

Thurston Neighbourhood Plan

**Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
incorporating Strategic Environmental
Assessment**

Draft Scoping Report for Consultation

October 2015

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	The Scoping Report	1
	Thurston Neighbourhood Plan.....	2
2	RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES (STAGE A1)	7
	International context	7
	National and regional context	8
	County/local context	11
	District policy context.....	13
3	BASELINE DATA AND KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES (STAGES A2 & A3) 14	
	Nature conservation.....	15
	Landscape	20
	Water and waste water	20
	Soil and Geology.....	22
	Heritage	24
	Air and Climate.....	26
	Human characteristics.....	26
	Roads and transport	26
	Infrastructure.....	26
	Economic characteristics	27
4	KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES	30
	SWOT analysis	30
	Key issues.....	30
5	SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK (STAGE A4)	32
6	ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY OF PLAN POLICIES AND SITE OPTIONS	34
7	NEXT STEPS (STAGE A5)	36

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report represents the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which incorporates the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Thurston Neighbourhood Plan. It is for consultation with the relevant statutory authorities and other interested stakeholders.

1.2 SEA is a requirement of the EC Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the impacts of certain plans and programmes on the environment. It is implemented in England through the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004'.

1.3 The objective of the 'SEA Directive' is:

'To provide for a high level of protection to the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development' (Article 1, Appendix 1)

1.4 The requirement for an SEA emerges from Schedule 10, paragraph 8(2)(f) of the Localism Act which states that a draft Neighbourhood Development Order (or Plan) "meets the basic conditions if the making of the order does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations". In this case, the relevant EU obligations are represented by the SEA Directive

1.5 This SEA is in accordance with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations.

The Scoping Report

1.6 The Scoping Report has been developed in accordance with government guidance for undertaking SEA in compliance with the SEA Directive

1.7 According to the guidance, the complete process has five stages resulting in the Environmental Report, which should be implemented in turn. Each stage comprises a number of subsidiary tasks, some of which should be implemented alongside each other and lead to the development of a specific output. The Scoping Report is the first stage of the SEA of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan associated with it. Stage A explains the process used in this Scoping Report and is presented below in Table 1.1. While the table may infer a sequential process, in practice, stages A1 to A4 inform each other, e.g. one has to have an understanding of the environmental issues (A3) to assess the relevant plans, programmes (A1) and requirements for baseline data collection (A2)

1.8 Consultation on the scope of the SEA is required under the SEA Directive and the Scoping Report guidance detailed above. It is a requirement that the Scoping Report is sent to three statutory Consultation Bodies with environmental responsibilities, as listed:

- The Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England

1.9 The consultation will seek to:

- ensure the methodology for the proposed SEA/SA is comprehensive to support the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan
- provide an opinion on the suitability of the SEA/SA objectives

- Advise on the key sustainability issues as far as they relate to SEA/SA
- Provide advice to ensure the baseline data is appropriate and sufficient.

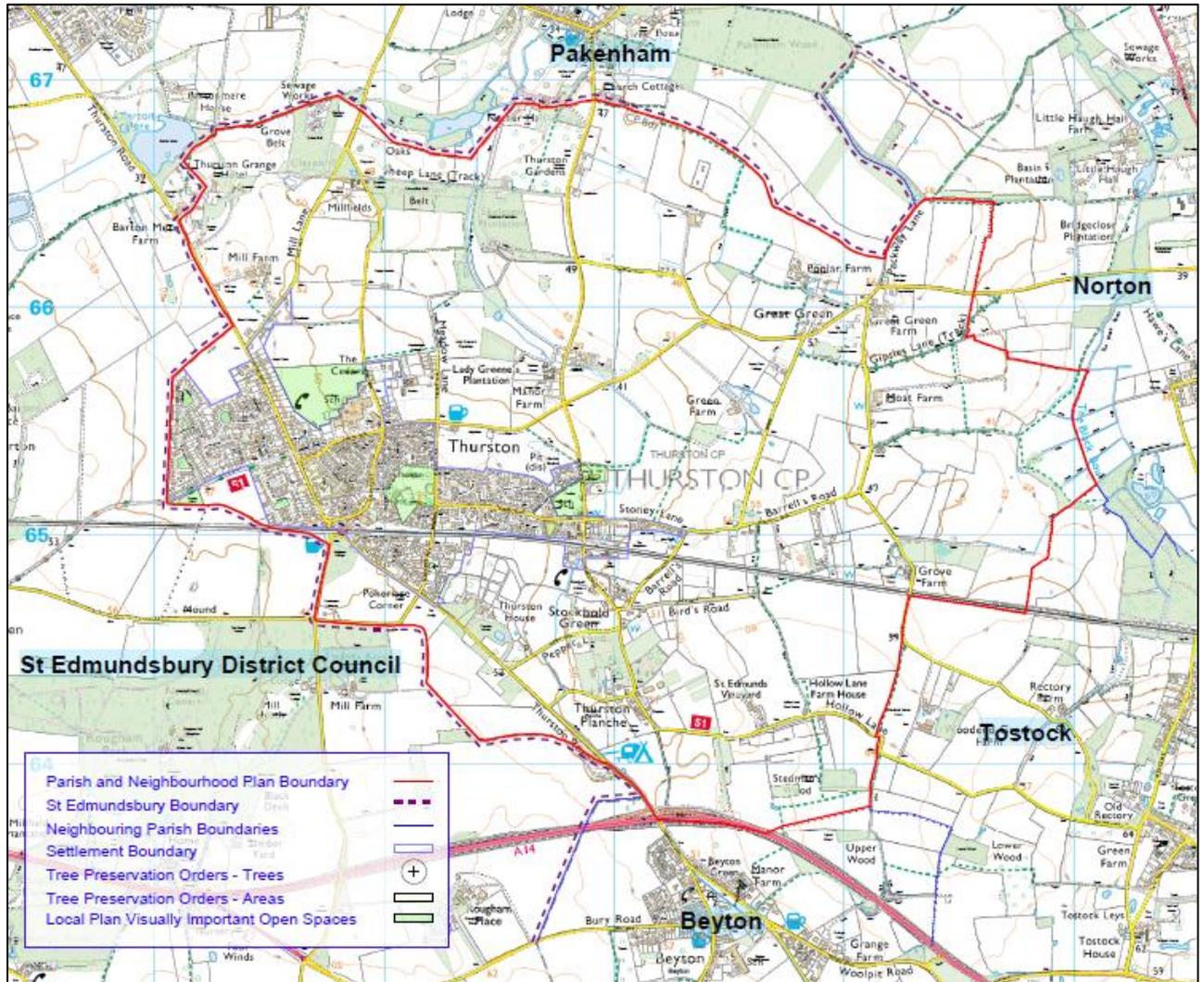
Table 1.1: Work Requirements for the Scoping Report.

