

Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan

**Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats
Regulations Assessment Screening Opinion**

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Key information on the emerging neighbourhood plan	4
3.	Legislative background	10
4.	Screening process	12
5.	Screening assessment.....	13
6.	Habitats regulations assessment screening	17
7.	Screening outcome	18
	Appendix 1 – environmental constraints.....	19
	Appendix 2 – Internationally designated sites	24
	Appendix 3 – plan area	27

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This screening report is to determine whether the content of the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2040 (Submission (Regulation 15) draft March 2024) requires a strategic environmental assessment in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2. This report also contains a habitats regulations assessment (HRA) screening to determine whether the plan would have a likely significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects as required by the Habitats Directive.
- 1.3. This draft has been prepared to inform consultation with the statutory consultees, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- 1.4. Ixworth is defined in the existing development plan (Core Strategy 2010 former St Edmundsbury Borough Council area) as a key service centre – these generally have a wide range of services as well as local employment provision and provide the main focus for growth outside of the towns with the scale of growth in the individual settlements dependent upon the local environmental and infrastructure capacity of the settlement concerned. It is in the administrative area of West Suffolk Council. The Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council (a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011).
- 1.5. The plan is at Regulation 15 stage and this screening is based on the information within the submission draft neighbourhood plan dated March 2024. The information on the plan is in section two.
- 1.6. A screening was undertaken in July 2023, post the pre-submission consultation stage and that screening was based on the information within the neighbourhood plan and accompanying documents that were on pre-submission consultation from 23 May to 7 July 2023. The screening at that time concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required.
- 1.7. The legislative background, set out in section three, outlines the regulations that require this screening exercise. Section five provides a screening assessment of the significant environmental effects of the neighbourhood plan, section six is the habitats regulations assessment (HRA) screening and section seven is the screening outcome.

2. Key information on the emerging neighbourhood plan

Vision, aims and objectives of neighbourhood plan.

- 2.1. The vision for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe is set out in 3.1 of the neighbourhood plan and is as follows:

In 2040, Ixworth is still a pleasant place to live. It has grown considerably in size, but its long-established character as a bustling village with an attractive environment has been preserved. Ixworth remains a vibrant village with its range of independent shops with good community facilities continuing to draw in local residents from the village and the surrounding areas every day.

In particular, Ixworth has successfully addressed three key issues. First, new housing development has taken place on sites around Ixworth village, reflecting the scale and character of the existing built environment – they have been integrated into the area and feel part of Ixworth. As a result of the new houses, neither younger nor older people now need to leave the village to find affordable or suitable housing.

Second, improvements in traffic management and pedestrian safety have made for a more pleasant environment while the development of walkways (including a pedestrian footbridge over the A143) and cycle paths into and around the village have encouraged people to leave their cars at home. This has reduced congestion and alleviated the pressure on the village car park and the High Street, resulting in an improved village centre as a place to stop and walk around. As a result, its shops and businesses thrive by both day and evening. The improvement of provision for small businesses has increased job opportunities for local people.

The character of the older parts of the village is now even more secure and has led to an increase in the number of visitors and tourists coming to the village centre. Ixworth has become a destination, where people come to walk or cycle in the surrounding attractive countryside or to enjoy a drink or meal in the village.

Third, additional and improved leisure facilities have been developed. Potential green spaces have been developed into recreational and informal leisure facilities to meet the needs of all sections of the population. New facilities for youth activities have been provided.

A strong community spirit continues to exist and new, along with established residents, have successfully integrated into the village, giving everyone the opportunity to participate in and live a healthy, safe and satisfying life.

2.2. To deliver the vision, the neighbourhood plan has the following objectives in six themes that have provided a benchmark for the preparation of its planning policies.

Housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the design of new housing in Ixworth parish is of high quality and in keeping with the best examples of character and design in Ixworth. 2. Ensure new housing meets the needs of Ixworth parish, particularly in respect of providing smaller dwellings for first time buyers and older people while providing a suitable mix of sizes to enable movement within the parish. 3. Ensure new development is designed so that it is in keeping with its rural location and does not feel overly dense.
Transport and movement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Improve the functioning of the road network to ensure pedestrian safety and maximise the potential for use by cyclists. 5. Encourage the provision of and improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes into and around Ixworth village to support a more sustainable and safer environment, reduce reliance on the car and offer healthier lifestyle options. 6. Ensure the provision of appropriate public car and bicycle parking within Ixworth village.
Leisure and recreation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Provide better opportunities for leisure for all in the community.
Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Improve the range and quality of open spaces and sporting facilities serving the local community. 9. Ensure new development does not increase flood risk and does not adversely affect drainage and flooding. 10. Ensure new development is energy efficient and enables wildlife to thrive. 11. Create greater access to the countryside through the creation of more pathways and green corridors. This public access should be sensitive to the needs of the natural environment.
Ixworth village centre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Provide for and enhance existing facilities and support initiatives to attract visitors and tourists to Ixworth village.

Neighbourhood area

- 2.3. The Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan area was originally designated by the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 20th July 2017. This is the area that the neighbourhood plan covers. The plan area includes the whole of the parish of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe defined by the parish boundary and is shown on the map in appendix three.

Approach to development

- 2.4. The neighbourhood plan for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe recognises that in the coming years new housing will be required across West Suffolk. In this regard, the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer allocating a site within the Neighbourhood Plan and is seeking to support and ensure that the sites allocated in Rural Vision 2031 and emerging West Suffolk Submission (Reg 19) Draft Local Plan provide the types of community infrastructure that will address the needs of the community, as identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policies

- 2.5. The neighbourhood plan includes 11 draft policies as set out in table 1 below. All the policies address the types of development that would be supported, and the mitigation or enhancement measures required to protect the character and environment of the parish.

Table 1: summary of policies in the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Submission draft Neighbourhood Plan

Policy	Summary
Policy IXW 1 Ixworth spatial strategy	<p>Development proposals within the settlement boundary or on further allocations site allocations will be supported subject to compliance with the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>All development will be expected to address identified housing needs, contribute proportionately to key infrastructure, and be of high-quality design and landscaping to retain the rural character of the parish.</p> <p>Development on best and most versatile agricultural land must demonstrate that the remainder of the land can still be farmed economically.</p>
Policy IXW 2 Meeting Ixworth's housing needs	<p>New developments must be appropriate for a key service centre and meet the needs of the parish.</p> <p>Affordable housing must maximise ownership for those with local connections.</p>

Policy	Summary
	<p>On developments of 10 or more dwellings 25 percent must be accessible and adaptable and must contribute to housing for older residents.</p> <p>Self builds and accessible homes will be supported.</p>
<p>Policy IXW 3 Retaining Ixworth Parish's character through residential design</p>	<p>New residential development should reflect the character of Ixworth by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of appropriate materials and colours • avoiding uniformity • including accessible green public open space • making footways accessible • retaining existing biodiversity
<p>Policy IXW 4 Incorporating Environmentally friendly features into building design</p>	<p>Schemes that maximise energy conservation will be encouraged, for example solar, thermal efficiency, insulation, on site energy production, reuse of grey water and providing electric vehicle charging points.</p> <p>Community energy schemes are strongly encouraged.</p> <p>Schemes that encourage wildlife and biodiversity will be supported especially if they include native trees and shrubs, provide nesting and sanctuary areas, allow connectivity to other ecological features and preserve habitats.</p> <p>Major schemes should provide access to communal growing areas to promote health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>Policy IXW 5 Re-provision of Ixworth village hall</p>	<p>The re-provision of Ixworth Village Hall within the settlement boundary or on any site adjacent to the settlement boundary that is allocated through another development plan document will be supported if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear justification of the need for a new facility has been made and the proposals are also demonstrated to be financially viable • it has sufficient parking • is of the same or better size and standard as the current hall • it will be fully operational before the old hall closes • safe and accessible access is provided for all. <p>A new hall must include sufficient provision of library facilities and be able to accommodate a population increase.</p>

