

Neighbourhood Plan Consultation – Green Ixworth Input

Langridge Site and Dairy Farm

This is a relatively large development for our community and would more than meet the target set by government for growth here.

Green Ixworth supports the allocation of this site for development in so far as it will offer a range of housing types, including self-build, and has potential to address the real local housing need as described in the Housing Needs Survey. Our core aim is to protect and improve the natural *and* built environment locally and to improve the health and well-being of people in the Ixworth area. We will therefore support schemes which meet this aim.

The development proposal for this site brings with it a substantial increase in rural footpaths, with safe access across the bypass. These are sorely needed by the village and we positively encourage their introduction. The site must also create links to the rest of the village for pedestrians and cyclists.

Wildlife corridors will need to be incorporated into the site as will screening for traffic noise for those houses closest to the road. Also, there is already a good hedge along the A1088; however, it needs thickening to be effective both for noise and wildlife.

Being adjacent to the bypass means vehicles servicing the retail unit will not impact the High Street. The NPWG document refers to the provision of an improved junction with the A1088 which we welcome and which will be necessary to improve road safety and manage the increase in traffic entering and leaving the village at this point.

The opportunity to incorporate a new, purpose built, low-emissions Community Centre on this site to meet the needs of our expanding community is welcomed. The current village hall has been modified too often, it is of a poor emissions standard and its entrance from the High Street is dangerous. A community centre on the Langridge is no more remote from the centre of the future Ixworth than the current village hall, particularly if pedestrian and cycling links are in place. We understand that the current development proposal offers funding for this type of community asset.

Cyder House

We support the allocation of this site which offers a type of building not available elsewhere in the Plan and which is in keeping with the core aim of Green Ixworth. It is supported because it offers real potential for 'low cost' housing rather than 'affordable' housing.

We support this development proposal on condition that the wildlife corridor along the river is maintained.

Ixworth Thorpe

Green Ixworth does not support the proposal for a settlement boundary at Ixworth Thorpe on the basis that the lack of facilities and public transport renders development unsustainable and the West Suffolk Local Plan makes it clear that planning authorities find it unacceptable.

We understand that in-fill development is currently permissible at Ixworth Thorpe; we would urge that any future proposals prioritise local housing need and incorporate refurbishment of existing houses rather than demolition.

Please note, the Housing Needs Survey did not specifically indicate a need for building at Ixworth Thorpe, as the location of need was not recorded. However, West Suffolk Council's Housing Register showed a need for housing for two households at Ixworth Thorpe in 2019. We would point out that Housing Need means properly affordable housing such as low-cost rental, shared ownership etc. In order to meet Green Ixworth criteria future housing would also need to meet high environmental

standards, which in turn will reduce running costs. The West Suffolk Local Plan allows the building of affordable housing via a Rural Exception Site without any change to current planning policy. The RES may include a small commercial building element if that is necessary to fund the project. Even so, we argue, this is still unsustainable unless the additional housing supports employment in Ixworth Thorpe.

General

Green Ixworth was disappointed by the manner in which this consultation was conducted. We received approaches from the public which included the following:

1. Difficulty in understanding the mapping published in the magazine.
2. An expectation that better-quality graphics and fuller explanations would be available at the NP Facebook page.
3. An expectation that submissions by other residents would be visible on the NP Facebook page.
4. A poor understanding of the 'voting' system; were residents required to express an opinion on all three proposals or to choose a single favourite.

At previous NPWG engagement events it was possible to monitor for multiple comments by individuals. The mixture of electronic and anonymous written submissions used here makes this impossible.