

# Farnham with Stratford St Andrew Parish Council

## Response to EDF Stage 3 Pre-Application Consultation for Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station



### Introduction

Farnham and Stratford St. Andrew are two adjacent villages situated on and around the A12 in East Suffolk, three miles from the market town of Saxmundham. There are a total of 255 people and 127 properties on the electoral register in the two villages. There is a small industrial estate in each of the two villages, one of which includes a service station with a small shop. Farnham has a number of Grade II listed buildings, some of which are on the main A12. Stratford St. Andrew has a large community centre with a playground and amenity land.

The A12 is an important strategic route serving the main tourist areas, from Aldeburgh to Southwold, as well as the industrial and port areas of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. It is the only major route from the south to the Sizewell site.

Following detailed assessment, Suffolk Coastal District Council has indicated there are higher than acceptable nitrogen dioxide levels in Stratford St. Andrew caused by road traffic. The report states:

*“Key contributors to NO<sub>x</sub> emissions are cars and HGVs. However, it is important to note that although HGVs and buses only make up 6% of the (current) traffic flow on the A12, their combined contribution to road NO<sub>x</sub> concentrations is disproportionate at 53.5%.”*

## Issues of Most Concern

Through ongoing engagement with our parishioners we have confirmed that the main issue of local concern associated with the Sizewell C development proposals remains – vehicular traffic.

We are therefore disappointed to see EDF have removed the seaborne freight option from their Stage 3 proposals. We consider this a key method of reducing the overall road-traffic volumes travelling through the villages of Farnham and Stratford St. Andrew; particularly HGVs. We do not think EDF have adequately justified this decision and feel that seaborne freight should still form a significant part of their transport mix.

Although EDF's latest proposals include so-called "Road-Led" and "Rail-Led" transport strategies, we feel that only half-hearted support has been demonstrated for the rail-led options. The meaningful use of rail transport for Sizewell C would significantly reduce HGV traffic along the A12 corridor and must surely form an important part of EDF's obligations to minimise the adverse environmental effects of their project on the locality.

Notwithstanding the above points, we recognise that an increase in road traffic volumes will nonetheless occur during the construction of Sizewell C. This will have significant detrimental effects on the residents and business of our two villages, with particular concern around the following:

### **A. Property and side-road access**

The section of existing single-carriageway A12 particularly relevant to those whom we represent is around 2 km long and contains eight minor-road junctions (five in our parish and three in neighbouring Benhall), along with numerous property and farm accesses.

Increasing traffic volumes and the tendency for slow-moving HGVs and buses to cause other vehicles to create long 'convoys' will make it increasingly difficult for road users to safely join or leave or for pedestrians to cross the A12 here. Waiting times to access the A12 are also expected to increase substantially, which has the potential to feed into drivers taking more risks whilst seeking a gap in traffic; as well as making local businesses less attractive to visit. There is also the concern that drivers may try and look for alternative routes which are not designed for lots of traffic.

## **Air quality**

Stratford St. Andrew is already subject to an Air Quality Management Plan (AQMA). Increasing numbers of vehicles – and in particular large vehicles – will exacerbate an already-poor air quality situation along the length of the A12.

## **B. Noise and vibration**

A large number of additional buses and lorries travelling along the A12 will cause unreasonable disturbance to nearby residential properties and those businesses reliant on providing a peaceful environment for their guests.

## **C. Cumulative effects**

No account has been taken of other major construction-related projects being proposed in the same timeframe as Sizewell C – for example:

- i. Sizewell B will be relocating facilities, which is forecast to start early next year (2020) and last for around 36 months. There is potential for an extra 140 HGVs per day over this period.
- ii. Scottish Power Renewals (SPR) are planning to build substations at Friston, just a few miles away. This is forecast to start in 2023, with the potential of an additional 250 HGVs per day.
- iii. Further windfarm-related projects are expected in overlapping timescales to the above.
- iv. And then there is Sizewell C. Early years of construction may add up to an additional 900 HGVs per day.

All of this means an early decision must be made on any new road, if we are to avoid total gridlock through our villages.

## **Stage 2 Consultation and Response**

During the Stage 2 consultation the parish council held a public meeting and issued a questionnaire to all residents. This invited their views and comments on the four A12 road improvement options proposed by EDF as mitigation for the forecast traffic increases during construction and operation of the new power station. Of the options presented, the majority of residents and the parish council were in favour of the two-village bypass – which would mitigate the issues of traffic negotiating the bend through Farnham and avoid exacerbating the air quality issue in Stratford St. Andrew.

The council is therefore pleased that in Stage 3 of the consultation process this is the only option that has been taken forward.

At Stage 2 we made specific suggestions on the most appropriate routing of the two-village bypass. These have not been adopted or even acknowledged at Stage 3.

Also, in our response to the Stage 2 consultation we asked EDF to consult with us on the routing of the two-village bypass prior to Stage 3. This did not happen.

## **Proposed Two-Village Bypass**

Whilst the parish council is pleased that a two-village bypass is being proposed, there is still an unsatisfactory lack of important detail in many areas.

We have been advised by EDF that additional detail will be included in the final application made to the Planning Inspectorate and that we will then have the opportunity to comment. However, we do not feel that this satisfies EDF's obligations to adequately consult and allow reasonable pre-application scrutiny of their proposals by interested parties, such as ourselves.

More detail should have been provided at each consultation stage so far. After all, EDF has had nearly two years between Stages 2 and 3 to develop and provide the necessary detail and it has not. We therefore believe a further consultation stage is now required.