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope			
Sub-Stage		Tasks	Key Outputs
A1	Identify links to other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives	Defines how the plan is affected by outside factors and suggests ideas for how any constraints can be addressed	Assessment of requirements of SEA/ Collection and evaluation of key datasets
A2	Collect baseline/ environmental data	Provision of an evidence base for sustainability issues, effects prediction and monitoring	
A3	Identify sustainability issues/problems	Used to focus the SEA and streamline the subsequent phases, including baseline information analysis, setting of the SEA Framework, prediction of effects and monitoring	Assessment of requirements of SEA
A4	Developing the SEA framework	A process to enable the sustainability of plan to be appraised	SEA/SA framework consisting of Sustainability Objectives (Table 5.1) based upon National, Regional and Local issues.
A5	Consulting on the scope of the SEA	Carried out with statutory bodies and other relevant organisations with social, environmental or economic responsibilities to ensure the appraisal covers the key sustainability issues	Revisions to Sustainability framework

Thurston Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.10 The Thurston Neighbourhood Plan area is shown in Figure 1.1 and is contiguous with the parish boundary.

Figure 1.1: Thurston Neighbourhood Plan designated area



- 1.11 The Thurston Neighbourhood Plan is being developed through an extensive programme of engagement with the local community. The primary settlement in the parish is Thurston Village with the majority of the population living within its limits. Therefore the focus of the plan has been on addressing the needs of the community that live within the village.
- 1.12 The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by local residents, with the support of Thurston Parish Council although an independent Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has driven the Plan forward. The Plan provides a vision for the development of the and parish up to 2030:

'Thurston 2031 is a vibrant Suffolk village community surrounded by attractive countryside. The village continues to be a safe, enjoyable place in which to live and bring up a family. It is a thriving village serving a wider rural hinterland

Since 2015 well-planned housing, business, health, educational and recreational provision has taken place. Thurston has not embarked on a slow and steady sprawl towards the edge of Bury St Edmunds. What it has

done is to protect the best of its historical buildings and spaces of value to the community along with the surrounding countryside, recognising they are an important part of what makes Thurston a special, individual place

The population has grown slowly since 2015 and that has enabled the community to enjoy the benefits of improved community infrastructure

New housing development has addressed the needs of the local community without changing the village 'feel'. Small-scale developments, including affordable and self-build housing, have continued over the years. In particular, groups of new starter, family homes and bungalows at various sites have been built so that young families have been able to find affordable housing locally and older people to down-size

The growth of Thurston has also enabled improvements to education and health provision. The primary school is on a new, larger site. A well-used and greatly appreciated health centre includes doctors, dentists, pharmacy, and social workers. It has become the focus of small developments for over 50s, where residents benefit from purpose-built housing, sheltered accommodation, a well-run nursing home, and social and health-care services

The centre of Thurston village has retained a good range of shops and services. New retail outlets, including eating-places and valued stores selling everyday items have located within both existing buildings and a new development in the centre of the village. New small-scale commercial units in and around the village have helped to nurture a thriving small business community. New businesses, many of which provide local services of value to the community have steadily sprung up. In general, Thurston is seen as a place where small and medium-sized companies can 'do business'. The presence of the railway station and the proximity to Bury St Edmunds has helped to nurture this progress

New sports and leisure facilities have been provided partly through financial contributions from residential development. A range of leisure facilities have been built. These provide a wide-ranging offer of activities that have been popular with children and young people: teenagers no longer say "there's nothing to do in Thurston". Accessible, linked pavements, footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways link homes to village facilities and also encourage residents to keep active. Everyone can benefit, from parents with babies in prams to the oldest member of the community

With retention of central open spaces, access to the countryside has been improved and the village has a 'green' feel to it. An additional area for burials has been created near the existing churchyard: it is peaceful and has encouraged wildlife. Green spaces and trees have been designed into each scheme and access to village facilities has been provided by footpaths, cycle paths and mobility scooter runs. Indeed, Thurston feels like a village knitted together with a network of high quality open spaces and connecting pathways

The village has been developed taking a holistic approach. New developments have been integrated into Thurston, rather than feeling like bolt-ons: they have been sympathetically designed to fit in with the style of development in Thurston to which residents have been accustomed, strengthening its appeal for everyone

The essence of life for young families, people who work in the village or surrounding towns, and the elderly has been enhanced.

1.13 In order to deliver the vision, the Plan sets out to meet a series of objectives:

- Objective One: Preserve and enhance the built, natural and historical environment of the local area
- Objective Two: Preserve the character of Thurston whilst allowing for sustainable economic and social growth and development
- Objective Three: To develop and sustain the key service centre status of Thurston by encouraging development that supports a range of employment, services and housing
- Objective Four: To develop a vibrant and prosperous neighbourhood by encouraging development that supports a range of businesses, services and housing, meeting the needs of local people while protecting the quality of the local environment.

1.14 Each of the objectives is presented in Table 1.2 below and is assessed against the strategic objectives of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy to establish whether there are any conflicts.

Table 1.2: Objectives of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan compared to the strategic objectives of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	District Core Strategy Strategic Objectives
Objective One & Two: Preserve and enhance the built, natural and historical environment of the local area and the character of Thurston whilst allowing for sustainable economic and social growth and development	SO1, SO4, SO5 CS1, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS9
Objective Three: To develop and sustain the key service centre status of Thurston by encouraging development that supports a range of employment, services and housing	SO2, SO5, SO7, SO8, SO13 CS1, CS3, CS6
Objective Four: To develop a vibrant and prosperous neighbourhood by encouraging development that supports a range of businesses, services and housing, meeting the needs of local people while protecting the quality of the local environment	SO9, SO10, SO11, SO13, SO14 CS1, CS3, CS4, CS6, CS9,

1.15 The assessment in Table 1.2 is also relevant information informing Stage A1 of the SA Scoping process.

Approach to engagement

1.16 It is recognised that the approach to engagement is vital to a successful plan. The community of Thurston parish – including its residents and businesses – must be able to properly input into the

ongoing process of developing the vision and objectives, considering options and then establishing the preferred set of options that make up the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.17 In order to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, Thurston Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan team which comprises Parish Councillors and a number of local volunteers. This team has put together a programme of engagement activities which has ensured that the community has the opportunity to input at every stage. This it has done using a range of methods:
- Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meetings held in public
 - Public meetings
 - Surveys and questionnaires delivered to all households, businesses and young people between the ages of 11 and 17
 - Regular postcard prompts delivered to all dwellings to remind residents to take part in activities relating to the Neighbourhood Plan
 - Direct engagement with local groups
 - Community engagement surgeries
 - Updates from the Neighbourhood Planning Team submitted to the Parish Council at its monthly meetings
 - Dedicated website pages on the Thurston Village Website
 - Thurston Village Newsletter.
- 1.18 All policies and site allocations will be consulted on with the community and, subject to the assessments undertaken in the SA, ultimately it is their views which will shape the decisions made on the final wording of policies and the sites that are allocated, demonstrating that reasonable alternatives have been taken into consideration. In doing so, it is vital that the community understands that the Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the Basic Conditions and therefore there are certain factors which need to be taken into consideration when giving their views on policies and sites. The Neighbourhood Plan team is using consultant support to advise on the best approach which ensures that the community is fully informed when being asked to engage on a particular matter and shape its outcome.

