

## **West Suffolk Council Plan – the Green Ixworth response**

We are Green Ixworth and are looking at the plan from the perspective of protecting and enhancing the environment and improving the well being of residents. In particular but not exclusively from the perspective of the area around Ixworth.

### **1) Key Service Centres.**

It is well established that urban areas are more economic in their use of resources and have a lower impact on the environment with reduced travel and private car use. It is cheaper, easier, more environmentally friendly and more convenient to use public transport, walk or cycle. The availability of local facilities is so important that Paris has adopted a program of “15 minute communities” where most facilities required are within 15 minutes of residents. The same can be considered for larger villages and small towns. Indeed this is the option which has largely been adopted locally with the Key Service Centre concept.

However this only works if there are good public transport links provided. The further development of KSCs makes public transport more economic with larger and more focused demand. However the current requirements for Key Service Centres need to be enhanced if they are to work effectively, there needs to be more career enhancing employment in the KSCs, not just low paid work.

### **2) Transport links and future development.**

Whilst seeking to avoid private car and van travel the current and anticipated development along the A143 from BSE to Stanton will only grow over the next decade or so. The existing congestion levels during the rush hour and other times when the A14 is blocked will only get worse. The road is really only suitable for local traffic. So an additional route for goods vehicles needs to be established. A new route from the A14 to east of Stanton would take away goods vehicles and private vehicles travelling beyond Stanton. It would also take much of the traffic away from the southern section of the A1088, relieving Norton, etc. of the through traffic.

When IKEA wanted to build a warehouse at Shepherds Grove their application was eventually withdrawn. The Planning Authority insisted that traffic flows would be unsuitable for the existing roads and made a major condition that they build a road direct from the A14. From that I assume a possible route has already been identified. Apart from Great Barton, the current pinch points on the road from Great Barton are the bridge and the two roundabouts at Ixworth, that is assuming at some point GB will be bypassed. I expect GB would be supportive of this proposal.

As for Stanton, the potential development of a further 800 + houses is likely to lead to calls for some traffic change as the only access is via the three T junctions to the south east and

the one plus to the north west. The benefits of a new road would include improving access to Shepherds Grove industrial area as well as easy access to the A14 for residents in the proposed new developments. Further it would remove much of the need for a bypass at Great Barton.

It would also reduce the barrier effect of the Ixworth by-passes which restrict development on the grounds of preventing access by foot, cycle and vehicle. From the perspective of Ixworth and parts of neighbouring Pakenham, future development beyond that provided in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, would not be possible, without destroying valuable green space alongside the river, much of which is also subject to flooding. Using only Brownfield or Grade 3 land for development enables the remaining land to be used most productively for the production of food. Grade 2 land should be used sparingly and grade 1 only in exceptional circumstances.

Whilst there is reference to Social Housing in the Plan, increasing demand requires LAs to be more pro-active in providing land and support.

In order to avoid piecemeal increments in housing which are likely to present communities with no increase in facilities, plans should clearly anticipate long term development and insist, in general, that land allocated for development should be developed as one project. At present the major reason why phasing is popular is to control the level of housing on the local market thus holding or increasing prices. This makes it difficult for local services, health, education, retail, to make significant improvements when development is piecemeal, with low incremental growth.

### **3) Well-being**

Well-being is subject to limits in large part resulting from lack of personal privacy and lack of space. Increasing the number and size of rooms will assist as will ensuring that all properties have at least a small garden with external storage space for cycles, etc. Britain has the smallest living space per person in Europe. Whilst wishing to decrease the overall density of people, in our village this can be achieved, in part, by increasing housing density but then providing much more shared space.

### **4) Environment**

All new developments should include "mini forests" to include native forest trees. These should be linked by wildlife corridors or cycle/footpaths with wide hedges and verges to the country side and the centres of villages. The plan should place a requirement on landowners/developers to provide additional footpaths outside the area of development to link with existing paths. Further when the bridge over the A143 is built it should include a wildlife corridor to connect the "country side" to the green corridors Green Ixworth is seeking to establish within the village. The principal of creating links across major roads is one which should be followed throughout the area. The annual crop of deer, badgers, foxes and hedgehogs as well as many birds seen dead on the A143 is both a loss to the environment and a health hazard.

All planting should use native trees and shrubs to encourage wildlife. There is no justification for non native plants, Britain has plenty from which to choose.

Where there are rivers or streams access should be provided to at least one bank with the other preserved and enhanced for wildlife. The rivers at Thetford provide a good example.

Developments should, in order to reduce costs and increase effective use of land, install collective systems for electricity generation and storage as well as heat production rather than rely on individual systems. Such collective systems should be provided by the developer as they are then able to integrate the heat provided with the building design eg heat pumps produce low grade heat which generally requires underfloor heating to be effective rather than a greater area of radiators.

## **5) West Suffolk Council**

WSC has a good record on the environment which I believe would only be enhanced by adopting or confirming the proposals above. Green Ixworth will welcome an even greater commitment to the enhancement of the natural and built environment and the further reduction in the human causes of the climate emergency.

At the end of the plan period only electric cars will have been sold in the UK for 10 years, new-fit gas boilers will have gone, the gas grid may be filled with hydrogen and holiday flying much reduced. It will be a very different world with rapid and substantial change. We would suggest that given the scale of the issue regular consultation with interested bodies such as ourselves should be established. Perhaps this should be a consultative committee to maintain some continuity of membership and ownership.

In difficult times the existing consultative process has been welcome, and although not possible now, perhaps further consultation on the Plan should also include in person presentations similar to those organised under the Rural Taskforce program.

Green Ixworth

**29/11/20**

Please note that since this was written agreement in principle has been established to construct up to 1,200 houses between Great Barton and Bury and approx 200 in Great Barton. This makes the case for better roads much stronger as in total between Stanton and Bury there would be a further 2,500 approx new dwellings all relying on the A143 and the roundabout and railway bridge constriction at Bury. It also strengthens the call for more and better work in Stanton, Ixworth and Great Barton to reduce travel to work.

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