

Councillor Patti Mulcahy Question & Answer Sessions

18th – 19th November 2025

Key Take Away Points

Planning Policy

Government Targets and Policy

- The government sets targets for housing delivery. The District Council are responsible for delivering a minimum of 5 years' housing land supply.
- East Suffolk's housing needs target is 1696 homes per year. This has been challenged with the government.
- There is 1.5 million national home target that is set by parliament. This target is extremely ambitious and was last achieved in the 1960s; unlike today, this was largely driven by social housing delivery. Most developers can achieve a build out rate of around 50 homes per year. Nonetheless, Local planning authorities must plan positively towards achieving this target.
- To achieve these ambitious housing targets some greenfield sites will have to be built upon. Government have reclassified land within the green belt that is considered to have potential for development due to its limited contribution to the core purpose of green belt as Grey Belt.
- Residents questioned whether the government has any plans for the future of agricultural land in Suffolk. The National Planning Policy highlights the best and most productive farmland for protection from development; the Bloor Homes proposed site is not considered as 'best and most productive' so wouldn't benefit from this protection.
- Cllr Patti Mulcahy noted that the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution could mean that national development policies will have a bigger impact on the county in the years ahead. East Suffolk District Council
- East Suffolk Council no longer have a 5-year land supply because of the government's changes to housing policy. In the absence of a 5-year land supply there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This tilts the balance in favour of speculative development on sites that have not been allocated in the Local Plan.
- The current development growth has increased by 87% from 905 per year. East Suffolk Council is not currently achieving the new target of 1640 homes per year until 2040.
- There are limited brownfield sites within East Suffolk (some in Lowestoft), despite a strong desire to build on this classification. Brownfield sites are also difficult and costly to develop due to contamination etc. These are therefore not as profitable and less desirable for developers. This leads to compromises such as number of affordable housing these sites can viably deliver.
- Building on some agricultural land is inevitable to deliver the necessary housing requirements.
- It is unclear what the implications may be for East Suffolk Council's emerging Local Plan when we become a unitary authority.

Call for Sites and Local Plan

- East Suffolk District Council are conducting their 'Call for Sites' to become part of the local plan allocation. Bloor Homes confirmed that they intended to put the Foxhall Road site forward as part of the call for sites process.
- The Call for Sites will be open until the 9th January 2026. The sites will then be reviewed and put to public consultation.

- Sites from 5 houses upwards, sites for employment and green infrastructure are all considered as part of the Call for Sites. A map will be developed and an appraisal undertaken. Each locality will need to be assessed.
- The local plan is due to be completed in 2028. It is estimated that it will take 30 months for the plan to be finalised. Future development will be limited to the defined settlement boundaries.
- The local plan looks at the District as a whole. Some areas have been defined as not available for development.
- In the case of Woods Lane in Woodbridge, the developer successfully argued a lack of suitable alternative locations to meet housing needs in justifying consideration of the Woods Lane site for development. There is a concern that Bloor Homes will make a similar claim in relation to Foxhall Road, which is outside the settlement boundary.
- Cllr Patti Mulcahy stated that the Orwell Garden Village (2000), and Bell Lane proposals from Persimmon Homes were both turned down. Developments can be refused when it can be demonstrated that there are additional sites to build on.

Energy and Sustainability

- A solar farm is planned for land adjacent Brightwell Lakes, but residents questioned why new homes are not built with solar panels as standard.

Bloor Homes development proposal - land off Foxhall Road

Bloor Development Proposal and Timelines

- The proposed development will be a part of Foxhall Parish.
- There is a potential for Bloor Homes' outline planning application to be ready by March 2026, although this could potentially take a year (once submitted) to get through the planning process.
- Major development applications usually take a minimum of 16 weeks to determine. It may go straight to the planning committee. If refused, the developer can appeal the decision, and the application would then be considered by the Planning Inspector.
- Residents queried the number of houses that would be built per year. 100 homes per year was initially stated with the remainder not being required until 2045. However, this figure is not confirmed and is subject to change. It is estimated to take between 8 and 13 years to complete the development and is subject to housing market demand.