## Detailed Stage 3 Feedback

In addition to receiving numerous written representations from parishioners, the council held a public meeting on 4th March 2019. This was attended by over 70 residents and the full parish council. The following issues relating to the “Two Village Bypass” option were discussed and the first four points expressly voted on – all of which were supported by the majority of those present and by those who have contacted us in other ways:

### 1. Location of the Stratford St. Andrew roundabout

EDF have proposed a roundabout at a point on the A12 part way between Tinker Brook (the minor road leading to Blaxhall) and Red House Farm (Stratford St. Andrew). This arrangement could result in traffic from the south queuing to turn right prior to the roundabout, thus holding up other traffic behind it. Traffic braking for the roundabout and accelerating away (causing additional noise and air pollution) will also be very close to the two properties at Red House Farm and the Grade II-listed Stratford Grange; which will also be adversely affected by car headlights and the roundabout's 24x7 lighting.

To alleviate the above we believe that it would make more sense to move the roundabout further west to include the turnings to both Tinker Brook and Chapel Lane.

*Having suggested this to EDF prior to submitting our formal consultation response, they have agreed to review the position of the roundabout.*

### 2. Routing past Farnham Hall and Foxburrow Wood

In our response to the Stage 2 consultation we recommended that the two-village bypass should go to the east of Foxburrow Wood, rather than the west. This is still the parish council's position.

Misleadingly, EDF's Stage 3 documentation refers to “Farnham Hall” as if it is a single property, when it is actually a loose collection of 12 residential dwellings – five of which fall within the curtilage of Farnham Manor's Grade II listed status. These currently enjoy a peaceful country setting, with little noise or light disturbance. The same is also true of nearby Farnham Hall Farmhouse and Mollett's Farm (which has, in addition to

the residential dwelling itself, six self-catering holiday homes and a five-pitch touring caravan site).

Foxburrow Wood – referred to locally as “the ancient wood” and “the Bluebell wood” – is much loved by parishioners, contains a network of publically-accessible paths and is designated as a County Wildlife Site (CWS). Farnham Hall Farmhouse lies directly at its south-west corner and the nearest “Farnham Hall” property boundary is around 145 m to the west, across an arable field.

EDF has proposed a two-village bypass route to the west of Foxburrow Wood which passes through this narrow gap and then cuts through the tree-lined track between Farnham Hall Farmhouse and “Farnham Hall”.

As well as being the sole means of vehicular access for Farnham Hall Farmhouse, this track is a Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath, is used by local horse owners and is the primary means by which parishioners access Foxburrow Wood and the popular circular walks via Mollett’s Farm and Friday Street Farm, as well as to the Greenwood Burial Ground.

Photographs of this track and some of its veteran trees can be found in **Appendix A**.

EDF makes a misleading statement in 7.2.25 of their Preliminary Environmental Information when stating “*the closest properties in Farnham are over 500m from the proposed route.*” The proposed route would in fact place all twelve of the above-mentioned “Farnham Hall” properties and two others within 200m of the centreline of the carriageways, before any account is taken of the road’s final width or the footprint of each property and their gardens. Real-life separations may be as small as 50m.

We consider that EDF’s suggested route to the west of Foxburrow Wood will:

- i. Adversely impact the setting of Grade II listed heritage assets,
- ii. Cause the above residents to be exposed to high levels of noise, dust, emissions and light pollution – both during road construction and operation,
- iii. Destroy their current rural landscape setting and views,
- iv. Impact locals and visitors using the PRoW,
- v. Sever the sole access to one of these properties.

## Are there any alternatives?

Engineering studies conducted on behalf of the Highways Agency in 1995 clearly demonstrate that it is possible to build a road to the east of Foxburrow Wood – thereby avoiding many of the issues highlighted above. **Appendix B** is an extract from one of their “Option 14” drawings showing a dual-carriageway running south from Friday Street towards the Alde Valley.

This has been used to create a sketch diagram showing an alternative to EDF’s “Two Village Bypass” proposal, which can be found in **Appendix C**. This route passes to the east of Foxburrow Wood.

Approximate heights above sea level are included to allow likely gradients of a road built at ground level to be assessed. Steep gradients will greatly increase noise and air pollution caused by traffic having to climb out of the Alde Valley or away from Friday Street whilst accelerating away from the proposed roundabouts – particularly the HGVs which form a significant part of EDF’s plans to construct Sizewell C. Shallower gradients would reduce those effects.

We have noted Suffolk Coastal District Council’s approval of an application to construct a reservoir on land to the north east of Pond Farm, Farnham (planning reference DC/18/0322/FUL). It’s location has been indicated on the sketch map.

Our suggested route to the east of Foxburrow Wood passes through part of a narrow and ragged strip of woodland called Palant’s Grove, which varies in depth between around 20 m and 45 m thick at that location (its western extremity).

Palant’s Grove is separated from Foxburrow Wood by a PRow footpath, but is not itself publically accessible. Historical and ecological assessments commissioned by the Highways Agency in 1992 and 1994 respectively stated that Palant’s Grove had its origins “*at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*”, “*ground flora is of good quality*”, but “*is of poor structure, with much dead and fallen timber.*”

We have included the historical assessment of Foxburrow Wood and Palant’s Grove as **Appendix F**. Photographs looking through and into Palant’s Grove from the PRow are included in **Appendix E**.