Policy	Summary
	<p>Retention of the old hall for future community use will be supported if a new hall is built.</p> <p>The car parking at the old hall will be retained to support the use of facilities elsewhere in the village.</p>
<p>Policy IXW 6 Retaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Ixworth village centre</p>	<p>Proposals that enhance and protect the vitality of the village centre will be supported.</p> <p>Alternative uses of the old village hall will be supported if provision of a new hall is made elsewhere.</p> <p>New retail provision outside the village centre will be supported only if it meets other development management criteria and is accessible from the village centre by sustainable transport means.</p> <p>Use of class E premises for pop-up shops and other temporary community uses will be supported in principle.</p> <p>Temporary uses as above must not detrimentally impact neighbouring uses, nor must they result in unacceptable temporary carparking issues.</p>
<p>Policy IXW 7 Enhancing leisure and sports facilities</p>	<p>Children’s active play facilities and youth facilities will be strongly supported.</p> <p>New facilities will be secured or funded via Section 106 agreements or Community infrastructure Levy funding.</p>
<p>Policy IXW 8 Improving walking and cycling throughout Ixworth parish</p>	<p>As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development should prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement.</p> <p>Cycles/disability vehicles, pedestrians and vehicular traffic should be kept separate wherever possible.</p> <p>All new developments (as appropriate to their scale, nature and location) must have good green transport links to identified connective routes within the village and must not hinder access points.</p> <p>A pedestrian footbridge over the A143 bypass will be actively supported.</p>

Policy	Summary
	Public rights of way should be retained, enhanced and linked to new routes and linking green spaces wherever possible.
Policy IXW 9 Vehicular parking	<p>Parking standards (Suffolk County Council guidance for parking 2023) must be adhered to and on street parking should be well integrated, non-obstructive and make provision for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Residential and public cycling parking provisions should be provided in secure and accessible locations and in accordance with the adopted parking guidance.</p>
Policy IXW 10 Protecting local green spaces	Local green spaces have been identified. No development may occur in these spaces unless demonstrated that it will enhance them.
Policy IXW 11 Multi-functional sustainable drainage systems	<p>Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) should be used on all new developments to mitigate any risk of flooding.</p> <p>SUDS should be designed to enhance wildlife and biodiversity.</p> <p>All drainage schemes must have an associated management scheme and be recorded on the Suffolk County Council Flood Risk Asset Registry.</p> <p>Where possible, water entering SuDS should be returned to the aquifer.</p>

3. Legislative background

- 3.1. The basis for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) legislation is European Union Directive 2001/42/EC which requires a strategic environmental assessment to be undertaken for certain types of plans or programmes that could have a significant environmental effect. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, commonly referred to as the SEA regulations.
- 3.2. To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation nine of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.
- 3.3. Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.
- 3.4. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, a strategic environmental assessment needs to be carried out and an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs two and three of Regulation 12 of those regulations.
- 3.5. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council (the qualifying body) has requested West Suffolk District Council to consider whether a strategic environmental assessment of the emerging neighbourhood plan is required due to significant environmental effects.
- 3.6. Sustainability appraisal is not legally required for neighbourhood plans, but it must be demonstrated how the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the area. It is the responsibility of the qualifying body to demonstrate how its neighbourhood plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development.
- 3.7. Strategic environmental assessment is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental effects of a plan before it is made. A habitats regulations assessment identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment must determine whether significant effects on a European site can be ruled out based on objective information.
- 3.8. European sites are defined in Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 and include special areas of conservation and special protection areas, potential special protection areas, and potential

special areas of conservation. The National Planning Policy Framework requires decision makers to apply the same protection and process to listed or proposed Ramsar sites. The sites collectively are referred to as habitats sites in this document.

- 3.9. If the conclusion of the habitats regulations assessment screening is that the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site, must be undertaken. If a plan is one which has been determined to require an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive, then it will normally also require a strategic environmental assessment.

