

# LAWFORD TYE ACTION GROUP



**Website:** [lawfordtyeactiongroup.org](http://lawfordtyeactiongroup.org)

**Planning Application:** 26/00627/OUT

**Site:** Land at Grange Road, Lawford: **Lawford Tye Field**

**Submitted by:** Lawford Tye Action Group (LTAG) to Tendring District Council

## Objection Submission

**16<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

# Contents

|                                                              |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Introduction .....                                        | 3 |
| 2. Inadequate Sewage and Utilities .....                     | 3 |
| 3. Loss of Rural Character of Lawford .....                  | 3 |
| 4. Loss of Valued Green Space.....                           | 4 |
| 5. Threats to Biodiversity .....                             | 4 |
| 6. Harm to Tye Henge Ancient Monument .....                  | 4 |
| 7. Similar Application Turned Down / Not in Local Plan ..... | 5 |
| 8. Housing Density .....                                     | 5 |
| 9. Community Impact and Increased Traffic .....              | 5 |
| 10. Conclusion .....                                         | 6 |

# 1. Introduction

Lawford Tye Action Group submits this objection. Lawford Tye Action Group is a residents' campaign group formed in response to the threat of losing valued green space to speculative housing development. We represent residents affected by cumulative development pressure, infrastructure strain, and the irreversible loss of valued landscape and heritage assets.

To date, this application has attracted substantial public objections, totally outweighing **any** public support for this application. This strong and consistent community response is a material consideration. Lawford Parish Council unanimously agreed to object to the application in an Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 7 May 2026 which was packed with a large number of concerned residents. All local Parish, District and County Councillors said at this meeting that they would also lodge individual objections.

We urge the Local Planning Authority to give proper weight to the views of the community, uphold the policies that underpin the adopted Local Plan, and resist speculative development that would cause lasting harm without delivering meaningful and sustained public benefit.

## 2. Inadequate Sewage and Utilities

The population of the built-up area of Lawford was 4,026 in 2011, 4,484 in 2021, and is now estimated at 4,761, an increase of about 18.3% in just 15 years, and the number of housing units has increased by about 1300 in this time – an increase of about 20%. This additional development places further pressure on the Manningtree Water Treatment Works, situated between the railway lines near Manningtree Station. Long-standing residents report that the works are already operating well beyond their intended capacity. The scale of population growth locally, together with **Anglian Water's** own confirmation that there is no capacity available, strongly suggests that the wastewater network and treatment works are already under severe strain. Residents living in Wignall Street and School Lane have raised concerns about exacerbating run-off and sewage overflow in the area, which regularly results in the sewage pump failing in Wignall Street and sewage entering Wignall Brook.

The developer's suggested alternatives, including tanker removal of foul waste, are surely not an appropriate solution.

Tye Field sits on higher ground, and water flows downwards to the Stour Valley – even the ancient Britains understood this. No infiltration testing outcomes, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) capacity assessment, or exceedance routing evidence has been provided by Welbeck, so there is no reassurance about how surface water would behave if the field were built over and disturbed by construction. The soil chemistry analysis posted by Welbeck records levels of metals such as arsenic and chromium, yet no risk assessment has been provided as to how this could affect the site and water run-off when the ground is disturbed by construction work.

The developer says key issues will be satisfied at "reserved matters", which is not acceptable. If the developer cannot demonstrate safety and deliverability now, the application should not be approved on future promises.

Consultee responses for **other** utilities such as gas supply, show that multiple providers require diversions, rearrangements, or reinforcement works before this development could proceed. None of these works are confirmed, costed, or secured. This creates significant uncertainty about the deliverability of the scheme and the level of disruption it would impose on the community.

## 3. Loss of Rural Character of Lawford

The proposal would result in the permanent loss of a unique, well-used, high-quality green field with public footpaths, which residents repeatedly identify as a valued space for walking, wellbeing and informal recreation, and the gateway at the edge of Lawford to the countryside. Public comments clearly show that this is a meaningful part of the community's daily life and local identity. Not many villages can claim the site of an ancient monument within their parish boundaries, and it should be celebrated and respected rather than stuck alongside a dense housing development.

If dense housing, engineered access roads, lighting columns, widened junctions and urban street furniture are introduced, the rural edge is lost for good. No amount of planting, tokenistic leisure areas, playgrounds or green buffering can recreate what has been removed. The strength of local feeling reflects a clear understanding of that permanence, and the Council should give it significant weight.

The development would introduce an urban-style estate into one of Lawford's last rural edges.

## 4. Loss of Valued Green Space

Welbeck's presentation of "green and blue infrastructure" is misleading. Most of what is labelled as 'green space' consists of narrow leftover strips between housing blocks, roadside verges, drainage margins and buffer slivers required for engineering. These are not functional or meaningful green spaces, but remaining spaces created by fitting the maximum number of units onto the site.