2 RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES (STAGE A1)

2.1 This section provides a summary review of the policy context relevant for the Neighbourhood Plan. Starting at the international level and working down in scale this covers the key policies that the Neighbourhood Plan should adhere to or consider. While it is common sense to ensure the Plan and SEA/SA reviews these requirements, it is also a requirement of the SEA Directive which states that the Environmental Report should include:

"an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes"

"the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation"

[Annex 1(a) and (e)]

2.2 Within this context it is stated in the NPPF that work for Neighbourhood Planning is proportionate with the scale and ambitions of the plan. We have therefore considered a range of relevant policies and plans for this assessment considering international, national, regional (East of England), and local (County and District) plans and policies.

International context

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
EU Habitats and Conservation of Wild Birds Directives (92/43/EEC and 79/409/EEC)		
To conserve fauna and flora and natural habitats of EU importance by the establishment of a network of protected areas throughout the European Community This was designed to maintain both the distribution and abundance of threatened species and habitats.	Identifies endangered habitats and species requiring protection and need for re-establishment of denuded biotopes. Protected areas should be created, maintained and managed.	Plans should take account relevant SPA and SAC sites. If negative impacts are anticipated appropriate assessments should be undertaken. Above protecting the integrity and interest of European sites, the NP should consider objectives to protect and if possible, enhance biodiversity.
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)		
To expand the scope of water protection to all waters, surface waters and groundwater <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 'good status' for all waters by 2015 • Water management should be based on river basins and a 'combined approach' of emission limit values and quality standards. 	Prevent deterioration in the status of aquatic ecosystems, provide protection and improve ecological condition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve at least good status for all water bodies by 2015 (or later subject to specific criteria). • meet the requirements of WFD protected areas • promote sustainable use of water 	Plan should consider any significant hydrological / hydrogeological factors and ensure integration with existing catchment management plans. Plan should consider including objectives to protect and enhance water resources, quality and ecological function.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water management should include the closer involvement of community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water progressively reduce or phase out pollutants that pose significant threats to the aquatic environment / groundwater help mitigate the impacts of floods and droughts. 	
EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)		
Establishes limit values and alert thresholds for concentrations of key pollutants in ambient air including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide / oxides of nitrogen, particulates. Maintain ambient air quality in areas where it is good and improve it in others.	Sets limit values and alert thresholds for concentrations of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead.	Plan should consider (where relevant) the levels of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air. Plan should consider maintaining ambient air quality and including objectives with the aim of reducing air pollution and, where possible, enhancing air quality in respect of key pollutants.

National and regional context

- 2.3 In this section we summarise the most relevant regional and local plans and policies making the assumption that these include the relevant international and national sustainability objectives.
- 2.4 The Planning system is undergoing a period of change following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012.
- 2.5 This has heralded significant changes including to the planning and provides a greater emphasis on localism. European Regulations still apply as does much of the legacy planning guidance – until it is revised for the NPPF.
- 2.6 The NPPF stresses the importance of sustainability running as a ‘golden thread’ throughout plans and policies.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)		
Planning should drive and support sustainable economic development. It should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> secure high quality design and good standard of amenity take account of the different roles of areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside 	Supports local and national targets with regard to biodiversity and geodiversity.	Plan should contribute to the objective of achieving sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). SA Objectives should reflect the core planning principles and policies set out in the NPPF. The Plan should:

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking account of flood risk and encourage the reuse of existing resources and encouraging the use of renewable resources • contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution • encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed • conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance • focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made sustainable. 		<p>contribute to minimising impacts and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible</p> <p>contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity – including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.</p>
<p>Paragraphs 115 and 116:</p> <p>"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.</p> <p>Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy • the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way and • any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated." 		<p>The Plan should ensure that development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is fully justified.</p>
<p>The Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011</p>		
<p>To encourage/ensure waste arises/is dealt with further up the waste hierarchy. Divert waste disposal away from landfill.</p>	<p>Target of 50% of household waste to be recycled.</p>	<p>Plan must have regard to the amended waste hierarchy. Policies and objectives should where possible encourage waste to be re-used, recycled or have</p>

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
		value / energy recovery. If possible the Plan should discourage landfilling of waste.
UK Climate Change Act 2008		
The Act introduced a statutory target for reducing carbon emissions.	Target of reducing carbon emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050, with an interim target of 34% by 2020.	Planning can make a contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate change by influencing the location, scale and character of development. The plan should include policies / objectives that contribute towards achieving lower carbon emissions and greater resilience to the impacts of climate change.
Flood and Water Management Act 2010		
Improve the management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses. To protect water supplies.	Local Authorities to prepare flood risk assessments, flood maps and plans. EA to prepare Local flood risk management strategies.	Plan should take account of flooding and water management issues and strategies and consider the inclusion of policies / objectives to reduce flood risks and other impacts on the water environment.
Carbon Plan: Delivering our low carbon future 2011		
Government-wide plan for action on climate change at domestic and international levels.	Includes a range of sector-based plans and targets for low carbon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building • transport • industry • electricity • agriculture, land use, forestry and waste 	The Plan should include policies / objectives that contribute towards achieving lower carbon emissions.
Mainstreaming sustainable development 2011		
This refreshed vision builds upon the principles that underpinned the UK's 2005 SD strategy, recognising the needs of the economy, society and the natural environment, alongside the use of good governance and sound science.	Promises a new set of indicators from DEFRA that link initiatives and include wellbeing.	Plan should take account of climate change and promote sustainability through sustainable, low carbon and green economic growth.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
The East of England Biodiversity Delivery Plan (East of England Biodiversity Forum)		
Provides a coherent vision to safeguard and enhance the regions biodiversity and wildlife. Embed a landscape scale approach to restoring whole ecosystems in the working practices and policies of all partners. Create the space needed for wildlife to respond to climate change. Enable all organisations in the East of England to support and improve biodiversity.	Provides a framework for the delivery of biodiversity targets through biodiversity opportunity areas and habitat and species targets.	The NP should consider objectives to protect and where possible, enhance biodiversity.
Anglian River Basin Management Plan		
Prepared under the Water Framework Directive, the plan is about the pressures facing the water environment in the Anglian River Basin District and the actions that will address them.	By 2015, 18% of surface waters (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) are going to improve for at least one biological, chemical or physical element. By 2015, 23% of surface waters will be at good or better ecological status/potential and 33% of groundwater bodies will be at good status. In combination 23% of all water bodies will be at good status by 2015. At least 47% of assessed surface waters will be at good or better biological status by 2015.	The NP needs to consider the impact of proposed development on water quality.