We note that the Foxburrow Wood CWS extends east to include Palant’s Grove, but that the level of non-statutory protection this affords is limited

and “should be commensurate with the level at which the site is designated (i.e. international, national and local).” Suffolk Coastal District Council’s Local Plan also states that:

*“Whilst these designated areas are provided with protection, the potential exists nonetheless for all new developments to look at ways of increasing or improving areas of biodiversity and/or geodiversity importance, providing a net gain of biodiversity and/or geodiversity and enhancing the green infrastructure network.”*

We consider that EDF is quite capable, if it chooses, of finding ways to mitigate any effects to the CWS. Enhancing the existing ecological connectivity between the ancient woodlands of Foxburrow Wood and Pond Wood would be a natural first choice and provide a lasting legacy benefit for the parish.

A list of properties directly affected by these road proposals can be found in **Appendix D**.

Indications of occupancy are provided (where known), along with approximate distances from the centre of each property to the centre of the existing A12; as well as to EDF’s “Two Village Bypass” and to the alternative route to the east of Foxburrow Wood. Colour-coding has been used to highlight the closeness of the various roads to each property – which we believe provides a good indication of the likely severity of real-world impacts to them.

The following is a summary of the key metrics when comparing the suitability of the two bypass routes:

	<b>Bypass to West of Foxburrow Wood</b> (EDF's proposal)	<b>Bypass to East of Foxburrow Wood</b> (our proposal)
<b>Number of residential properties adversely affected</b> (centre of building closer than 200m to centreline of road)	14	3*
<b>Number of residential properties significantly affected</b> (centre of building closer than 150m to centreline of road)	5	1
<b>Difference in ground level between Friday Street and highest point on route</b> (near Pond Barn Cottages)	7 m	4 m
<b>Difference in ground level between the Alde Valley and highest point on route</b> (near Pond Barn Cottages)	22 m	19 m
<b>Number of sole vehicular accesses severed</b>	1	-
<b>Number of PRow footpaths severed</b>	4	3
<b>Affects the proposed reservoir adjacent to Pond Barn</b>	No	No
<b>Length of route</b>	2.4 km	2.8 km

\* = It should be noted that despite appearing in this column, two of these properties will still be better off with this eastern alignment as it places the bypass further away than the EDF proposal.

We consider that EDF's suggested route between the 12 dwellings at "Farnham Hall" and the ancient woodland of Foxburrow Wood has been based on cost, without fully considering the effects it will have on those residents adversely affected or attempting to find solutions to eliminate or minimise those impacts. We feel that the overwhelming 'greater good' will be served by a bypass alignment to the east of Foxburrow Wood and strongly urge EDF to re-consider their choice of route.

*Having suggested an alternative alignment to EDF prior to submitting our formal consultation response, they have committed to look into the feasibility of this and that access to all properties will be maintained and built into the next stage of design.*

### **3. Speed limit**

Regardless of the eventual routing of the bypass, we support the proposed maximum speed of 50 mph on this new single-carriageway road. As well as adhering to good design practice for this type and design of road, we see this as essential to minimise the negative effects of traffic on those properties nearby and the overall landscape setting it will pass through. This is also the speed limit of the current A12 road past Glemham Hall which will join the western roundabout.

### **4. Mitigation**

EDF have provided insufficient detail for us fully consider and comment on the proposed mitigation for their "Two-Village Bypass" option. We are greatly concerned that such information will only be presented as part of EDF's formal application to the Planning Inspectorate – leaving insufficient opportunity for us and those affected to respond to it – thereby failing in their duty to conduct adequate pre-application consultation. We therefore believe a further consultation stage will now be required to consider proposed mitigation for the bypass and other parts of the proposal.

Regardless of the eventual route selected for the bypass we would expect substantial mitigation to reduce or compensate for increases in noise, dust, emissions and light pollution – both during road construction and operation. Route selection should of course be a factor in reducing

or eliminating adverse effects to heritage building assets, landscape setting, visual impact, quality of life and blight.

The “A12 Wickham Market to Saxmundham Improvement” road proposals agreed and determined at Public Inquiry in the 1990’s included up to 8m ‘false cuttings’ in the area around Farnham Hall. These were considered necessary to ‘hide’ the road within the landscaping setting and to reduce the negative impacts on neighbouring properties to acceptable levels. These 4m cuttings and 4m embankments also had substantial side-slopes and earth shaping, combined with tree planting to soften the road’s visual intrusion. Bridges were also used to ensure uninterrupted use of the unclassified road passing Pond Farm and footpaths in the vicinity of Foxburrow Wood.

We see very little of these necessary measures in EDF’s proposals, which we consider a deficiency.

Perversely, EDF appears to have raised sections of the proposed bypass some 2m above ground level near to properties and protected woodland – contrary to design practices that would reduce the impact of their development on our residents. Raising the road would also surely increase costs which if reduced would help towards mitigation for the slightly longer route.

The introduction of cuttings into EDF’s proposals could provide useful on-site compensation for the projected deficit of 33,700 cubic metres of fill-material required during construction of the “Two Village Bypass”, as would a choice of route taking best advantage of natural ground levels to enter / exit the low Alde Valley. Both measures taken together could also reduce HGV movements during construction, which would help address the main issue of local concern – vehicular traffic – whilst helping EDF meet their obligations to reduce the overall impact of their development.