The true green space — the open 16.4-acre grassland that currently supports wildlife, recreation and landscape character, would be largely destroyed. Replacing it largely with fragmented, shaded, inaccessible strips, a token recreation area with a water run-off pond is not green infrastructure; it is loss disguised as provision.

Planning Inspectors in the local area have recently dismissed similar edge-of-settlement proposals (for example in Tiptree Appeal APP/A1530/W/25/3376495) because of the permanent and irreversible harm they cause to rural character and appearance of the area including to the landscape. The development of Tye Field would not cause temporary or cosmetic impact; it would be a fundamental permanent change to the identity of Lawford.

## 5. Threats to Biodiversity

Welbeck's claim that the grassland of Tye Field is in "Poor Condition" is **not** supported by the evidence available locally or by what can be seen on the site in the proper season. Tye Field is a 16.4-acre grassland habitat that supports a rich mix of flowering plants, grasses, hedgerows and the wildlife that depends on them. In spring and early summer, the field contains abundant flowering species such as Dandelions and Bulbous Buttercups, alongside a range of grasses including Sweet Vernal Grass and Meadow Foxtail, all of which indicate a far more ecologically valuable grassland than the "Modified – poor condition" label relied on by Welbeck. These plants support the wider food web: local naturalists have recorded over 200 moth species on the site, including priority species such as the Lunar Yellow Underwing, as well as Skylarks, Song thrush, Bank Voles, Barn Owls, Pipistrelles, Noctules, Common Lizards, Slow Worms and Grass Snakes. Against that background, Welbeck's reported findings appear strikingly limited, including the recording of only a single lizard. This raises a serious question about the survey work undertaken by Welbeck's ecologists, Lizard Ecology, who undertook their survey work on a single cold, windy visit on 10 February 2026. This is a weak basis on which to downgrade this grassland and then claim that more wildlife will survive on a much smaller residual area after more than half the field has been built over. The claimed **Biodiversity Net Gain therefore remains unproven**, should be treated with great caution and should be checked by independent ecologists.

The Habitat Regulation Assessment also fails to consider cumulative ecological pressure from nearby housing growth, the planned National Grid infrastructure and substations, and other major schemes in the wider area.

The Environment Act requires secured, funded, long-term management of habitats. Welbeck's report does not identify a responsible custodian, nor funding mechanism, nor monitoring arrangements to manage the Post-Development habitats responsibly which has been a material factor in other local Planning Applications for example at Mistley Place Park in Mistley Planning Ref 21/00453/FUL.

## 6. Harm to Tye Henge Ancient Monument

Lawford Tye Henge is a rare, protected Scheduled Ancient Monument from the Neolithic period, which is a rare Neolithic Timber Circle of which there are only about four in East Anglia and of similar age and significance 4000 years ago to Stonehenge in Wiltshire. The monument has not been fully explored, and mysteries remain following excavation work in 1960's, 1970's and 2018. Although many artefacts were uncovered from excavation, which are retained in Colchester Museum, areas of crop marks north of the monument could not be excavated and explored at the time, and these features could reveal further archaeological features of significance. One of the most important features of this monument is its setting in the wider landscape, and how this relates to its possible purposes relating, for example, to ceremonies and the Winter Solstice or Lunar alignments.

The Historic Environment Assessment confirms that the development will cause "less than substantial harm" to the Scheduled Ancient Monument within the site. "Less than substantial harm" is more significant than it first appears – in this case it refers to the "setting" of the monument being harmed even though there may be no direct damage to the monument itself.

Dense housing, construction and engineered infrastructure within the immediate area of the henge and its wider setting could cause harm that has not been justified, and is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Lawford Parish Council has suggested that Lawford Tye field should be given a protected status because of its special characteristics.

## 7. Similar Application Turned Down / Not in Local Plan

The site lies outside the defined Settlement Development Boundary and is not allocated for housing in the adopted Local Plan nor in the current Local Plan Review. It failed the Local Plan site-selection process due to landscape sensitivity, heritage constraints, and poor sustainability so there is no reason for it now to be sacrificed for a speculative development.

Policy **SPL2** requires development to be within settlement boundaries, and Policy **SPL3** requires compatibility with surrounding uses and avoidance of adverse environmental impacts. A similar proposal on the same site was Refused Planning Permission in 2018 and Dismissed at appeal in 2019 on grounds including unsustainable location, harm to rural character, harm to biodiversity, heritage impacts and conflict with the Local Plan. It was also refused a Judicial Review by a High court Judge in 2020. There has been **no material change** to justify a different outcome.