County/local context

- 2.7 Suffolk County Council prepares statutory land use plans for waste and minerals policy. In March 2011, Suffolk County Council adopted a Waste Core Strategy which covers the period to 2026 and is the most up-to-date statement of the Authority's land-use planning policy for waste.
- 2.8 A key element of the plan is the aspiration to have ended the landfilling of untreated municipal, commercial and industrial wastes.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for Neighbourhood Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031		
To ensure that transport investment supports the economic and business growth strategies in the county.	Indicators include: congestion, mode of travel to work and school, cycling trips, accessibility, road traffic accidents, road and footway maintenance, street lighting, highway structures, road	The Plan should consider policies / objectives which contribute to transport sustainability. This should go beyond reducing carbon emissions to include economic growth, safety, pollution,

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for Neighbourhood Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	flooding, air quality and transport emissions.	traffic reduction and access to services.
Suffolk Waste Core Strategy 2011		
By 2026, the landfilling of untreated municipal, commercial & industrial wastes will have ceased and residual waste management processes will be fully operational, recovering value from wastes that cannot practicably be recycled or composted.	To only make provision for a declining amount of landfill over the plan period with 'zero waste to landfill' by 2026.	The Plan should consider how, within the context of a growing population in Thurston, waste generation can be minimised and it can be ensured that Thurston contributes towards the target of zero waste to landfill.
Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan		
<p>Maintain and, where practicable, enhance the wildlife and habitats that provide the natural character and diversity of Suffolk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure lawful compliance towards biodiversity in planning decisions. • To promote best practice and provide support to planners on biodiversity issues. • To ensure the planning system contributes to the Natural Environment White Paper 2011 objective of no net loss of biodiversity as part of sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure development avoids adverse impacts on biodiversity • Where avoidance is not possible, mitigate residual impacts of developments. • Where mitigation is not possible, compensate for losses incurred during development. • Enhance developments for biodiversity. • Ensure biodiversity is taken into consideration during, and after, the construction phase of development. 	Plan should include consider including policies / objectives to: enhance (where possible) the wildlife and habitats that give rise to Suffolk's natural character and diversity.
Mid Suffolk Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008)		
Identifies all areas of flood risk within the district as well as what the level of risk is	Flood zone	The Plan needs to ensure that new development avoids areas identified at risk of flooding and that the existing level of flood risk within and outside Thurston is not exacerbated and, where possible, reduced.
Suffolk County Council Landscape Typology Mapping		
To map and record the value and variety of the Suffolk landscape.	No targets	Plan should ensure that the development strategy is in keeping with the local landscape typologies
Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation – Suffolk County Council, 2009		
To identify areas or units of land based on their key historic landscape attributes.		The Plan should ensure that areas of historic landscape character are preserved and enhanced.

District policy context

- 2.9 Thurston is within Mid Suffolk district for planning purposes. Mid Suffolk District Council's (MSDC) Core Strategy, Core Strategy Focused Review, Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) and Site Allocations DPD and Suffolk County Council's (SCC) Waste Core Strategy make up the Development Plan.
- 2.10 The weight given to policies from the plans above will depend upon the degree to which they conform to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which in the event of any conflict will take precedence.
- 2.11 The MSDC Core Strategy was adopted in 2008 and the Focused Review in 2012, with both being accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) and a Habitats Regulation Assessment. Table 1.2 of this Scoping Report considers the relationship between the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and those of the District Core Strategy and demonstrates that there is general conformity.
- 2.12 It should be noted that, at the present time, there are no other parishes in close proximity to Thurston that are in the process of preparing neighbourhood plans. As such, there are no plans which could potentially have a residual effect on Thurston parish.

3 BASELINE DATA AND KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES (STAGES A2 & A3)

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that certain environmental topics are included within the environmental baseline collected to inform the SEA. The topics required by the SEA Regulations are shown in Table 3.1.
- 3.2 The SEA Scoping Report summarises the current state of the environment and also identifies key trends and pressures for the future. The information is categorised under topics, although it must be recognised that many of the topics are interlinked.

Table 3.1: Topics and their relevance to the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan

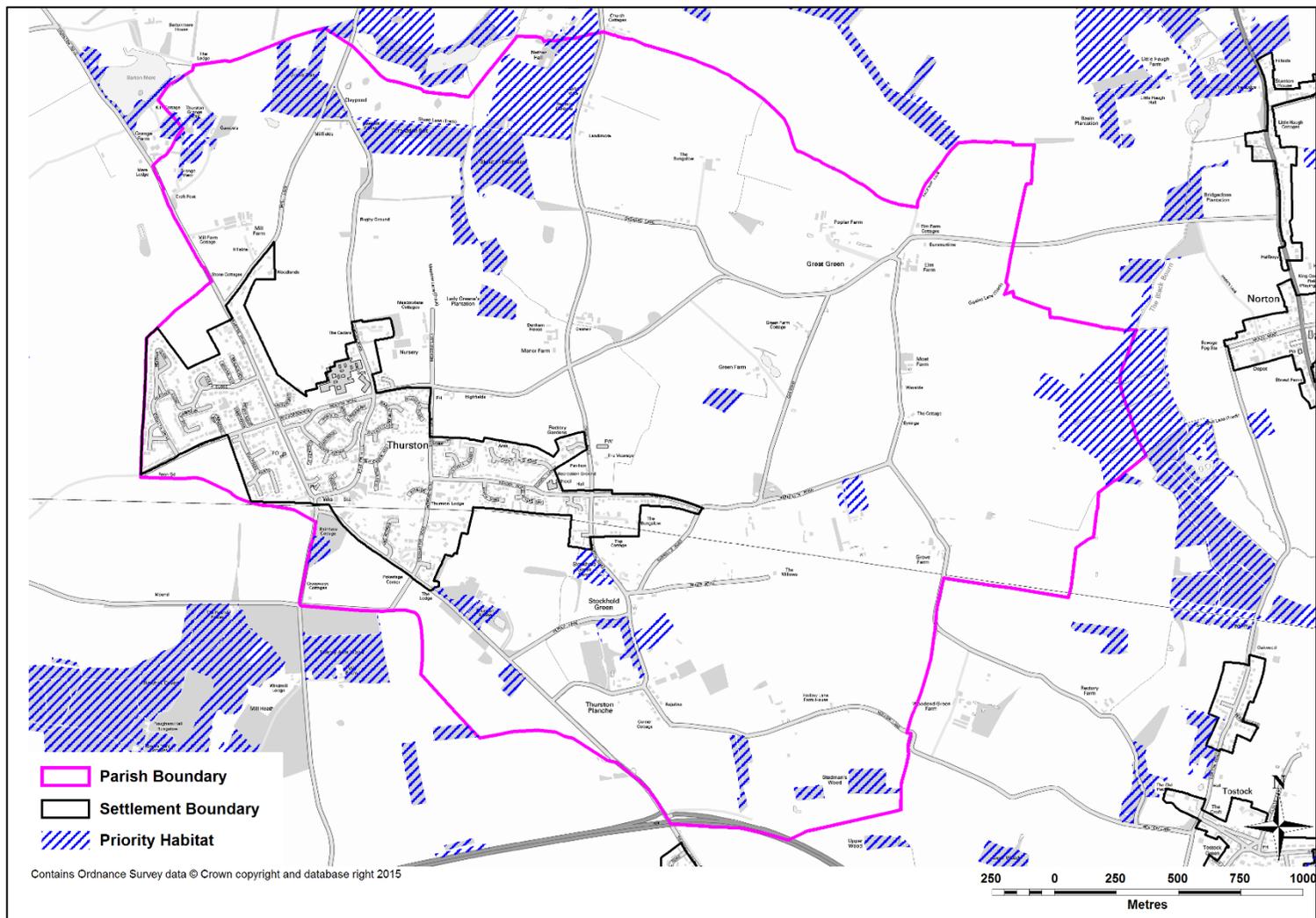
Topic	Relevance to the Thurston NP
Nature conservation	Potential for new site allocations to impact on the habitats of species within areas of nature conservation value.
Landscape	Potential for new site allocations to impact on the landscape
Water	Risk of flooding impacts on where people live and can impact on the economic prosperity of an area. The way in which water is drained off of land, including road and other hard surfaces, can be important to the level of flood risk experienced in an area.
Soils	Potential for site allocations and development to impact on best agricultural soils or important geological sites.
Heritage	Historic environment features can be vulnerable to damage and other impacts from neglect, decay or development pressures.
Air and Climate	Potential for new site allocations to create pollution through additional congestion.
Human characteristics	Potential for the plan to impact on human health, particularly positively through improvements to walking, cycling routes, etc
Roads and transport	Development could impact on congestion on the road network and create pedestrian safety problems, particularly at key junctions in Thurston Village
Infrastructure	Development could have an impact on the infrastructure necessary to keep society running smoothly
Economic characteristics	Development could impact on the ability of communities to function effectively (in their interaction with services) and on the economic prosperity of an area.