*Having brought some of these matters to the attention of EDF prior to submitting our formal consultation response, they say the scheme is subject to further discussion with affected landowners to confirm access requirements to property and land. This will feed into the detailed design process which will also confirm the profile of the road. Additional environmental assessment, in particular for noise, will also feed into the final scheme design.*

## **5. Loss of Amenity Access**

The proposed bypass cuts across or disrupts a number of PRow footpaths, access tracks, pavements and other rights-of-way. The parish council and local residents feel very strongly that as many as possible of these need to be maintained, improved or diverted so as to provide continued access to local walking routes, cycle paths, equestrian routes, etc.

We believe it will be unsafe for cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians (particularly those with disabilities or with animals) to cross the new road as proposed. Additional provision needs to be made for these vulnerable groups.

## **6. Friday Street Farm Shop and Café**

This business is located near to the current A12 / A1094 junction and use adjacent land as an integral part of their operations. EDF's "Two-Village Bypass" will:

- i. Subject their staff and customers to increased noise, dust and emissions,
- ii. Sever footpaths leading to their trading premises,
- iii. Affect their pick-your-own / soft-fruit growing activities,
- iv. Affect their farmland and access to it.

## **7. Roundabout Lighting**

We expect that 24/7 lighting on the proposed roundabouts will cause disturbance and loss of 'dark skies' to nearby residential properties and businesses offering overnight accommodation (such as Red House Farm and Mollett's Farm) – effectively a form of light pollution.

If roundabout lighting is a mandatory feature of these road layouts, then it must be designed to minimise spill and other adverse effects away from the road infrastructure itself.

## **8. Four-Village Bypass**

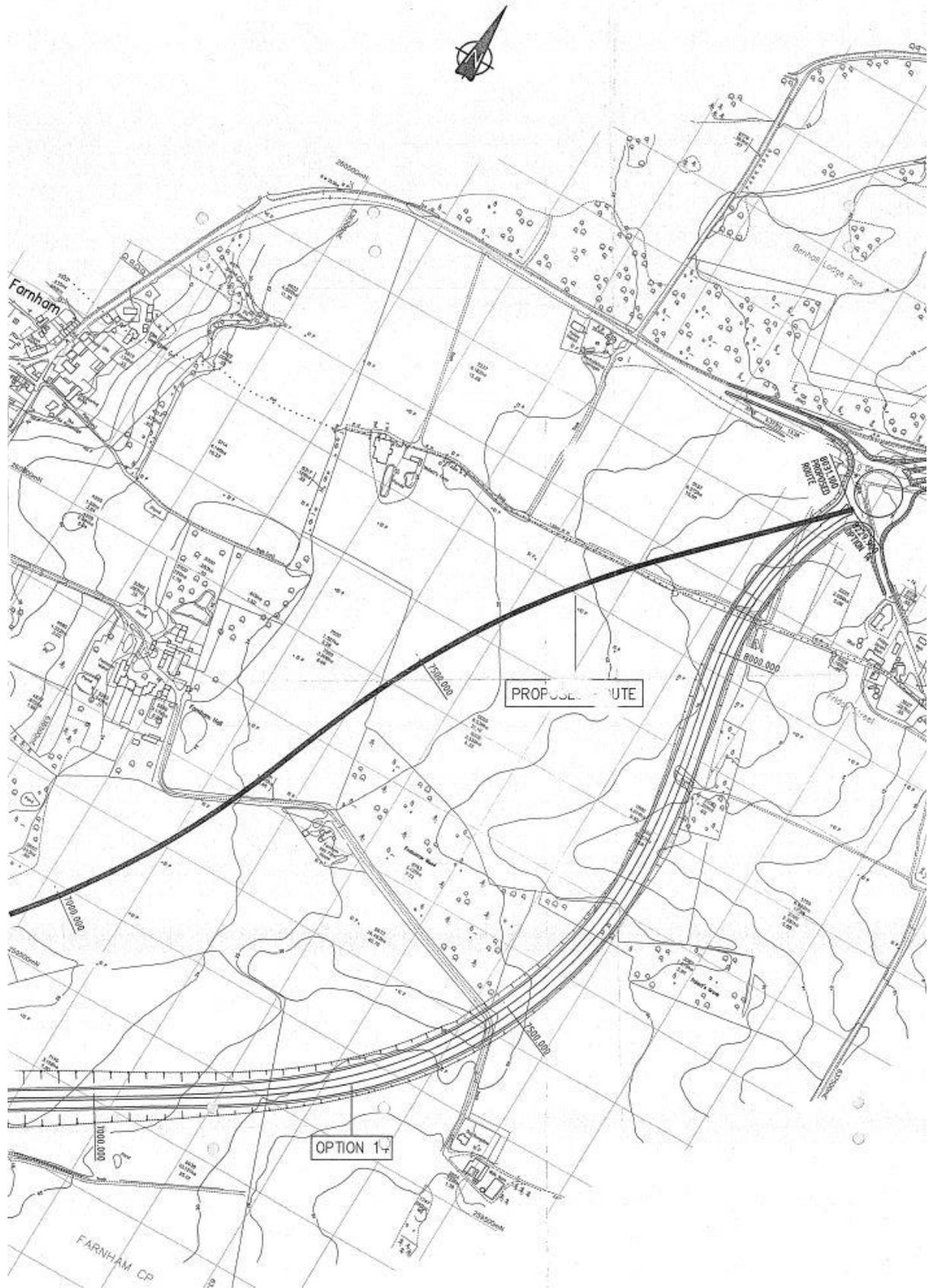
There has been much discussion recently about the possibility of a four-village bypass which is not included as an option in EDF's Stage 3 consultation, but which is the preference of Suffolk County Council (SCC). Many of the issues mentioned in relation to a two-village bypass above apply equally to a longer four-village route.