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

4. Screening process

- 4.1. The environmental constraints of the site are set out in appendix one of this document.
- 4.2. The criteria from schedule one of the strategic environmental assessment regulations have been used in the consideration of environmental effects.

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

5. Screening assessment

- 5.1. A neighbourhood plan may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the proposals within it and a case-by-case assessment is required. The criteria for undertaking this assessment are drawn from Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC (Annex 11) and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 as set out in table two below:

Table two: consideration of likely significant effects, using the criteria from schedule one of the strategic environmental assessment regulations.

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe neighbourhood plan policies set out a framework for all development projects and other activities considering design, scale, operating conditions and protection of existing landscape and character. The majority of the proposals that would be supported are small in scale and as such would be unlikely to have any significant effect on the environment.
The degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The neighbourhood plan provides policies for the plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with the strategic policies of the former St Edmundsbury area of West Suffolk. It does not influence other plans but will become a development plan document if made.
The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	A neighbourhood plan is required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The plan includes a strong emphasis on increasing biodiversity and protecting the existing natural environment and habitats. The neighbourhood plan seeks to safeguard areas of the parish that are considered historic assets and to promote community facilities, sustainable construction, including renewable energy and energy efficiency

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
	as well as consideration of sustainable drainage and safeguarding against flood risk. Policy IXW8 aims to protect, enhance and reinstate public rights of way in the parish, allowing greater opportunities for local leisure and recreation, and reaffirming possibilities to enhance green corridors and biodiversity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental problems relevant to the plan. 	<p>The environmental impact of the proposals within the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be minimal due to the location, size and scale of development that would come forward as a result of the policies.</p> <p>Any potential environmental problems including those associated with loss of agricultural land and air pollution are likely to be of a local scale and could be tackled through the implementation of the plan. The policy content of the previously adopted St Edmundsbury local plan and the emerging West Suffolk local plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the neighbourhood plan area. These policies have been or will be subject to sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment screening.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection). 	<p>The neighbourhood plan is required to be in conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan. The local plan has had regard to European community legislation on the environment.</p>
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects 	<p>Development that could come forward through the plan would in general be of small enough scale that any effects are</p>

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
	unlikely to be significant in terms of duration, frequency, and reversibility.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cumulative nature of the effects 	<p>Other plans and projects in the vicinity of the plan area have been reviewed. Policy themes in the plan and policies in other local plan documents that would continue to be relevant protect local environmental assets. Cumulative effects are unlikely to be significant. The neighbourhood plan policies seek to safeguard the plan area from inappropriate development, individually and in combination.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transboundary nature of the effects 	<p>The plan will not lead to transboundary effects. The development site proposed within the plan is in the centre of the parish of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe and as such any transboundary effects are likely to be minimal. Any proposals that arise as windfall development or incidentally are unlikely to lead to transboundary effects on interests of acknowledged importance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risks to human health or the environment (for example due to accidents) 	<p>The level of development in the plan is unlikely to lead to additional risks to human health or the environment.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) 	<p>The potential development that could occur as a result of the plan is limited physically in its geographical area. Any effects are likely to be local and are unlikely to be significant.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values - intensive land-use 	<p>The environmental sensitivities in the plan area and immediate vicinity are listed in appendix one. The plan proposes to include policies that protect heritage and archaeological assets and protect and enhance local environmental assets. A policy in the plan expects proposals for residential development to reflect the local character and use appropriate local materials and colour palettes and incorporate natural features. Other local plan documents would also continue to be relevant. The</p>