Community Concerns regarding Bloor Homes Development

- Concerns have been raised about village identities. Neighbourhood plans and Local Plans seek to preserve this.
- A document produced by Bloor Homes that does not have a scale was queried. Concerns were also raised that the appendices are technical and difficult to understand. It has been suggested that a simplified version be produced so it is more accessible to those without technical knowledge.
- There are concerns that the process is being rushed. Questions have been raised; would it not be better to wait until the Call for Sites process has been published?
- Residents asked where the assumption of housing need has come from. The Brightwell Lakes development is not yet complete, so the impacts on traffic, schools and doctors is unknown. The impact is small currently, but it is likely to be significant once complete.
- Residents have expressed concerns about a potential footpath at the end of their gardens, citing privacy issues due to the current low fences. The existing fences are approximately 750mm high and are subject to a deed of covenant, meaning that any alterations would require residents to apply for permission and cover the costs themselves. To address this, a planning condition could require the

developer to install a suitable boundary fence along this edge, ensuring privacy is maintained.

- Back-to-back gardens is an option and is another way of addressing privacy concerns. Clarity will be provided once the planning application is submitted.
- There is a topographical difference between existing houses and the proposed development. Lighting will also need to be investigated to avoid light pollution. This will be considered once the planning application is submitted. Mitigation measures will be dealt with through planning conditions.
- Other suggestions for alternative development sites were discussed including Bentwaters airfield, as it may offer more employment opportunities. Patti Mulcahy explained that potential sites needed to be put forward in the call for sites process and the landowner may not wish to put the site forward for development.
- Residents have raised concerns about the lack of local employment opportunities to support additional housing, noting that BT's workforce at Adastral Park has fallen to around 1,800 and there is substantial unused floor space. In response, East Suffolk Council has stated that it must plan positively for employment growth at Adastral Park, recognising its role as a major local employer and ensuring that future housing development is supported by adequate job opportunities.
- Residents questioned why housing is not instead being directed closer to Sizewell C, where a high level of growth in employment opportunities is expected.

Bloor Homes Planning and Consultation

- There is an unmet need for housing from the surrounding areas (Ipswich, for example).
- At present, Bloor Homes are trying to gain as much information as possible to enable them to present a favourable outline planning application. The application will need to address material planning issues, including issues raised by the local community, where these are material to planning.
- Bloor are seeking the views of the local community regarding the mix of house sizes although the general aim is for more 2-to-3-bedroom homes.
- Members of the community were urged to collate evidence of concerns regarding material planning considerations to raise during the consultation. Comment should be made once the application has been submitted. Evidence-based concerns carry more weight than opinions. Once comments have been received, these are published on the Planning portal.
- Between the proposed development and Martlesham Heath, Bloor are proposing a green divide of approximately 60 metres (house to house).

Archaeological Aspects

- Quadbikes have been seen traversing the site for areas to dig. These are due to take place in the coming weeks.
- Bloor Homes will potentially have to dig or map grounds. Any findings can be covered up as it has been and recorded.
- Questions were raised regarding the trenches. Who will decide where the trenches go, and will Heras fencing be put in place and taken down once they have been filled in and made safe?

Environmental and Wildlife Concerns

- There are significant concerns about the impact on local wildlife and biodiversity. Natural England and Suffolk Wildlife Trust will act as consultees on these issues.
- Residents are asking, "Why here?" because the proposed development site is part of a green corridor leading into Ipswich, which is important for wildlife movement and ecological balance.

Although it is designated as a green corridor in the Local Plan, the area is unlikely to be preserved as current development targets will override the designation.

- If the development is approved, some mitigation decisions will need to be made. The impact on the Nightingale population (Classified in the UK as Red under the Birds of Conservation Concern) is a significant concern for local residents. Natural England and Suffolk Wildlife Trust will need to evaluate the impact on priority species.
- The Mill River area supports species such as trout, wildflowers, and buzzards, highlighting the ecological importance of the location.
- Tree planting has been discussed, with a proposal for a 40-meter green buffer to help maintain biodiversity.
- The development will be required to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.
- The site is not designated greenbelt land but is considered a valuable biodiversity corridor, so its ecological value will need to be recognised.
- There are concerns about how development will mitigate impacts on nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Deben Estuary.
- 5 ecologists are currently employed at East Suffolk Council, they advise on planning applications.
- There are general concerns that Natural England will not seriously consider the impact of the development due to the site being considered 'low-grade' agricultural land.