- 3.3 The information was compiled from a wide range of information sources. Firstly information came from the draft Neighbourhood Plan and associated work conducted to support it. As part of the widespread consultation work to support the plan this has included feedback from a range of consultees. There are also a number of key reports relevant to the environment of the area and some of their key findings have been summarised here – they are referenced through the text, as are various data sources used to provide maps and statistics. This section presents topics relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and while it seeks to be comprehensive only the key issues are included to keep the document manageable.

Nature conservation

- 3.4 The rural and relatively unspoilt landscape and the presence of a significant amount of ancient woodland provides the area with a rich conservation and biodiversity resource.
- 3.5 Figure 3.1 provides a map of the environmental features of the area.
- 3.6 This shows that the parish has no significant environmental features. There are a number of areas of priority habitat but these are relatively isolated.

Figure 3.1: Key environmental features



Species

3.7 Information from the Suffolk Biological Records Centre shows sightings of the following species since 2006:

Bird	Bird...cont...	Flowering plant...cont...	Insect...cont...
Gadwall	Skylark	Wild Pansy	Limnephilus flavicornis
Teal	Swallow	Fairy Flax	Indet Dragon/Damselfly
Mallard	House Martin	St. John's-Wort	Hawker dragonflies
Pintail	Meadow Pipit	Perforate St John's-wort	Southern Hawker
Shoveller	Pied Wagtail	Crane's-Bill	Brown Hawker
Great White Egret	Wren	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	Migrant Hawker
Red-legged Partridge	Duncock	Hedgerow Crane's-bill	Emperor Dragonfly
Grey Partridge	Robin	Willowherb	Banded Demoiselle
Pheasant	Stonechat	Great Willowherb	Azure Damselfly
Sparrowhawk	Blackbird	Broad-leaved Willowherb	Common Blue Damselfly
Buzzard	Fieldfare	Hoary Willowherb	Red-eyed Damselfly
Kestrel	Song Thrush	Lime	Small Red-eyed Damselfly
Merlin	Redwing	Cleavers	Blue-tailed Damselfly
Water Rail	Mistle Thrush	Marsh-bedstraw	Large Red Damselfly
Moorhen	Spotted Flycatcher	Common Centaury	Willow Emerald Damselfly
Oystercatcher	Blackcap	Field Bindweed	Emerald Damselfly
Lapwing	Garden Warbler	Bittersweet	Broad-bodied Chaser
Snipe	Lesser Whitethroat	Lesser Burdock	Four-spotted Chaser
Woodcock	Whitethroat	Creeping Thistle	Black-tailed Skimmer
Green Sandpiper	Long-tailed Tit	Spear Thistle	Darter Dragonfly
Black Tern	Blue Tit	Common Knapweed	Ruddy Darter
Stock Dove	Great Tit	Chicory	Common Darter
Woodpigeon	Marsh Tit	Cat's-ear	Buff-Tailed Bumble Bee
Collared Dove	Treecreeper	Autumn Hawkbit	Robin's Pin-Cushion Gall
Turtle Dove	Jay	Bristly Oxtongue	Common Spangle Causer
Cuckoo	Magpie	Goat's-Beard	Oak-apple Causer
Barn Owl	Jackdaw	Sow-Thistle	Mayflies (Olives etc)
Little Owl	Rook	Perennial Sow-thistle	Cloeon dipterum
Tawny Owl	Carrion Crow	Prickly Sow-thistle	Yellow-barred Long-horn
Long-eared Owl	Common (Mealy) Redpoll	Lactuca	Red-tipped Clearwing
Green Woodpecker	Greenfinch	Prickly Lettuce	bugs
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Linnet	Dandelion	Lesser Water-Boatman
Sedge Warbler	Chaffinch	Smooth Hawk's-beard	Punctate Corixa
Reed Warbler	Bullfinch	Beaked Hawk's-beard	Hesperocorixa castanea
Chiffchaff	Yellowhammer	Hawkweed	Hesperocorixa linnaei
Willow Warbler	Reed Bunting	Common Cudweed	Hesperocorixa sahlbergi

