
<b>Ecosystem Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current literature and practice on income generation potential for Great Fen delivery of eco system services.</li> <li>• Identify partner to develop peat land model for carbon sequestration/carbon offsetting pilot</li> </ul>	<p>2012</p> <p>2014</p>

**Aim Four – Climate change adaptation and mitigation**

**The Great Fen will help wildlife and people to live within and manage a changing environment.**

*To plan, design and manage the Great Fen to benefit climate change adaptation and mitigation.*

<b>Reduction of Green House Gases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Open University to investigate greenhouse gas fluxes from arable and restored land</li> </ul>	2011/2012
<b>Minimize carbon footprint</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit the Great Fen’s carbon footprint to help create a Great Fen Carbon Management Plan</li> <li>• Complete feasibility study of carbon neutral visitor centre</li> </ul>	Dec 2013  Dec 2013
<b>Flood attenuation and water storage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop plans to protect homes and businesses from winter floodwater and to provide water for the Great Fen and farmers during summer droughts.</li> </ul>	On going
<b>Resilience to Climate Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create mosaic of habitats to enable range of plant and animal species to react to climate change</li> </ul>	On going
<b>Climate Change Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help people to understand why climate change is important and how it affects people, wildlife and landscapes.</li> </ul>	By 2013

## Our Values

These underpin all the activities of the Great Fen

<p><b>Carrying on into the future</b></p>	<p><i>Sustainability</i> is central to all four Great Fen Aims and is expressed in many ways; here are some examples:</p> <p><b>Natural environment and landscape</b> – once established, restored landscapes are designed to largely “look after themselves” through introduction of grazing animals and management of water levels</p> <p><b>Social and community</b> – volunteers carry on programmes set up by Great Fen staff such as walks and talks, and the Great Fen Oral History project</p> <p><b>Economic and promotion</b> – Supporting and encouraging an enterprise culture within the Great Fen</p> <p><b>Climate change adaptation and mitigation</b> – creating new spaces for threatened fen species to live within and prosper, creating improved connectivity for species that may require new habitats through climate change impacts</p>
<p><b>Working together</b></p>	<p><i>Co-operation</i> has made the Great Fen possible. Project Partners, outside agencies, local communities and business people all work together to achieve the Great Fen Vision and Aims.</p>
<p><b>Involving everyone</b></p>	<p><i>Inclusion and access.</i> The Great Fen is for everyone to be part of and enjoy</p>
<p><b>Respect for the environment and people</b></p>	<p><i>Valuing our surroundings and people.</i> The Living Landscape of the Great Fen is for people and wildlife. Great Fen activities balance the needs of each.</p>
<p><b>Honesty and openness</b></p>	<p><i>Integrity.</i> The organization of the Great Fen and its day to day work can be questioned by anyone.</p>
<p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<p><i>Ability to respond to change.</i> Seizing new opportunities as they arise without losing sight of the four Aims</p>