

IXWORTH & IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

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IXWORTH & IXWORTH THORPE
PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 18 June 2026

Sarah Drane – Planning Case Officer
West Suffolk Council
West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3YU

Dear Sarah,

REF: DC/25/0666/HYB – LAND OFF CROWN LANE

Further to the latest consultation on the above application, this letter constitutes the formal response of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council as statutory consultee following consideration at its meeting held on 10 June 2026.

The Parish Council acknowledges that a number of amendments have been made since previous iterations of the application and welcomes the progress that has been achieved in certain areas. In particular, the Council welcomes the applicant's agreement in principle to secure land for the future extension of Crown Lane Cemetery through a Section 106 Agreement, reflecting a longstanding community aspiration.

However, whilst improvements have been made, the Parish Council remains of the view that several fundamental policy and infrastructure issues remain unresolved. These matters are sufficiently significant that the Parish Council must maintain its objection to the application. Accordingly, the Parish Council **OBJECTS** to the application and requests that planning permission be refused for the reasons set out below.

OVERDEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO THE SITE ALLOCATION

The application continues to propose a level of development substantially in excess of that envisaged by the development plan. Policy AP30 identifies the site for approximately 145 dwellings. The current application seeks permission for 187 dwellings.

Whilst this represents a reduction from previous iterations of the scheme, the proposal still exceeds the allocation by approximately 42 dwellings, representing an increase of almost 29% above the level envisaged through the Local Plan process. The Parish Council remains concerned that no compelling justification has been provided to explain why such a significant departure from the allocated quantum should be accepted.

The housing numbers identified through the Local Plan process were established through evidence, consultation and examination. To permit development at a substantially greater density than that envisaged by the allocation risks undermining confidence in the plan-led system and raises legitimate concerns regarding the ability of local infrastructure to accommodate the scale of development proposed.

FAILURE TO PROVIDE A POLICY-COMPLIANT MASTERPLAN

The Parish Council considers the continued absence of a comprehensive masterplan to be one of the most fundamental deficiencies within the application. Policy AP30 does not require a masterplan as a procedural exercise or administrative formality. The requirement exists to ensure that the various components of the allocation are planned in a coordinated manner and that critical infrastructure requirements are properly assessed, integrated and delivered alongside development.

Amongst the matters specifically identified within Policy AP30 is the requirement for the masterplanning process to consider whether facilities for pedestrians and cyclists should include a bridge across the A143 linking the site with the public rights of way network and countryside to the east.

The importance of this relationship cannot be overstated.

The masterplan is the mechanism through which the feasibility, design, cost, funding and deliverability of such infrastructure should have been explored. It is the very process intended by policy to enable informed conclusions to be reached regarding whether a bridge is necessary and, if so, how it can be delivered.

However, no such masterplan has been provided.

The consequence is that the policy requirement relating to the bridge has never been properly discharged. The absence of a masterplan has not simply resulted in a missing document; it has prevented one of the allocation's most important infrastructure questions from being properly examined.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the applicant's failure to comply with the masterplan requirement has directly frustrated the ability of the Local Planning Authority and stakeholders to assess the feasibility and deliverability of a pedestrian and cycle bridge in the manner envisaged by Policy AP30. This represents a clear failure to comply with the site allocation policy.

FAILURE TO PROPERLY REFLECT THE IXWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Parish Council is concerned that insufficient regard has been given to the requirements and aspirations of the Ixworth Neighbourhood Plan adopted in July 2025.

Particular concern remains regarding the density, layout and overall form of development proposed when assessed against the objectives and character expectations established through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

The Parish Council does not consider it has been adequately demonstrated that the proposal fully accords with the vision endorsed by the local community through the adoption of that Plan.

FAILURE TO SECURE THE A143 FOOTBRIDGE AND ACTIVE TRAVEL CONNECTIVITY

The Parish Council remains profoundly concerned by the continued failure to make meaningful progress towards securing a pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A143.

This issue cannot be separated from the applicant's continued failure to provide the comprehensive masterplan required by Policy AP30. The policy does not simply identify a bridge as a desirable aspiration; it specifically requires the masterplanning process to consider whether facilities for pedestrians and cyclists should include a bridge across the A143 linking the site to the public rights of way network and countryside to the east.

The purpose of the masterplan is to provide the mechanism through which the feasibility, design, cost, funding and deliverability of such infrastructure can be properly assessed. By failing to undertake this process, the applicant has effectively prevented one of the allocation's most significant infrastructure requirements from being properly examined and resolved. This is particularly concerning given that the AP30 allocation has been identified as a future development opportunity since approximately 2007 and has long been presented as the most realistic opportunity through which a bridge could be secured using developer contributions associated with major development.

The significance of this issue extends far beyond the provision of a bridge itself. The existing A143 crossing arrangements continue to present a substantial barrier to accessing the countryside and public rights of way network east of the village. For many residents, particularly wheelchair users, those with mobility impairments, families with pushchairs and others unable to negotiate steep stepped access, that network is effectively inaccessible. This runs contrary to the objectives of promoting active travel, encouraging walking and cycling, improving public health outcomes and ensuring equality of access to the natural environment. The Parish Council therefore finds it difficult to reconcile the strong emphasis placed elsewhere within the application and Suffolk County Council's consultation response on sustainable transport and active travel with the continuing failure to address one of the most significant barriers to achieving those objectives.