Bird	Bird...cont...	Flowering plant...cont...	Insect...cont...
		Ploughman's-spikenard	Sigara
Flowering plant	Flowering plant...cont...	Common Fleabane	Sigara (Pseudovermicorixa) nigrolineata
Common Duckweed	Perennial Rye-grass	Canadian Fleabane	Sigara (Sigara) dorsalis
Water-plantain	Fescue	Daisy	Sigara (Subsigara) distincta
Curled Pondweed	Red Fescue	Yarrow	Sigara lateralis
Broad-leaved Pondweed	Crested Dog's-tail	Sneezewort	Sigara limitata
Pale Persicaria	Smooth Meadow-Grass	Oxeye Daisy	Dipsocoridae
Redshank	Rough Meadow-grass	Pineappleweed	Pondskater
Knotgrass	Cock's-foot	Scentless Mayweed	Gerris (Gerris) gibbifer
Black-bindweed	False Oat-grass	Marsh Ragwort	Common Pondskater
Dock	Wild-oat	Hoary Ragwort	Gerris (Gerris) thoracicus
Common Sorrel	Yorkshire-fog	Common Ragwort	Water boatmen
Curled Dock	Bent Grass	Groundsel	Common Backswimmer
Broad-leaved Dock	Black-grass	Marsh Valerian	Notonecta (Notonecta) maculata
Wood Dock	Meadow Foxtail	Wild Teasel	Notonecta (Notonecta) viridis
Greater Stitchwort	Timothy	Ivy	Plea minutissima
Common Mouse-ear	Sweet-Grass	Rough Chervil	Epiphragma ocellare
White Champion	Lesser Soft-Brome	Cow Parsley	Chaoborus
Goosefoot	Common Soft-brome	Wild Parsnip	Anopheles
Fat Hen	Barren Brome	Hogweed	Culex
Cowslip	Common Couch	Carrot	Non-biting midges
Creeping-Jenny	Spiked Water-milfoil	Field Forget-me-not	Long-horned General
Scarlet Pimpernel	Coronopus	Water Forget-me-not	
Speedwell	Shepherd's-purse		Moss
Wall Speedwell	Winter-cress	Insect	Common Cord-moss
Brooklime	Water Cress	Indet. Alder Fly	Grey-cushioned Grimmia
Germander Speedwell	Cuckooflower	Alder Fly	Common Pocket-moss
Common Field-speedwell	Charlock	beetles	Redshank
Small Toadflax	Hedge Mustard	Halipilus	Common Pincushion
Sharp-leaved Fluellen	Garlic Mustard	Halipilus confinis	Field Forklet-moss
Round-leaved Fluellen	Field Penny-cress	Halipilus (Halipilus) obliquus	Variable Forklet-moss
Ribwort Plantain	Black Bryony	Halipilus (Neohalipilus) lineatocollis	Heath Star Moss
Greater Plantain	Common Spotted-orchid	Halipilus (Haliplinus) ruficollis	Hornschurch's Beard-moss
Hoary Plantain	Southern Marsh-orchid	Gyrinus substriatus	Lesser Bird's-claw Beard-moss
Water-Starwort	Bee Orchid	Agabus	Bird's-claw Beard-moss
Stachys	Yellow Iris	Agabus (Gaurodytes) bipustulatus	Cylindric Beard-moss
Marsh Woundwort	Long-headed Poppy	Agabus (Gaurodytes) nebulosus	Soft-tufted Beard-moss

Bird	Bird...cont...	Flowering plant...cont...	Insect...cont...
Hedge Woundwort	Common Poppy	Ilybius	Wall Screw-moss
White Dead-nettle	Traveller's-joy	Ilybius chalconatus	Awl-leaved Screw-moss
Bugle	Water Crowfoot	Colymbetes fuscus	Cuspidate Earth-moss
Ground-ivy	Meadow Buttercup	Acilius sulcatus	Intermediate Screw-moss
Selfheal	Lesser Spearwort	Hydroglyphus geminus	Golden Thread-moss
Wild Basil	Creeping Buttercup	Hydroporus palustris	Wood Bristle-moss
Red Bartsia	Celery-leaved Buttercup	Hydroporus planus	Anomalous Bristle-moss
Crab Apple	Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot	Hygrotus (Coelambus) confluent	White-tipped Bristle-moss
Hawthorn	Common Meadow-rue	Hygrotus (Coelambus) impressopunctatus	Lyell's Bristle-moss
Meadowsweet	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	Hygrotus (Hygrotus) inaequalis	Bruch's Pincushion
Bramble	Tufted Vetch	Hyphydrus ovatus	Frizzled Pincushion
Creeping Cinquefoil	Hairy Tare	Laccophilus	Silver-moss
Water Avens	Smooth Tare	Laccophilus minutus	Capillary Thread-moss
Agrimony	Meadow Vetchling	Anacaena limbata	Bryum dichotomum
Dog Rose	Spiny Restharrow	Berosus (Berosus) affinis	Raspberry Bryum
Common Nettle	Black Medick	Hydrobius fuscipes	Crimson-tuber Thread-moss
Rush	Lesser Trefoil	Cream-spot Ladybird	Pea Bryum
Soft-rush	Red Clover	7-spot Ladybird	Pill Bryum
Hard Rush	White Clover	Rosemary Beetle	Pink-fruited Thread-moss
Sedge	Pedunculate Oak	Small Skipper	Hart's-tongue Thyme-moss
Lesser Pond-sedge	Dog's Mercury	Essex Skipper	Creeping Feather-moss
Glaucous Sedge	Sun Spurge	Large Skipper	Kneiff's Feather-moss
Greater Pond-sedge	Petty Spurge	Brimstone	Common Feather-moss
		Large White	Dwarf Feather-moss
		Small White	Clustered Feather-moss
Horsetail	Annelid	Green-veined White	Tender Feather-moss
Field Horsetail	Leech	Orange-tip	Swartz's Feather-moss
	Helobdella stagnalis	Purple Hairstreak	Whitish Feather-moss
Acarine (Acari)	duck leech	White-letter Hairstreak	Rough-stalked Feather-moss
Hydracarina		Small Copper	Neat Feather-moss
Aceria fraxinivora	Crustacean	Brown Argus	Silky Wall Feather-moss
	Mussel Shrimp	Common Blue	Pointed Spear-moss
Alga	Ceriodaphnia reticulata	Holly Blue	Hypnum cupressiforme
Enteromorpha	Daphnia	Red Admiral	Supine Plait-moss
	Daphnia (Daphnia) obtusa	Painted Lady	Springy Turf-moss
Amphibian	Daphnia (Daphnia) pulex	Small Tortoiseshell	Woosy Silk-moss
Smooth Newt	Simocephalus vetulus	Peacock	Lateral Cryphaea
Great Crested Newt	Chydorus sphaericus	Comma	Flat Neckera
Common Toad	Crangonyx pseudogracilis	Speckled Wood	Fox-tail Feather-moss
Common Frog	Gammarus pulex	Wall	Larger Mouse-tail Moss

Bird	Bird...cont...	Flowering plant...cont...	Insect...cont...
	Water hog lice/slaters	Hedge Brown	
Liverwort	Cyclopid Water-Flea	Meadow Brown	Mollusc
Forked Veilwort	Diaptomus	Small Heath	Invertebrates (Molluscs)
Greasewort	Cyclopoida	Ringlet	Great Pond Snail
Even Scalewort	Notodromas monacha	Limnephilidae	Wandering Snail
Dilated Scalewort			White-lipped Ramshorn
	Terrestrial Mammals	Flatworm	Whirlpool Ramshorn
Springtail	West European Hedgehog	Polycelis nigra	Ferrissia (Petancyclus)
Isotoma viridis	Pipistrelle Bat species		
Podura aquatica	Pipistrelle		
	Long-eared Bat species		
Stonewort	Brown Long-eared Bat		
Delicate Stonewort	Roe Deer		
Common Stonewort	European Water Vole		
	Brown Rat		
	Brown Hare		
	European Rabbit		

Source: Suffolk Biological Records Centre

- 3.8 In total there are nearly 2,200 records over the period since 2006. The majority of these were recorded at Grove Farm and in Thurston itself.

