



# Harlaxton Parish Council

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By email to: [planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Formal Objection to the Regulation 18 Proposed Allocation SKPR-318 on Land to the West of The Drift, Harlaxton**

Harlaxton Parish Council submits this formal objection to the proposed housing allocation SKPR-318 (land west of The Drift, Harlaxton) in the current South Kesteven Local Plan review. This objection is grounded in the following material planning considerations:

1. Conflict with the adopted spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy
2. Infrastructure inadequacy and cumulative service capacity failure
3. Landscape and character harm
4. Incompatibility with SKDC's 2025–2030 Housing Strategy
5. Precedent of recent refusal (S25/0558 – “Harlaxton Meadows”)
6. Undermining of sustainable development principles in the NPPF
7. Irreplaceable heritage hedgerows and loss of established countryside use

Each of these grounds is developed in detail below.

### **1. Conflict with SKDC's Spatial Strategy and Local Plan Policies SP1, SP2, SP4**

The proposed allocation SKPR-318 directly conflicts with the adopted Local Plan's spatial strategy (Policies SP1, SP2, and SP4). Harlaxton is designated a *Larger Village*, where development is to be “carefully managed” and “small-scale (generally expected to be on sites of no more than 11 dwellings)” [SKDC Local Plan, para. 2.11].

The site SKPR-318, if allocated, would enable large-scale residential development on open countryside with vehicular access from the A607, in contradiction to:

- Policy SP2, which supports development only where it would not compromise the settlement's nature and character; and
- Policy SP4(a–f), which requires clear community support, appropriate scale, sensitivity to landscape, and infrastructure provision.

Application S25/0558 for up to 200 homes on the south side of Harlaxton was recently refused for failing to comply with these exact policies. Allocating SKPR-318 on the opposite side of the village on similar high-grade agricultural land with significant ecological and heritage interest would represent a fundamentally inconsistent approach.

[Continued...]

## 2. Infrastructure Deficits: School, GP, Retail, Drainage

The SKDC Housing Strategy 2025–2030 calls for development only in locations with adequate infrastructure. Harlaxton no longer meets that test:

- Both the village shop and post office closed in July 2025, and are not being replaced. Furthermore, the Post Office has currently expressed disinterest in offering an outreach mobile service.
- The Welby GP surgery is a part-time satellite clinic with significantly limited availability. Most residents are now registered elsewhere in Grantham, Croxton Kerrial and Bottesford.
- Primary school places are at capacity. Lincolnshire County Council has already sought £1.2m in s.106 contributions to support nearby secondary schools (ref. S25/0558).
- Anglian Water formally objected to that same application, stating the Harlaxton Water Recycling Centre has only a 54-house capacity, and no planned upgrades in AMP8 (2025–30).

SKPR-318 offers no guarantees that these deficits would be addressed, and allocation would run contrary to the Housing Strategy's own standards for infrastructure-supported growth.

## 3. Landscape and Character Harm

SKPR-318 lies within the Harlaxton–Denton Bowl Landscape Character Area, described by the Council's own assessment as a "landscape of high scenic value" and "high sensitivity to residential development" [LCA, §4.93, §4.99]. The site occupies open, rising ground that forms a visible backdrop along the north side of the A607. Its development would:

- Visually extend the village in an obtrusive and disconnected manner
- Disrupt historic field patterns and views across open countryside
- Diminish the unique nucleated character of Harlaxton

Similar landscape harm was cited in the refusal of S25/0558 and applies equally here.

## 4. Incompatibility with SKDC Housing Strategy 2025–2030

The proposed allocation contradicts core principles of the Housing Strategy:

### a. Wrong location

"Plan for, enable, build and acquire housing... in sustainable locations." Harlaxton's loss of essential services and isolation from major transport corridors disqualify it.

### b. Viability and design challenges

"The Council is seeing a decline in affordable housing provider interest on s.106 sites." A remote greenfield site such as SKPR-318 would likely struggle to deliver either viability or tenure diversity.

### c. Lack of sustainable transport access

"Housing must reduce carbon emissions and support active travel." SKPR-318 fronts the winding A607, currently a 50mph road. A speed reduction to 40mph has been approved but remains unimplemented. There is no safe cycling infrastructure, and public transport is infrequent, with bus services through Harlaxton operating at two-hour intervals.

## 5. Inconsistency with Refusal of S25/0558

The reasons SKDC gave for refusing application S25/0558 (Harlaxton Meadows) apply equally to SKPR-318, including:

- Breach of spatial strategy (SP1, SP2, SP4)
- Overdevelopment of a small village
- Infrastructure deficits
- Landscape harm
- Highways and transport concerns

It would be irrational to refuse one application and then allocate another site with matching characteristics.

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## **6. Harlaxton's Service Status No Longer Supports "Larger Village" Designation**

Policy SP2 defines Larger Villages as those with viable local services. The closure of the only shop and post office in July 2025 leaves Harlaxton with no year-round convenience retail and minimal primary healthcare. Accordingly, Harlaxton no longer meets the test for further strategic housing growth.

Continuing to promote allocations of this scale in Harlaxton would be contrary to SP2 and unjustified in the current service context.

## **7. Heritage Landscape and Loss of Historic Features**

### **a. Southern boundary: Historic hedgerow along A607**

The site's southern boundary is defined by a historic hedgerow, adjacent to the A607 and running along the footway. This hedgerow is:

- Visually prominent and integral to Harlaxton's character along the A607
- Qualifies as an important hedgerow under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997, because it exceeds 30 years of age and marks a historic field boundary
- A vital ecological corridor for birds, invertebrates, and mammals

Its disturbance, removal, or fragmentation would directly conflict with NPPF §174 and §180 (biodiversity and irreplaceable habitats), and with the Housing Strategy's goals for character protection.

### **b. Western boundary: Long-established wildlife hedge and track**

The western boundary abuts third-party land and is defined by a well-established hedge, forming a strong landscape edge and wildlife corridor. This boundary is also the location of a 'gallop' track, which has:

- Been used by the current tenant for at least 20 years
- Served as an informal but well-established footpath connecting parts of the village and local network
- Functioned as a de facto public amenity, qualifying for protected status as a public right of way or permissive path

The gallop may meet the threshold for protection under Section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980.

The development of this area would result in the loss of both wildlife habitat and a community recreational asset, contrary to NPPF §100–102 and Local Plan Policy EN1.

## **Conclusion**

Harlaxton Parish Council respectfully but unequivocally opposes the proposed allocation of SKPR-318. The site:

- Conflicts with SKDC's adopted spatial strategy
- Lacks the infrastructure to support further growth
- Would harm the landscape and heritage features
- Contradicts the objectives of SKDC's 2025–2030 Housing Strategy
- Overlaps with refusal grounds from S25/0558
- Poses threats to hedgerow heritage, wildlife corridors, and informal recreational use

We urge South Kesteven District Council to remove SKPR-318 from consideration in the Local Plan review.

Your faithfully

Harlaxton Parish Council

*On Behalf of:*

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