

A143 corridor

Support for our concerns about developments and services along the A143 have been taken up by the West Suffolk MP, Matt Hancock. He is asking the Department of Transport for its designation as a trunk road. This will remove it from SCC and hopefully provide funding to remove the bottlenecks and take a more strategic view of the A143 corridor. National Highways policy is to encourage biodiversity and the establishment of Green Bridges such as that promoted by Green Ixworth.

The situation is aggravated by a further proposed development in Stanton of huge warehouses which will further congest the A143. The company are “consulting” on a flimsy proposal before seeking planning permission. See more at: <https://stanton.your-feedback.co.uk/> Our initial response is:

“Green Ixworth is an environmental organisation covering much of the rural area between Bury St Edmunds and Stanton. Our aims and objectives are to protect and improve the natural and built environment. Supporting the provision of jobs and truly affordable housing, of which none is planned locally, so it is not difficult to support the implications of the questions

However, our answers will depend on how each of those question areas is addressed by yourselves and there is little information in your outline to indicate that. For example, no indication is given as to what will be the balance in the types of business to be carried out and what proportion will be manufacturing or storage. Generally, storage and distribution provide few, well paid jobs, generally require few significant skills or provide much training beyond driving a fork lift. Manufacturing and research require high level skills and therefore provide higher wage income to the area. That balance would therefore be critical to our level of support.

Does the development and the jobs provided, contribute a net increase or a replacement for business space and jobs elsewhere? What use will the new development make of embodied carbon in existing structures? The design, such as is illustrated, gives no indication of your intentions with regard to the aspect of roofs and whether they will mount solar panels. The scale of the buildings should make the site self-sufficient in energy needs. This would also determine our support or otherwise. For your information this guidance may help in your decisions:

<https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/nsc/Documents%20Library/NSC%20Publications/123160-NSC-Solar-Roofs-Good-Practice-Guide-WEB.pdf>;

Your position on road transport seems dependent on the roundabout being constructed by Copart. If the Copart/Jaynic project were not to go ahead, we would expect your project to construct the roundabout and the link into the Shepherds Grove East industrial estate. If it were your intention to use Summer Road directly on to the A143 in the absence of the roundabout, we should oppose the project. We welcome your commitment to the use of public transport but would wish this to be tied into working hours fitting in with the bus timetable.

There is, understandably at this stage, no indication of expected traffic levels as a result of the development. You will be aware of the general concern in the area at the very congested A143 particularly towards Bury St Edmunds. Existing proposals for perhaps 1,000 plus houses in Ixworth, Stanton and surrounding villages, will generate some 6,000 plus additional vehicle movements per day and Copart, if it should be built, a further large number of HGVs and other vehicles. There is no question that these additional vehicles will make the present situation worse. Minor road changes will not resolve this conundrum. Therefore, unless major road improvements take place before your project goes ahead, we should oppose the development, as desirable as it may be in other respects.

Biodiversity would be significantly damaged by your proposals. We would therefore expect a very substantial proposal for additional biodiversity on a significant scale to both replace and improve it. Further, in respect of the major biodiverse value of old land and vegetation, new planting should not be seen as a satisfactory replacement.

You will be aware of local concern over the chemicals which have been used on the area of the old RAF airfield and subsequent Nuclear Missile base. The aquifer is susceptible to pollution as is the natural drainage into the Little Ouse, an area with significant areas of SSSIs and other valuable natural habitats. The presence of a disrupted clay layer over the aquifer is not sufficient protection. Disturbance of the soil during construction could release these chemicals into the aquifer or streams.

We look forward to the sight of and being consulted over your masterplan and further details.”

20th May 2023