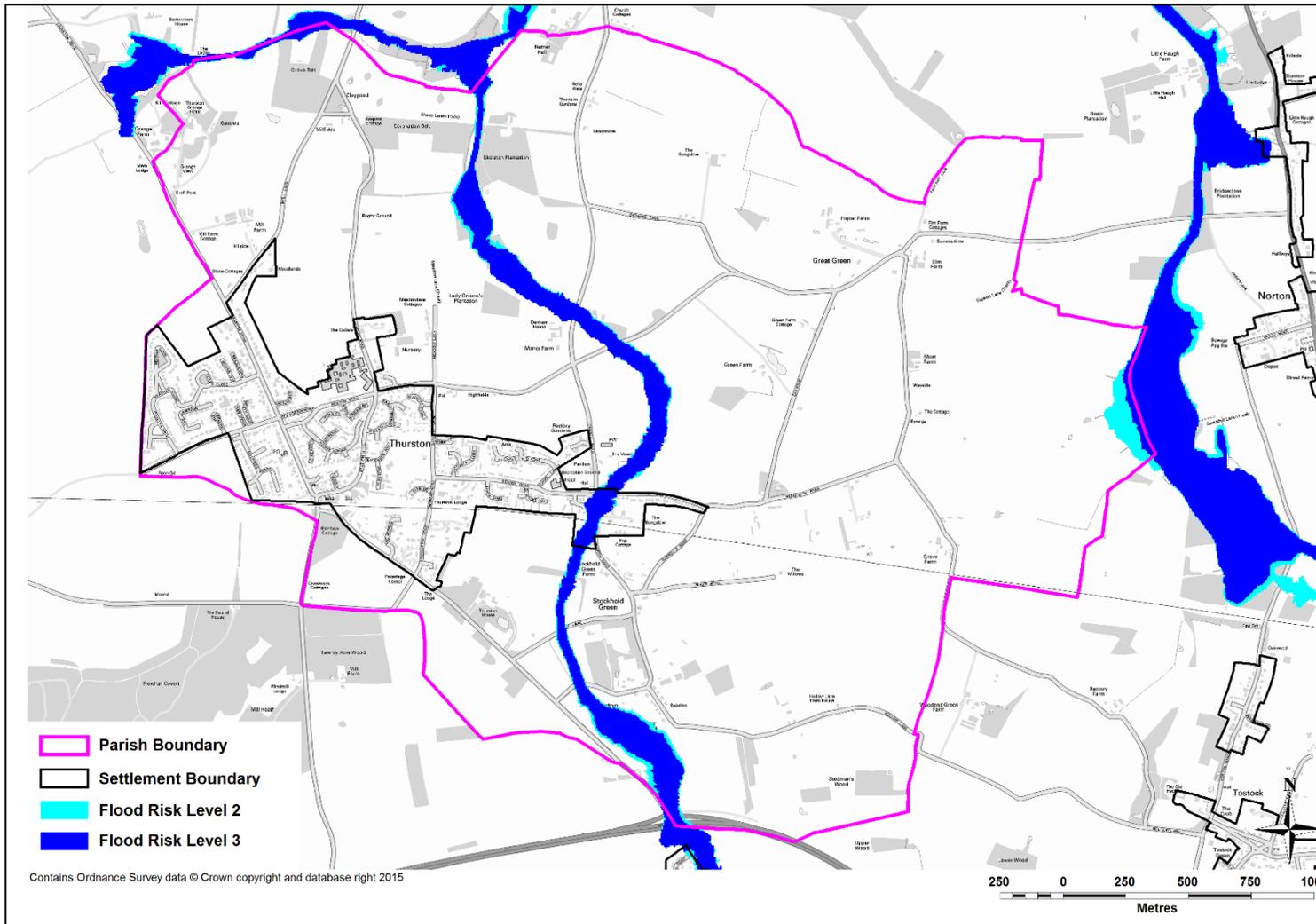
Landscape

- 3.9 Thurston is a rural parish in the very western part of Mid Suffolk district. It contains the following landscape capacity areas:
- Plateau estate farmlands - covers most of the parish. A landscape of large regular fields with small woodlands on light loamy soils
 - Valley Meadows and Fens – covers a very small slither of land in the north of the parish. Flat valley floor grasslands on silty and peat soils with small valley fens.

Water and waste water

- 3.10 Certain limited parts of the parish are classified as Flood Zone 3. This includes a small part of Thurston Village. This is shown in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2: High flood risk areas



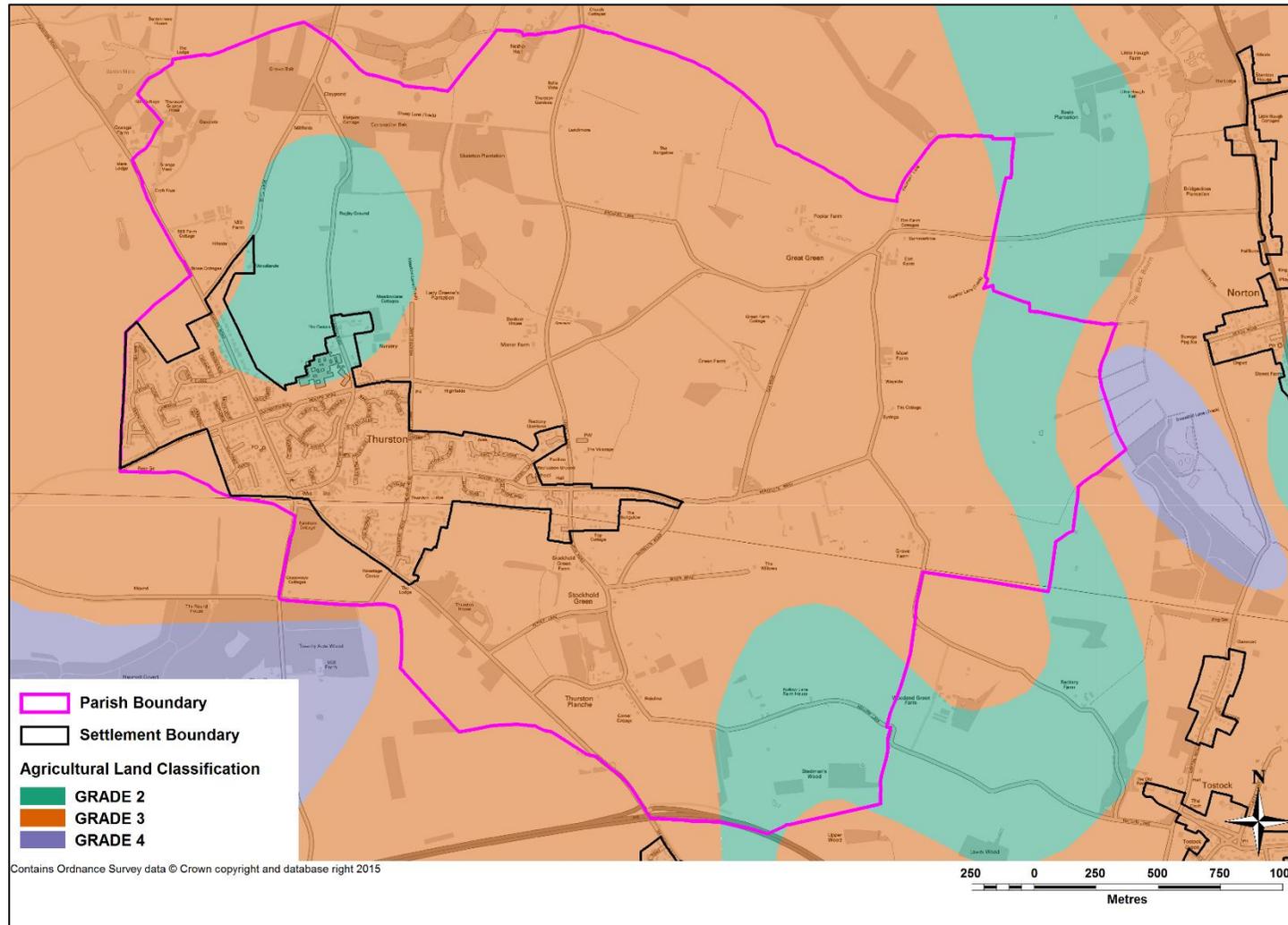
- 3.11 The 2014 Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)¹ identified that there may potentially be the need to enhance waste water treatment facilities and the waste water network to serve the Key Service Centres. However, this did not specifically identify any particular issue in respect of Thurston.