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
	environmental effects arising from the plan are unlikely to be significant.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status. 	<p>Local, national and internationally designated nature conservation sites in the locality are listed in appendix one. The closest sensitive area is Bangrove Wood which is a SSSI and an ancient woodland within the parish boundary. The wood is private and there is no public access. No footpaths or proposed new footpaths run to the woodland therefore it is unlikely that there will be an increase in footfall or dog walking in the area. Habitats regulations assessment screening below has screened out likely significant effects on any international sites.</p> <p>A review of local landscape designations has looked at locally valued landscapes (West Suffolk Preferred Options local plan consultation 2022) and identified the Brecks Fringe and River Valleys as an important landscape area. This proposed new designation will cover approximately half of Ixworth Thorpe and extends on the western side of Ixworth within the river valley.</p>

DRAFT FOR COMMENT

6. Habitats regulations assessment screening

- 6.1. There are no Natura 2000 (European Sites) sites within the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan area. Sites outside of the neighbourhood plan area but within 15 kilometres include Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA), Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens (SAC), Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar.
- 6.2. Recent habitats regulations assessment (HRA) work in West Suffolk (West Suffolk Issues and Options Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment September 2020) has highlighted possible effects associated with the international sites as follows:
 - Direct loss or physical damage due to construction.
 - Disturbance and other urban edge effects from construction or occupation of buildings.
 - Disturbance from construction or operation of roads.
 - Recreational pressure.
 - Water quantity.
 - Water quality.
 - Air quality.
- 6.3. The Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites. The plan area is over five kilometres from the closest sites - Waveney and Little Ouse SAC, and Breckland SPA - and does not propose development within the 1500 metres buffers any of the sites.
- 6.4. In addition, the potential for effects to occur in combination with the development in the local plan and with other projects has been considered. However, it is judged that the plan is unlikely to lead to in-combination effects.
- 6.5. It is concluded that likely significant effect on any European site can be screened out.

7. Screening outcome

- 7.1. This report contains the detail of the assessment of the need for the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to strategic environmental assessment as required by Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) and appropriate assessment as required by the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The assessment for both these requirements has been undertaken on the basis of the growth set out in the neighbourhood plan and summarised in section two of this report. Based on the environmental information, and the scope of the policies in the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan, the preliminary outcome of the assessment is:
- In respect of strategic environmental assessment, significant environmental effects can be screened out (section five).
 - In respect to habitats regulations assessment, likely significant effects can be screened out (section six).
- 7.2. This report has been prepared to inform consultation with statutory consultees, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. The screening will be reviewed in light of any comments received through the consultation process.

Appendix 1 – environmental constraints

Biodiversity

There are no internationally important sites within the plan area. The closest habitats site to the plan boundary, including special areas of conservation (SAC), special protection area (SPA) and Ramsar sites are listed in the table below.

SAC	SPA	Ramsar
Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens (5.4 kilometre (km)) Breckland (8.2 (km))	Breckland (5.4 km)	Redgrave and South Lopham Fens (11.3 km)

There is one nationally important site within the plan area:

- Bangrove Wood SSSI.

There are many nationally important SSSI sites in the vicinity including:

- Pakenham Meadows 0.47 km
- Stanton Woods 0.66 km
- Fakenham Woods and Sappiston Great Grove 0.95 km
- Norton Wood 4.9 km
- The Gardens, Great Ashfield 4.9 km
- Weston Fen 5.4 km
- Little Heath, Barnham 5.5 km
- Breckland Forest 6 km
- Westhall Wood and Meadow 7.3 km
- Lackford Lakes 8.4 km

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) risk zones of Natural England give an indication of the types and scale of development that might have an effect on these SSSI. The criteria listed are in the following table.

Development category	Description	Comment
All planning applications	All planning applications outside or extending outside existing settlements or urban areas affecting greenspace, farmland, semi natural habitats or landscape features such as trees, hedges, streams, rural buildings and structures.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan
Infrastructure	Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan

Air pollution	Livestock and poultry units with floorspace more than 500 square metres (m ²), slurry lagoons more than 750 m ² and manure stores more than 3500 tonnes.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan
Combustion	General combustion processes more than 50 megawatts energy input. Including energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis or gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration or combustion.	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan
Discharge	Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 20 cubic metres per day to ground (for example to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream (please note: This does not include discharges to mains sewer which are unlikely to pose a risk at this location).	There are no such proposals or policies proposed in the plan

There are no designated county wildlife sites within the plan boundary. The closest is Mickle Mere which is adjacent to the parish boundary of Ixworth to the south. The settlement of Ixworth lies between the neighbourhood plan's Langridge site allocation and the reserve, and development of this site is therefore unlikely to have any impact on the reserve.