Flooding and Water Management

- The A12 is already susceptible to flooding, and there are concerns that increased development will worsen this problem.
- Statutory consultees will advise on flooding risks – SCC is the lead local flooding authority.
- Sustainable infrastructure is a critical concern, particularly regarding sewage systems. There are fears of sewage leakage into the River Deben if capacity is not improved.
- Cllr Patti Mulcahy noted that the homes put forward in the Halesworth area were rejected due to the foreseen environmental impact. Halesworth did not have plans to increase the capacity of their sewage system within the next 20 years, it was therefore deemed unsuitable due to the impact.
- Anglian Water will be a consultee and will advise on water supply and wastewater treatment capacity.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- Only the Environmental Impact Assessment has been submitted so far. It was open for comments until 19th November 2025.
- The community queried who will manage the land and habitats post-development. Cllr Patti Mulcahy suggested contacting Natural England for clarity.
- Photographs were submitted in relation to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Residents were advised to contact East Suffolk Council for updates.

Additional Environmental Issues

- Air quality concerns have been raised due to increased development and traffic.
- Landscape sensitivity and heritage aspects will need to be balanced with ecological considerations.

Access and Green Space

- The plans include green space with tree planting.
- There is an unofficial footpath and informal greenspace on the site, near the SSSI, which will be expanded.

Schools

- Questions have been raised regarding the demand for schools. If the development does go ahead, what provisions will be put into place for high school aged children?
- An expansion of the Kesgrave school is expected in the first instance. For a new secondary school to be considered, a population growth of a whole years' worth of pupils is required.
- Land is being prepared at Brightwell Lakes for a primary school near to Ipswich Road however, despite initial plans for an all-through school, this appears to have been ruled out, with decreasing birth rate cited as a cause.

Infrastructure (General)

- Funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from the Brightwell Lakes development is earmarked for new medical facilities.
- At present, there are no major infrastructure changes planned. There is potential for this to change, particularly regarding the A12.
- Waste management facilities will need to be considered. Residents are asking if East Suffolk Council will cope with the increase in residents with both the proposed Bloor Homes development and Brightwell Lakes. Pressure on the Foxhall Road Recycling Centre was also raised as a potential cause for concern.
- Residents questioned whether infrastructure could be put in place prior to the development to reduce the pressures on existing services.

A14 Traffic

- The proposed development would impact the wider area including the A14 and Orwell Bridge. Bloor Homes confirmed that they are in talks with National Highways with assessments modelled up to 2043. These will encompass development sites that have not yet been completed, for example, the development behind Ransomes Europark.
- Traffic issues on the A14 are a National Highways issue. Suffolk County Council therefore have no jurisdiction regarding the modelling. This will be a separate consultation with factors including the length of the slip road considered. Strategic planning will need to take place to ensure the roads can safely accommodate the increases capacity.
- Transport East are assessing how to reduce HGV traffic by taking them off the road and onto rail. (Haughley/Ely Junction).

A12 Traffic

- Residents questioned how the A12 Major Road Network improvement scheme considers the new homes and Sizewell C. Even prior to the formal approval of the project, there was an expectation that Sizewell C would proceed. Sizewell C would have been a fundamental element in the traffic modelling. Business cases for improvements factored in additional housing growth including existing allocations in the Local Plan and deliverable sites identified at that time.
- The A12 Major Road Network proposal does not include the proposed Bloor Homes development. Suffolk County Council will need to evaluate the impact of a further 1300 homes on the A12 and surrounding minor roads including Bell Lane and Dobbs Lane.
- Residents are already frustrated about the traffic on the A12. Key concerns were raised over the immediate impact of increased traffic, lack of public transport, and regarding the impact of congestion on emergency response times.

General Traffic Concerns

- Suffolk County Council will be a consultee. They will assess the impact on surrounding roads including Bell Lane, Foxhall Road and Adastral Park. The assessment will include anticipated volumes of traffic alongside the general access, parking and usage.
- Foxhall Road has been assessed to have the speed reduced.
- Traffic congestion at the retail park is another key concern. This site was formally an industrial estate, never originally intended for retail. Since Tesco's was permitted, further retail applications were able to go ahead because the general precedent had already been set. As Suffolk Highways can only address road issues associated with each individual application based on the information they have at that time. To enable the proposed improvements to the A12, Highways are attempting to mitigate the issues of congestion at the retail park, by limiting the parking on the road and creating more pedestrian crossings.
- Cllr Patti Mulcahy confirmed that Bloor Homes will have to conduct a multi-model transport assessment as part of their planning application. This will address, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, emergency vehicles and personal vehicles.
- It was confirmed that any improvements to the highways required because of the proposed development would be financed by Bloor Homes.
- Cllr Patti Mulcahy confirmed that the county council cannot comment on future sites yet to be brought forward for development. They can only address what is put to them at the time.