This application and its timing are clearly speculative, neither plan-led, nor need-led, nor infrastructure-led. It does not represent sustainable development, and the Planning Authorities should protect sites and communities from this kind of speculative pressure.

If this application were to be agreed, this could encourage further speculative development on farmland to the west of Tye Field - Welbeck have indicated their ambition for this in their planning submission, which is outrageous.

## 8. Housing Density

There is no evidence of need for additional new housing in this location at this time. Nearby large new-build developments, including Manningtree Park, are experiencing slow sales, which suggests that the local housing market is already under limited demand. Waiting for the revised Local Plan to be concluded by the Local Authority would not disadvantage people wanting to buy new-build homes in the wider Manningtree area.

Delivering another 95 units on a sensitive rural greenfield site does not respond to an identified local need and would add further pressure to already stretched roads, services and utilities. The proposed density, at 12 dwellings per acre, is more than double that of the adjoining School Lane at 5.4 dwellings per acre, and the associated road widening, lighting, engineered junctions and street furniture would permanently urbanise Grange Road. This is incompatible with the rural lane character that defines this part of Lawford. There would be an unacceptable contrast with the rural landscape and the existing buildings in this area.

## 9. Community Impact and Increased Traffic

Neighbour objections and comments clearly confirm that local infrastructure is already struggling due to other new developments in the area. There has been no adequate assessment of the **cumulative** impacts of this application alongside other recent major development in the area, such as Summers Park, Manningtree Park, Lawford Place, Lawford Green, Newlands Park, River Reach which together have added over 1300 houses to our community over 20% increase in housing stock with other developments like Admirals Park Mistley already approved. It is often forgotten that there are similar developments at Brantham and East Bergholt in nearby Suffolk. In addition to this, our community is facing the likely construction of 4 major substations and their associated infrastructure by National Grid, Five Estuaries, North Falls and Tarchon Interconnector which threaten to bring major construction disruption, traffic, drainage works etc

Residents have already endured years of construction disruption from multiple large housing developments including noise, dust, road closures, HGV movements, diversions and general major disturbance. Neighbours' objections and comments repeatedly highlight that local roads and services are already under pressure from ongoing building works. Adding another multi-year construction site on Grange Road would compound this cumulative harm. This is not a theoretical impact; it is a lived reality for residents who have experienced continuous disruption for nearly a decade. The Local Planning Authority should recognise that communities cannot be expected to absorb indefinite construction disturbance simply to enable further speculative, rather than planned, growth.

Grange Road and School Lane are narrow, rural roads with intermittent footways, which are used by agricultural vehicles, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians. Increased traffic — including construction vehicles associated with proposed substations, will materially worsen safety and convenience.

Future residents of this proposed development would be heavily car dependent, with poor utilities, no joined-up public transport, traffic congestion, limited access to shops and facilities without a car, and increasing pressure on already overstretched health and school services. This is not a development designed around people or sustainable living; it is a development designed around opportunism. Tye Field is not a sustainable location, and the evidence shows that it would add further car-dependent traffic to roads which are already under pressure. This is particularly relevant to Manningtree, Mistley and Lawford, and neighbouring Brantham and East Bergholt because of the fundamental issue of the Manningtree Station Crossing which is a restriction that causes major delays for traffic movements every day. This is a problem that has existed for many years and, in spite of repeated discussions to resolve it, nothing significant has been done to improve this major bottle-neck.

These are long-term system issues that local government departments spend years trying to address, and they cannot be fixed by developer handouts attached to a speculative application.

## 10. Conclusion

Lawford Tye Action Group represents the community, and the community has spoken clearly. Residents have raised over 300 Objections to this Planning Application by Welbeck and Lawford Tye Action Group gives voice to their unanimous objections.

The Local Authority has a duty to safeguard communities from cumulative harm and to uphold the Local Plan. Approving a speculative, profit-driven proposal against overwhelming public objection would undermine public confidence in the Planning System.

Speaking with people in the community, and as reflected in many of the Objections submitted, there is also a clear concern about the effect this development would have on their wellbeing and mental health. People connect with Lawford Tye Field as part of their everyday lives, their sense of place, and their experience of living in this area. The social and emotional value and the mental health risk of destroying Tye Field should not be dismissed simply because it is difficult to quantify.

This proposal:

- Conflicts with SPL2, SPL3, PPL3 and multiple NPPF policies
- Fails to demonstrate safe or sustainable development.
- Offers no community benefit.
- Is opportunistic, speculative and not driven by need.
- Exacerbates infrastructure strain.
- Causes irreversible harm to rural character, landscape, biodiversity and heritage of an ancient monument.
- Is overwhelmingly opposed by residents.

**For all these reasons, Lawford Tye Action Group respectfully requests that application 26/00627/OUT be refused.**