The Parish Council is also concerned by the safety implications of the current arrangements. The existing crossing facilities require users to negotiate steep stepped access before crossing a busy 60mph three-lane section of the A143 in order to reach the public rights of way network to the east. The Council is aware that residents have frequently expressed concerns regarding the safety of these arrangements over many years and anecdotal reports of near misses are not uncommon. Whilst the Parish Council is not aware of any recorded serious or fatal incident at this location, it is frankly remarkable that, in the forty years since the bypass was constructed in 1986, such an outcome appears to have been avoided. The absence of a recorded tragedy should not be taken as evidence that the current arrangements are safe, adequate or fit for purpose.

Despite nearly twenty years of policy evolution and a development proposal that continues to exceed the allocated housing numbers, there remains no agreed design, feasibility assessment, cost estimate, funding package, delivery programme or committed developer contribution towards the bridge.

The most recent Suffolk County Council Highways response only reinforces this concern. Whilst land is proposed to be safeguarded for a potential bridge landing point, Suffolk County Council remains unable to identify how, when or by whom the bridge would ultimately be delivered.

The Parish Council considers this position fundamentally contradictory. If the bridge is important enough to warrant safeguarding land, there should be a coherent strategy for its delivery. Equally, if it is not considered necessary or deliverable, that conclusion should emerge from the masterplanning process required by Policy AP30. Neither has occurred.

The result is that a longstanding infrastructure deficiency is acknowledged by all parties yet remains no closer to resolution than it was many years ago. The Parish Council therefore considers that the applicant's failure to comply with the masterplan requirement, coupled with Suffolk County Council's inability to provide a consistent and meaningful delivery strategy, has thwarted the very process through which this issue was intended to be assessed and, if appropriate, delivered.

The safeguarding of a small bridge landing area alone cannot reasonably be regarded as satisfactory compliance with Policy AP30 nor as a meaningful response to almost twenty years of planning policy evolution and community expectation. It does nothing to resolve the current barriers to accessibility, equality of access or active travel that continue to affect both existing and future residents. Accordingly, the Parish Council maintains that the application fails to adequately address one of the most significant and longstanding infrastructure deficiencies affecting the village.

DISPROPORTIONATE REDUCTION IN INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Parish Council is also concerned by the apparent reduction in infrastructure contributions sought through the planning process. Earlier iterations of the application proposed approximately 215 dwellings. The current proposal seeks permission for 187 dwellings, representing a reduction of approximately 14%.

However, the Parish Council understands that the infrastructure contributions sought by Suffolk County Council have reduced by approximately 66% during the evolution of the application.

On the face of it, this appears wholly disproportionate. No clear explanation has been provided as to why a relatively modest reduction in dwelling numbers should result in such a substantial reduction in infrastructure obligations. This raises legitimate concerns regarding whether the infrastructure package associated with the development remains sufficient to mitigate its impacts and whether opportunities to secure important community infrastructure have been progressively diluted during negotiations.

The concern is particularly acute in relation to the A143 footbridge, where there remains no identified contribution, funding mechanism or delivery strategy despite the development continuing to exceed the allocated housing numbers by a significant margin.

The Parish Council finds it difficult to reconcile a 66% reduction in infrastructure contributions with a development that still exceeds the site allocation by approximately 29%, particularly when one of the community's most significant and longstanding infrastructure priorities remains unfunded and unresolved.

The Parish Council therefore requests that the Local Planning Authority carefully scrutinise the rationale behind the reduction in infrastructure contributions and satisfy itself that the mitigation package remains proportionate to the scale of development proposed.

CEMETERY EXTENSION LAND

The Parish Council welcomes the applicant's agreement to secure the cemetery extension land through a Section 106 Agreement. This represents a significant improvement compared with earlier versions of the application and demonstrates constructive engagement with a longstanding community need.

However, important concerns remain.

The Parish Council's position remains that the land transferred should extend fully to the boundary with Ixworth High School. The currently proposed extent unnecessarily restricts future functionality and limits the ability to maximise the community benefit of the land.

The Council also remains concerned regarding the proposed positioning of underground infrastructure and associated apparatus within this area. Such infrastructure should be relocated elsewhere within the development site to avoid sterilising land intended for long-term community use.

Furthermore, whilst future burial provision remains important, the more immediate need relates to accessibility. The Council's objective has never been solely the provision of additional burial capacity. The land also provides an opportunity to create improved access into the cemetery and reduce the considerable walking distances currently faced by many visitors, particularly elderly residents and those with mobility difficulties seeking to visit newer burial plots. The Council has consistently envisaged this land fulfilling a wider community function, including supporting future accessibility improvements, public amenity and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace objectives. The current proposals do not yet fully realise those opportunities.

RETAINED PREVIOUS CONCERNS

Whilst this response focuses upon the principal matters arising from the latest amendments, the Parish Council maintains its previous concerns regarding highway impacts, school-related traffic movements, healthcare infrastructure, transport assumptions, traffic modelling, pedestrian connectivity and other matters where they have not been satisfactorily addressed through the latest submission.

CONCLUSION

The Parish Council welcomes the progress that has been made in certain areas, most notably the proposed provision of cemetery land.

However, those improvements cannot outweigh the continuing failure of the application to comply with key planning policy requirements, including the excessive number of dwellings proposed relative to the allocation, the absence of a policy-compliant masterplan, apparent conflict with the Ixworth Neighbourhood Plan, the

disproportionate reduction in infrastructure contributions and the ongoing failure to secure meaningful progress towards the long-promised A143 pedestrian and cycle bridge.

Accordingly, Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council maintains its **OBJECTION** to the application and respectfully requests that planning permission be **REFUSED** unless these matters can be satisfactorily resolved.

Yours sincerely,

For and on behalf of Ixworth and Ixworth Parish Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Lord', followed by a long horizontal line that ends in a small upward flick.

Ben Lord
Chairman