

Nick Timothy, Member of Parliament for West Suffolk



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON, SW1A 0AA

To Newmarket Town Council

7 October 2025

I am writing regarding Flagship's [Rowley Drive Masterplan](#) proposal for the redevelopment of land at Icewell Hill, Regents Court, Churchill Court St. Mary's Square and Exning Road. I met Flagship representatives on 26 September 2025 along with Cllr Rachel Hood to hear about the proposals. I understand there is strong concern in the community about this Masterplan. I share these concerns as the MP, particularly on the following issues:

- a) Status of the Masterplan and consultation with the community;
- b) The number and density of dwellings;
- c) The impact on quality of life for residents;
- d) The wider impact on Newmarket.

Status of the Masterplan and consultation with the community

During our meeting, I asked Flagship about the status of the Masterplan and will be following this up with them in separate correspondence. Flagship indicated that the plan was a 'development brief' which was flexible. Yet it is not clear how this could be the case when assumptions are built in, such as the numbers and density needed to make the finances work.

I am not at all happy with the degree to which Newmarket residents and their elected representatives have been consulted on this scheme.

As I have said to Flagship, if they wish to proceed with this project they need to gain community confidence. To achieve this, they must be straight with the community's representatives. As things stand, what Flagship have said does not make sense. I will be seeking clear commitments that the Masterplan will not be the eventual blueprint. There must be real consultation with residents and all elected representatives at the beginning of the process and before designs are agreed. This redevelopment is of huge significance for Newmarket. As such, before designs are agreed, clear principles must be established and these must be founded in proper public support. That said, below I offer some substantive points on the Masterplan which has been produced, in the hope that this is helpful in beginning to make some of our views, as a community, clear to Flagship.

The number and density of dwellings

The Masterplan proposes an increase in the number of homes from 263 to approximately 440 homes including the re-provision of existing homes – see p.40. The current density of 74 homes per hectare is already greater than the level of 45 dwellings per hectare which would be seen in a typical low to medium density estate with terraced housing. However, the Masterplan proposes to increase this to more than 120 dwellings per hectare. This would be mean changing the estate from medium density to high density. This is approaching to housing estates in London such as De Beauvoir Estate (134 units per hectare) and East Village (143 units per hectare).

An uplift in density on this scale is disproportionate. Far from increasing the quality of life of those living on the estate, it will decrease it. As the Town Council knows, local services are already over-stretched — with GP surgeries, dentist surgeries, and parking already at and above capacity, along with a lack of amenities such as no dedicated recycling centre for the town. Increasing the density of this estate by such a degree is not sensible.

The quality of life for residents

It was noted during the presentation on 26 September that the proposals have been developed following consultation with residents which revealed the following issues: Lack of amenities for children, bins blocking

the roads, no active frontage at ground floor and cars blocking garages, car-dominated streets, anti-social behaviour, poor lighting, undersized flats with no private amenity.

The Masterplan as it stands would make these problems worse. Keeping Newmarket special means having high-quality, attractive accommodation which provides sense of privacy and pride, and which is safe and attractive for families.

Buildings, as depicted in the Masterplan, range in height from one to six storeys. However, buildings of multiple storeys such as this do not fit in with the town's look and design profile. The redevelopment should be made up of streets with townhouses and flats with private garden or balcony space for each dwelling.

The wider impact on Newmarket

Given the fact that local services are at capacity — and roads surrounding the development area are frequently jammed — I am keen to gain further information from Flagship as to what infrastructure would be offered to Newmarket by Flagship as part of the Section 106 process.

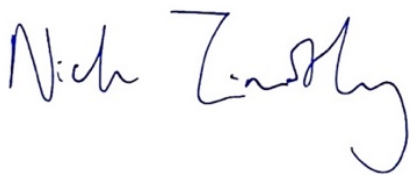
I will in contact with West Suffolk District Council about this. My view is that a significant commitment will need to be made in line with this work — both to compensate the town for the long-term disruption at such a pivotal location and to help the town cope with its growing number of residents.

Such investment should include but not be limited to: a) bus service improvement funding to enable residents to be able to commute better to and from the centre of Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds b) traffic and road safety infrastructure improvements, especially in the area of Exning Road, Fred Archer Way and Rowley Drive c) funding to improve safety on the A14 in the area of Newmarket for accident prevention d) funding for extra local GP and dentist surgeries and other health services and e) funding for community and sports facilities.

These blocks are an important element in the town's skyline when one views it from the Warren Hill. Their future is of crucial significance for the town. My strong opinion is that the proposal needs to be totally re-imagined, with the skyline firmly in mind, to ensure that it leads to an enhancement of the profile and visual aspect of Newmarket as seen from afar. At present, the excessive height of the buildings means this development will overwhelm the view of Newmarket from Warren Hill — and in a negative way.

In summary, I believe redevelopment of this area represents a real opportunity for Newmarket. However, the entire process of consultation with residents and their elected representatives needs to be re-started. Before we can proceed with the scheme in any substantive way, the Masterplan needs to be totally redone in parallel with careful coordination with the community. It seems there is a cross-party consensus regarding the development, and I look forward to working with you all to achieve a different approach from Flagship.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Timothy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nick Timothy
Member of Parliament for West Suffolk