If plans for a four-village bypass are moved forward it is vital that the parish council is included in preliminary discussions concerning the route alignment and mitigation of subsequent impacts, and that action is taken at the earliest opportunity.

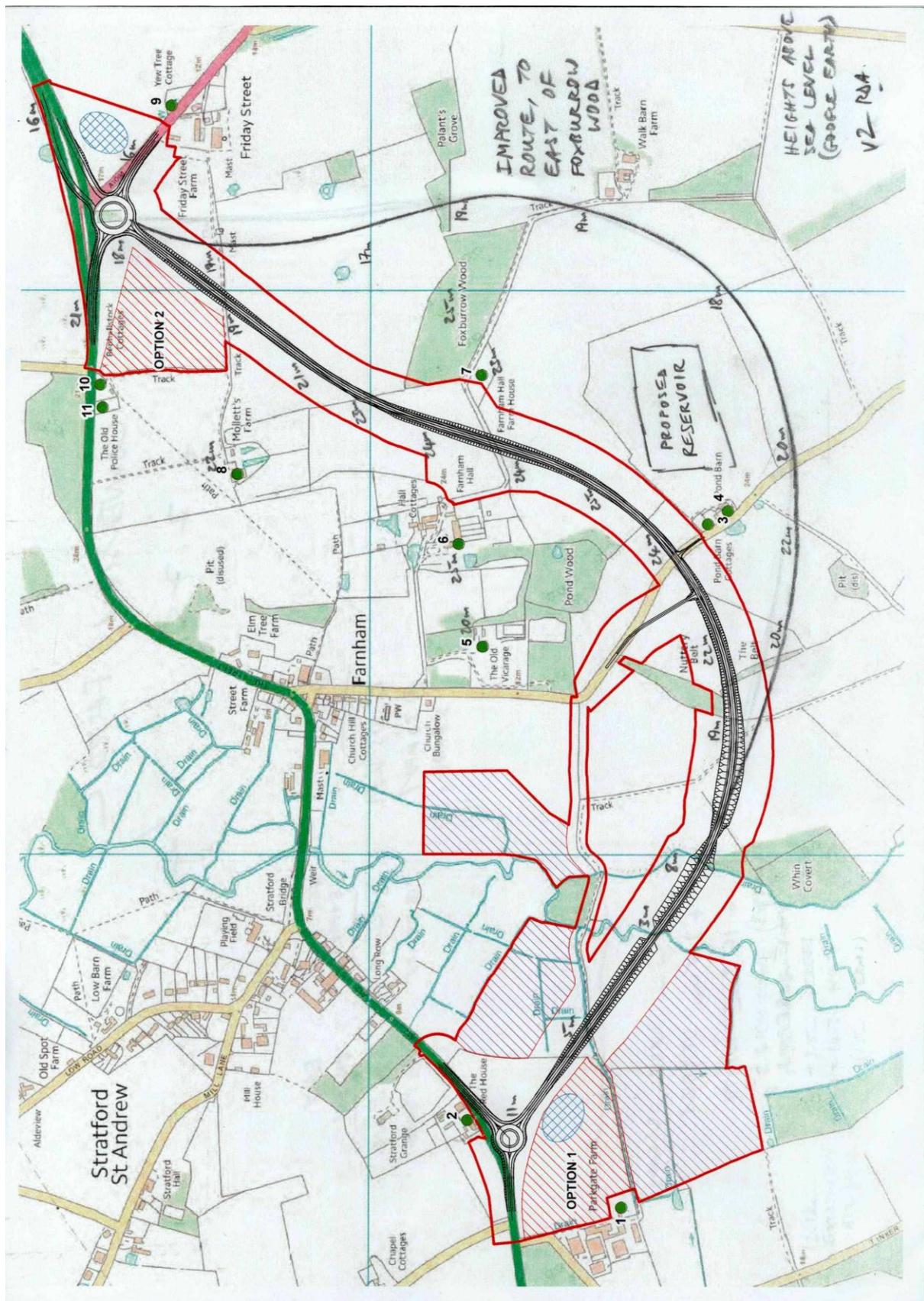
**APPENDIX A – Track and trees between Foxburrow Wood and Farnham Hall  
(looking west)**