The Black Bourne Valley (Suffolk Wildlife Trust) nature reserve is approximately 4.8 km away from the plan area. This is a designated as a county wildlife site (NPPF local wildlife site status).

There are no other local nature reserves within 5 km of the plan boundary.

Ancient woodland - two ancient woods are present within the plan area:

- Bangrove Wood (Ixworth)
- Oak Grove (Ixworth Thorpe)

Others ancient woodlands within one km of the plan area are:

- Stowlangtoft Thicks 0.6 km
- Kiln Wood, Half Grove 0.7 km
- Wyken Wood 0.8 km
- Great Grove, Sappiston 1 km

The protective buffer zones for these ancient woodlands do not fall within the plan boundary.

Soil

The land within the plan area is primarily a mixture of grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land and a much smaller quantity of grade 4. The proposed development on Langridge is Grade 2, and the Dairy Farm site Grade 3.

Water

The Black Bourne River forms much of the northern and eastern boundary of Ixworth Thorpe and divides the parish of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe in two. There are associated flood zones two and three along the length of the river and functional flood plain. The Dairy Farm development site borders these flood zones.

There are many drainage channels, connecting waterways and some ponds within the plan area. Some of these are in part connected to the Black Bourne river.

The south-eastern portion of the plan area is within a source protection zone – Zone 1 Inner protection zone.

Air quality

There are no air quality management areas within the plan area.

Noise

The main sources of noise pollution in the plan area come from traffic noise from the A143 and A1088 crossing through the parish of Ixworth.

Access and recreation

There are only a few public rights of way within the plan area but Policy IXW8 addresses this and seeks to establish new permitted footpaths. IXW7 is concerned with leisure provision within the village.

Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

One scheduled ancient monument is present within the plan area – Ixworth Roman Villa lies to the south of Ixworth Parish on the other side of the A143 from the settlement of Ixworth.

There are twelve further scheduled ancient monuments within 5km of the plan area boundary:

- Roman settlement of Ixworth 1.84 km
- Moated site in Round Grove 2 km
- Stanton Upthorpe windmill 2.6 km
- Roman villa Stanton Clair 1.9 km
- Ringwork in Burnthall Plantation 2.2 km

- Troston Mount 1.86 km
- Pickett Hamilton Forts 2.97 km
- Bowl Barrows Black Hill 2.8 km
- Bowl barrows Neville House Farm 4.6 km
- Bell Barrow NW of Park Farm 3.9 km
- Roman Road NE of Barningham Park 3.5 km
- Castle Hill Motte 4.2 km

There are 73 listed buildings within the plan area, concentrated along The High Street and the Thetford Road. Most are listed Grade II.

Listed Grade I - Church of All Saints, Ixworth Abbey, Church of St Mary
Grade II* Water Mill and Mill House, Stable to Pickerel Inn, Dover House and Garden wall adjoining on west.

There is a conservation area in the village of Ixworth, and the area is rich in archaeological finds.

Landscape

The majority of the plan area is comprised of two different landscape character types (Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment) – Plateau Estate Farmlands that covers the majority of the parish and Valley Meadows and Fens landscape type along the Black Bourne and streams to the south of the parish. There is a small portion of Ancient Plateau Claylands to the extreme south-west of Ixworth Parish. These landscapes have the following characteristics:

- **Plateau Estate Farmlands**
A landscape of large regular fields with small woodlands on light loamy soils. A flat landscape of light loams and sandy soils. Large scale rectilinear field pattern. Network of tree belts and coverts. Large areas of enclosed heathland. 18th, 19th and 20th Century landscape parks. Clustered villages with a scattering of farmsteads around them. Former airfields. Vernacular architecture is often 19th century estate type of brick and tile.
- **Valley Meadows and Fens**
Flat, narrow river valley bottoms. Deep peat or mixtures of peat and sandy deposits. Ancient meres within the valley bottoms and important fen sites. small grassland fields, bounded by dykes running at right angles to the main river. Sparse scattering of small alder carr and plantation woodlands. Part of a wider estate type landscape. Largely unsettled, except for the occasional farmstead. Drier fields turned over to the production of arable crops. Cattle grazing now often peripheral to commercial agriculture. Loss to scrub encroachment, tree planting and horse paddocks.
- **Ancient Plateau Claylands**
Flat or gently rolling arable landscape dissected by small river valleys. Field pattern of ancient enclosure, small patches of straight edged fields associated with the late enclosure of woods and greens. Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin. Villages often associated with medieval greens or tyes. Farmsteads

predominantly timber framed, houses are colour washed and barns blackened with tar. Roofs tiled but some may be thatched. Scattered ancient woodland parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly. Hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees. Substantial open areas created for WWII airfields and by 20th century agricultural changes. Network of winding lanes and paths often associated with hedges create visual intimacy.

A review of local landscape designations has looked at locally valued landscapes and identified the Brecks Fringe and River Valleys as an important landscape area in the local context. This report forms part of the evidence base for the emerging West Suffolk local plan [Landscape Valuation report and annexes April 2022.pdf \(inconsult.uk\)](#) and the designation is expected to be included the pre-submission consultation draft of the West Suffolk Local Plan ([pre-submission Regulation 19 consultation planned January 2024](#)).

The proposed Brecks Fringe and River Valleys area covers over half of Ixworth Thorpe and extends through Ixworth along the Black Bourne River Valley encompassing Bangrove Wood. Once the local plan has been adopted the identified area will supersede the existing special landscape area which extends along the Black Bourne to the north and covers a small area of Ixworth Thorpe.

The key characteristics of the proposed locally valued landscape designation are of a transitional area ranging from domestic pastoral valley through to a larger scale mosaic of mixed woodland, heath, Scots Pine lines and farmland which is more characteristic of the Brecks. Along the Black Bourne are a string of small settlements based around river crossing points each with a range of historic buildings and bridges or fords and a riverside landscape setting.

Appendix 2 – Internationally designated sites

Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe are over 5 km from all the Internationally designated sites. The closest sites are Waveney and Little Ouse Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA). It is within 15 kilometres of Breckland SAC, and Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar site.

Site	Conservation objectives of the international site
Breckland Special Protection Area	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features. • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features. • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely. • The population of each of the qualifying features. • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. <p>Qualifying features: A133 <i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>; Stone curlew (breeding). A224 <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>; European nightjar (breeding). A246 <i>Lullula arborea</i>; Woodlark (breeding).</p>
Breckland Special Area of Conservation	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Qualifying Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H2330. Inland dunes with open <i>Corynephorus</i> and <i>Agrostis</i> grasslands; Open grassland with grey-hair grass and common bent grass of inland dunes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H3150. Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation; Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed. • H4030. European dry heaths. • H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone. • H91E0. Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae); Alder woodland on floodplains. (Important orchid site.) • S1166. <i>Triturus cristatus</i>; Great crested newt.
<p>Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Special Area of Conservation</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site <p>Qualifying Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> (Calcium rich fen dominated by great fen/saw sedge) • <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) (Purple moor-grass meadows). • Desmoulin's whorly snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>
<p>Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar site</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site <p>Qualifying Features</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The site is an extensive example of a spring-fed lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation.• The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates including a population of the fen raft spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>.• The diversity of the site is due to the lateral and longitudinal zonation of the vegetation types characteristic of valley mires, such as dry birch woodland, scrub and carr, floristically rich fen grassland, mixed fen, wet heath and areas of reed and saw sedge.
--	--

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Appendix 3 – plan area