**APPENDIX B – Highways Agency “Option 14” route to the east of Foxburrow Wood**



# APPENDIX C – Suggested route to the east of Foxburrow Wood



## APPENDIX D – Comparison of the existing A12 with the two bypass routes

Residential Dwelling	Parish	Residents / Occupancy	Existing A12	Bypass to West of Foxburrow Wood		Bypass to East of Foxburrow Wood	
			Distance to centreline	Distance to centreline	Change from existing A12	Distance to centreline	Change from existing A12
Yew Tree Cottage	Benhall	3	200 m	200 m	0 m	200 m	0 m
53 Friday Street	Benhall	3	245 m	245 m	0 m	235 m	-10 m
54 Stockhouse Cottages [Grade II]	Benhall	3	15 m	250 m	235 m	290 m	275 m
55 Stockhouse Cottages [Grade II]	Benhall	1	15 m	250 m	235 m	285 m	270 m
Old Police House	Benhall	2	25 m	285 m	260 m	325 m	300 m
51 Friday Street	Farnham	2	295 m	295 m	0 m	295 m	0 m
Farm Cottage, Friday Street	Farnham	2	255 m	235 m	-20 m	215 m	-40 m
Mollett's Farm	Farnham	5	255 m	205 m	-50 m	365 m	110 m
Walkbarn Farm Bungalow	Farnham		930 m	485 m	-445 m	40 m	-890 m
Farnham Hall Farmhouse	Farnham	3	660 m	110 m	-550 m	315 m	-345 m
Farnham Barn	Farnham	2	390 m	165 m	-225 m	565 m	175 m
2 Farnham Barn	Farnham	2	400 m	155 m	-245 m	560 m	160 m
Cart Lodge, 2A Farnham Barn	Farnham	2	415 m	140 m	-275 m	550 m	135 m
Farnham Manor [Grade II]	Farnham	1	390 m	195 m	-195 m	610 m	220 m
2 Farnham Hall	Farnham	2	400 m	180 m	-220 m	595 m	195 m
3 Farnham Hall	Farnham		405 m	170 m	-235 m	595 m	190 m
4 Farnham Hall	Farnham	1	415 m	165 m	-250 m	590 m	175 m
5 Farnham Hall	Farnham	2	420 m	155 m	-265 m	580 m	160 m
Booths Barn, 6 Farnham Hall	Farnham	3	425 m	145 m	-280 m	560 m	135 m
1 Hall Cottages	Farnham	1	370 m	180 m	-190 m	570 m	200 m
2 Hall Cottages	Farnham	1	370 m	180 m	-190 m	570 m	200 m
The Old Vicarage	Farnham	1	330 m	345 m	15 m	505 m	175 m
57 Pond Barn Cottages	Farnham		775 m	80 m	-695 m	160 m	-615 m
58 Pond Barn Cottages	Farnham		785 m	80 m	-705 m	150 m	-635 m
1 Hill Farm	Farnham		1010 m	370 m	-640 m	255 m	-755 m
2 Hill Farm [Grade II]	Farnham		1010 m	370 m	-640 m	255 m	-755 m
Business Property	Parish	Residents / Occupancy	Existing A12	Bypass to West of Foxburrow Wood		Bypass to East of Foxburrow Wood	
			Distance to centreline	Distance to centreline	Change from existing A12	Distance to centreline	Change from existing A12
Friday Street - Farm Shop	Benhall	-	235 m	215 m	-20 m	195 m	-40 m
Friday Street - Café	Benhall	-	185 m	170 m	-15 m	165 m	-20 m
Mollett's Farm - Accommodation	Farnham	13	275 m	225 m	-50 m	405 m	130 m

**Notes**

- All distances measured from centre of building to centre of carriageway. No account is therefore taken of overall road width, property footprint or the extent of surrounding private gardens / land.
- Number of residents / occupants stated where known.
- Proximity of the eastern bypass route to dwellings and businesses could be further improved by sensitive changes to the final A12 / A1094 roundabout location and precise bypass alignment as it passes Friday Street.
- Background colour coding: **RED** = less than 150 m / **AMBER** = 150 m - 199 m / **GREEN** = 200 m or greater

**APPENDIX E – View through and into Palant's Grove (looking north and east respectively)**



## APPENDIX F – Historical assessment of Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove

### A12 WICKHAM MARKET TO SAXMUNDHAM IMPROVEMENT, SUFFOLK

#### BRIEF HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT OF FOXBURROW WOOD AND PALANT'S GROVE, EAST OF FARNHAM HALL

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 A historical assessment of two areas of woodland to the east of Farnham Hall, named Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove, was carried out on 16-17 November 1994 by Anthony Walker and Partners. This work, which was commissioned by the Highways Agency, was to attempt to define the ecological and/or historic interest of the woodland.
- 1.2 The work comprised an initial search through the published documentary and cartographic evidence available at the Ipswich branch of the Suffolk County Record Office (SRO), and a site inspection.

#### 2 Historical background

- 2.1 There is little published historical material on Farnham and its immediate area. A brief account of the manorial history and landownership is, however, contained in Copinger (Copinger, W A 1910 The Manors of Suffolk volume 3, 127-130) while other more general county works provide some background information (eg. Dymond, D & Martin, E (eds) 1988 An Historical Atlas of Suffolk; Dymond, D & Northeast, P 1985 A History of Suffolk).
- 2.2 In 1086 the present parish of Farnham was divided between two manors, Farnham and Claydon. The Domesday Book records that the manor of Farnham had previously been held by Edric of Laxfield and was now held by Robert Malet. The manor is described as comprising 1 carucate of land, 10 acres of meadow, a ploughteam held in demesne and a mill, all valued at 20 shillings.
- 2.3 Robert Malet was one of the largest Norman magnates in Suffolk, holding some 220 manors centred on the castle and borough of Eye. In 1110, his son Robert plotted against the King and his lands were taken into royal ownership; the manor of Farnham was subsequently given to Sir Robert de Sankville or Sackville as part of the Honor of Eye. The manor passed to William de Glanville by marriage and in 1171 Ralph de Glanville gave it to the newly founded Augustinian Priory at Butley, east of Orford. It remained in monastic hands throughout the medieval period until the suppression in 1513, after which it was owned by Sir John Glemham. In the late 17th century the manor passed from the Glemham family to Sir Dudley North and his descendants.
- 2.4 The village of Farnham was always small. It has its origins before the 11th century, when it is named as a hamlet in 1086. In 1428 it is recorded as comprising less than 10 households while in 1674 the Hearth Tax notes that, although this had risen to some 30, over half were classified as poor. The present Farnham Hall dates to 1602.

### 3 Documentary and cartographic research

- 3.1 As noted above, the manor of Farnham is poorly documented in terms of readily available published material, although it is possible, and even likely, that there are specific references to the manor and the various land parcels within it in unpublished and untranslated medieval documents, such as court rolls held either locally and nationally.
- 3.2 The Domesday survey generally refers to woodland when describing the components of a manor. However, in Suffolk, woodland is listed in terms of the number of pigs that were supposed to fatten on their acorns; none are listed for Farnham. Rackham has undertaken a limited assessment of the medieval woods in Suffolk and concludes that only some 9% of the county was woodland in the 11th century. Although his list is not exhaustive, he suggests that there is no woodland of medieval origin in Farnham (Dymond, D & Northeast, P 1985 (eds) An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, 50-51).
- 3.3 In the absence of any readily available documentary material, evidence for the presence of woodland within the parish has to come from cartographic sources. From these, a simple landscape regression analysis can be compiled (see figure 1). The arrow at the north-west corner of Foxburrow Wood provides a fixed reference point for each plan.
- 3.4 The earliest map which is at a scale appropriate to identify isolated areas of woodland is that printed by Hodkinson in 1783 (SRO S912). This shows Foxburrow Wood (not named) as an approximately square block of woodland divided by a straight sections of road leading from Farnham Hall. Although the scale of the map makes it difficult to be absolutely certain, it is assumed from adjacent road junctions and other topographical features that the northwest-southeast section of the road passing through the wood is that which survives today. A second road is depicted to run north-south on the east side of Foxburrow Wood. A building, later named as "Walk Barn" on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale map (Pathfinder sheet 986), is also shown, adjacent to the south-east corner of the wood. An area of woodland corresponding to Palant's Grove is not shown, neither is the present north-south road to the east of Palant's Grove which currently runs from Burnt House Farm to Manor Farm; the road that is depicted follows the present north-south footpath to the east of the railway line. A similar arrangement of roads and woodlands is shown on an Ordnance Survey map of 1798 (SRO MR28).
- 3.5 An estate map of 1803 titled "A view of the parish of Farnham in Plomesgate Hundred, Suffolk..." (SRO HA408/B/74) shows "Foxburrow Wood" on both sides of the road. However, it is clear that the southern part of the wood has been reduced in size by approximately one-half, the south-east corner of the wood now joins the road at the point at which it turns to the south, to the north of "Walk Barn". The north-south road no longer continues to the north. "Pallants Grove" is also shown to the east; its boundaries correspond to the present woodland although it extends further eastwards as far as the present road and it is physically separated from

Foxburrow Wood by the line of the former road. An isolated rectangular house within an enclosure is shown to the east of Pallants Grove; this corresponds to a building known as Monks Valley. The map indicates that this house belongs to John Pallant and it is likely that he is the originator of Pallants (now Palant's) Grove. The fields to the south of Palant's Grove are named as "old enclosed ground".

- 3.6 The Ordnance Survey 1" map of 1837 (sheet 50SE) depicts Foxburrow Wood (again not named) with the road passing through its centre. The southern boundary of the wood is shown as stepped with an area marked as "Sand Pits" encroaching on the south-west corner. No north-south road at the east end of Foxburrow Wood is depicted. Palant's Grove is shown as an unnamed area of woodland to the east with its area being the same as in 1803. Two parallel north-south roads are now shown, one corresponding to the earlier road to the east of the railway line and now named as "Snuff Lane", and one at the east end of Palant's Grove, corresponding to the existing road.
- 3.7 The 1841 tithe map, titled "Plan of the parish of Farnham, Suffolk, 1841" (SCR P461/95) depicts a similar arrangement, although at a larger scale. The wood to the north of the road is named simply as "Grove" while the triangular area to the south is "Foxburrow". Palant's Grove is still named as "Pallants Grove" and all the woodland is owned by William Long, who also owned but did not occupy Farnham Hall at this time. It is interesting to note that, although owned by William Long, Pallants Grove does not lie within the Farnham Hall estate.
- 3.8 The Ordnance Survey 6" map of 1883 (sheet 59NE) shows that the woodland to the south of the road from Farnham Hall has now disappeared although two "Old Sand Pits" and the southern field boundary remain. The name "Foxburrow Wood" now applies only to the remaining northern section of woodland and a track is shown running east-west through it. The former north-south road running between Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove is also shown as a footpath. Otherwise, all is as shown on the 1841 tithe map, although the house occupied by John Pallant is now named as "Monkey's Hole".

#### 4 Field evidence

- 4.1 A site inspection of the two areas of woodland was carried out on 17 November 1994 during light and sunny conditions. In places, the two areas of woodland were heavily vegetated with bracken and other undergrowth which made the identification of any internal earthwork features impossible.

##### **Foxburrow Wood**

- 4.2 The Detailed Ecological Assessment Report (Anthony Walker and Partners 1992 [A12 Wickham Market to Saxmundham Improvement: Detailed Ecological Assessment: Preferred Route](#), 38) notes that a considerable number of canopy trees have been lost in Foxburrow Wood through recent storms. The wood is dominated by ash, oak, hornbeam and beech, with an

understorey of hazel, elder, field maple and silver birch. The ground flora includes ramsons, bluebell, dogs mercury, ground ivy, early purple orchid, lesser celandine, bramble, nettle and red campion. Replanting has been undertaken in open areas with introduced species such as sycamore and horse chestnut. The wood is classified in the Nature Conservancy Council's provisional list for Suffolk as being ancient.

- 4.3 The site visit showed that Foxburrow Wood is surrounded by an earthwork bank with an external ditch of varying dimensions. Along its southern boundary, adjacent to the track from Farnham Hall, the bank is between 0.25-0.50m high with an external ditch of similar dimensions, although in places this has silted up. A number of mature oak trees and oak stumps stand on the top or sides of the bank. The bank is more substantial on the east side of the wood, with a well developed but rounded profile up to 1m high and 1m wide. On the north and west sides the bank and ditch are still visible although it has been disturbed and possibly accentuated by modern dredging to facilitate drainage. The north side contains a large pollarded oak, positioned at the angle of the boundary (see figure 1).
- 4.4 There were no internal features visible in Foxburrow Wood apart from an apparently modern rectangular pit approximately 7m by 4m in a central eastern location; this was filled with modern debris and rubbish. There were also no obvious remains associated with the former track and footpath shown on the historic maps as passing through this part of the wood. However, given the presence of bracken and other vegetation, the presence of other internal features cannot be discounted.

#### Palant's Grove

- 4.5 The Detailed Ecological Assessment Report (Anthony Walker and Partners 1992 A12 Wickham Market to Saxmundham Improvement: Detailed Ecological Assessment: Preferred Route, 38) notes that Palant's Grove is of poor structure, with much dead and fallen timber. However, the ground flora is of good quality and includes dogs mercury, bluebell, red campion, hazel, ash, elm, oak, nettle, ground ivy, elder, horse chestnut, lesser celandine, larch, cuckoo pint, blackthorn, field maple and ramsons.
- 4.6 As with Foxburrow Wood, Palant's Grove is also surrounded by a bank and ditch. Significantly, a bank approximately 0.5m high curves around the western tongue of the wood, confirming the cartographic evidence that Palant's Grove and Foxburrow Wood are two separate areas of woodland. The intervening ground, which was formerly a track in the late 18th century, remains as a grass footpath, although a slight earthwork bank across the path remains from a former field boundary.
- 4.7 The enclosing bank is best preserved on the southern side of the western tongue. This is 1m high and 2m wide and lies parallel to but inside the present field boundary. Once again, there is an external ditch and a number of oaks on the top and sides of the bank. The bank and ditch continue along the south side, running into the existing east-west field boundary which originally formed part of the wood. The bank and ditch is not so

prominent on the north side of the wood; in places it has been disturbed by a modern ditch while in others it has been ploughed out and incorporated into the adjacent fields.

## 5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The cartographic research suggests that Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove were always two separate areas of woodland divided by a north-south track and later footpath. Foxburrow Wood was in existence by 1783 but Palant's Grove is first shown on a map of 1803, possibly associated with a landholding to the east occupied by John Pallant. Both areas of woodland were originally larger; Foxburrow Wood extended for some distance to the south of the track from Farnham Hall and Palant's Grove extended to the east to the line of the present north-south road.
- 5.2 The field evidence broadly confirms the cartographic evidence. The curving boundary bank in the western tongue of Palant's Grove confirms that the two areas of woodland were always physically separate. Both woods are surrounded by boundary banks and ditches, although in places it has been disturbed by modern intervention. Well preserved sections of both earthworks remain and it appears that that surrounding Foxburrow Wood has a more rounded profile, suggesting, although not proving, an earlier date relative to the Palant's Grove bank. However, the fact that neither boundary bank is particularly massive implies that they are of fairly recent creation.
- 5.3 The question of whether Foxburrow Wood can be classified as "ancient", defined by the Nature Conservancy Council as having been in existence before 1600 and representing areas of former medieval wildwood, is problematic and almost impossible to prove without further detailed research to identify specific documentary references which may or may not exist. Rackham suggests that the Oxlip (*Primula elatior*) occurs in almost every wood in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex known on documentary or topographical grounds to be ancient (Rackham O, 1983 Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape, 124-125) and its absence in Foxburrow Wood may be significant.
- 5.4 The boundaries of the original extent of Foxburrow Wood, as shown on the 1793 map, appear to be regular and directly aligned with a section of track leading from Farnham Hall. The course of the track from Farnham church to beyond Walk Barn is actually made up of several wide and straight sections. This all suggests that this particular area of landscape was laid out at one point in time, rather than being the result of gradual landscape development over centuries when more curvilinear alignments and boundaries would be expected to survive. Based on current research, the evidence points to an enclosure landscape, brought about by the regularisation of earlier land holdings into a more uniform and rectangular field pattern characterised by straight boundaries. Many new wide and straight roads were created and areas of woodland planted as part of this process.

- 5.5 There are, however, no records of enclosure in Farnham, implying that this was a piecemeal process undertaken by agreement rather than deliberate Act of Parliament. This process may have taken place at any time during the 16th or 17th centuries, but is unlikely to have occurred while the manor was in monastic ownership (ie. pre 1513); the map of 1803 notes the fields to the south of Palant's Grove as being "old enclosed ground".
- 5.6 In conclusion, therefore, it is only possible to say that, while Palant's Grove has its origins at the end of the 18th century, Foxburrow Wood was already in existence at that time. The cartographic evidence shows that the track from Farnham Hall was an integral part of the wood, originally passing through its centre, and it is likely that both originated at the time of enclosure, possibly in the late 16th or 17th centuries. This may suggest that the wood is ancient (ie. pre 1600) but it is unlikely, on the basis of the records consulted as part of this survey, to represent an area of earlier, medieval, woodland.