Soil and Geology

- 3.12 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use within the planning system. The scale ranges from 1 (high quality) to 5 – poorest.
- 3.13 Figure 3.3 shows that the majority of the parish is classified as Grade 3 so could be 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. Two areas are classified as Grade 2 so are definitely 'best and most versatile agricultural land. This includes land immediately adjacent to Thurston Village.

¹ Navigus Planning (2014) *Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan*, for Mid Suffolk District Council

Figure 3.3: Agricultural Land Classification



Heritage

3.14 The parish contains 23 listed buildings, of which one is grade II* listed and the remaining 22 are grade II. Of this total, 7 are in or adjacent to the Thurston Village built-up area boundary. This is shown in Figure 3.4

Grade II* Listed Building

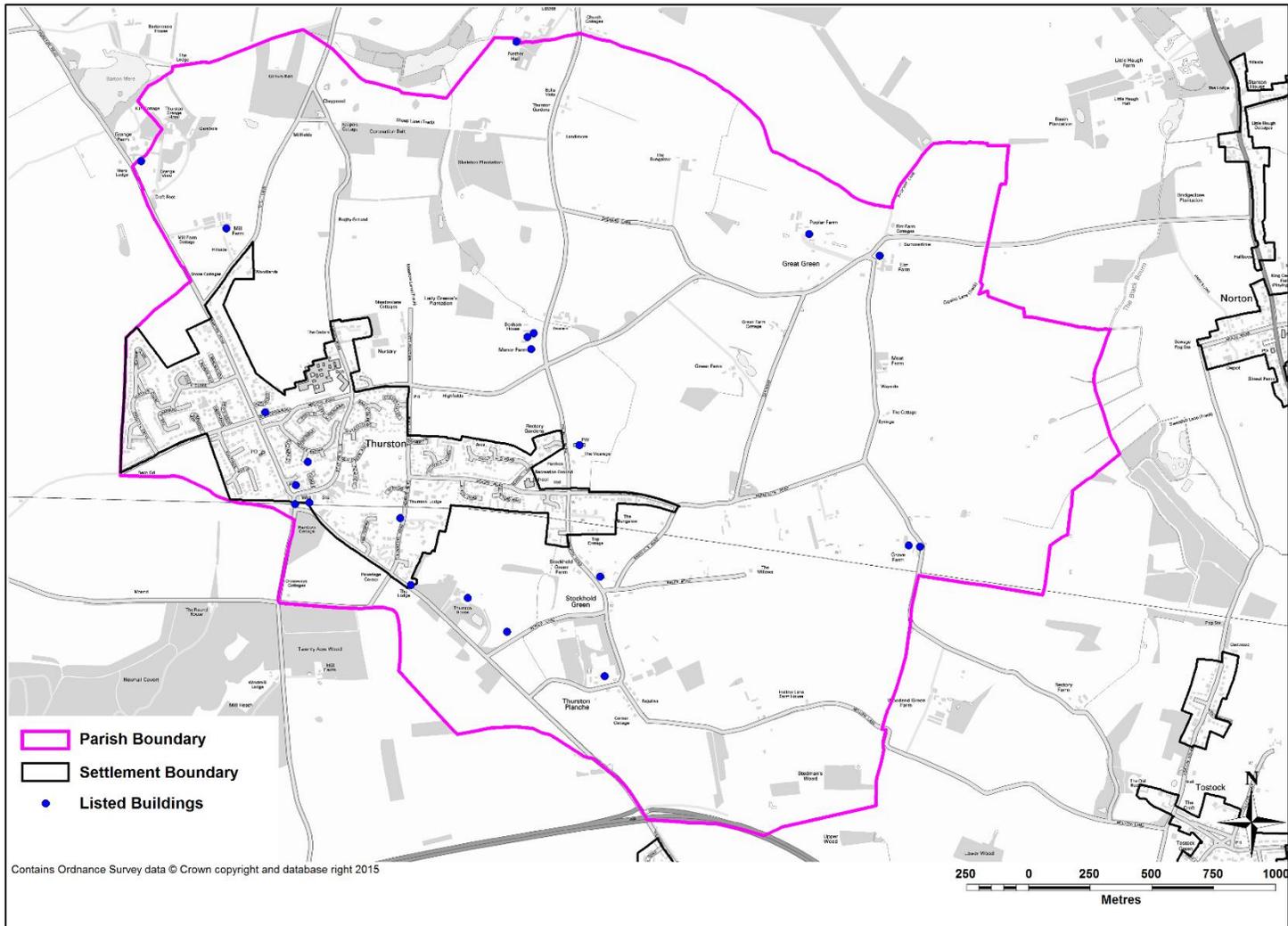
- Manor Farm House

Grade II Listed Buildings

- Barton Mere Farmhouse
- Burnt Cottages
- Church of St Peter
- Coachmans
- Elm Green Farmhouse
- Fox and Hounds Public House
- Green Farm Cottage
- Green Farmhouse
- Grove Farmhouse
- Ha Ha and Garden Walling attached to and extending about 40 metres west of Nether Hall
- Mill Farmhouse
- Nether Hall
- Pepper Cottage
- Poplar Farmhouse
- Railway Bridge
- Range of farm buildings immediately North of Manor Farm House
- Stables, 40 metres East of Grove Farmhouse
- Stockhold Green Farmhouse
- The Gate House, Thurston Place
- Thedwastre White House
- Thurston House
- Thurston Railway Station

3.15 There are no scheduled ancient monuments in the parish.

Figure 3.4: Listed buildings and Conservation Area in Thurston parish



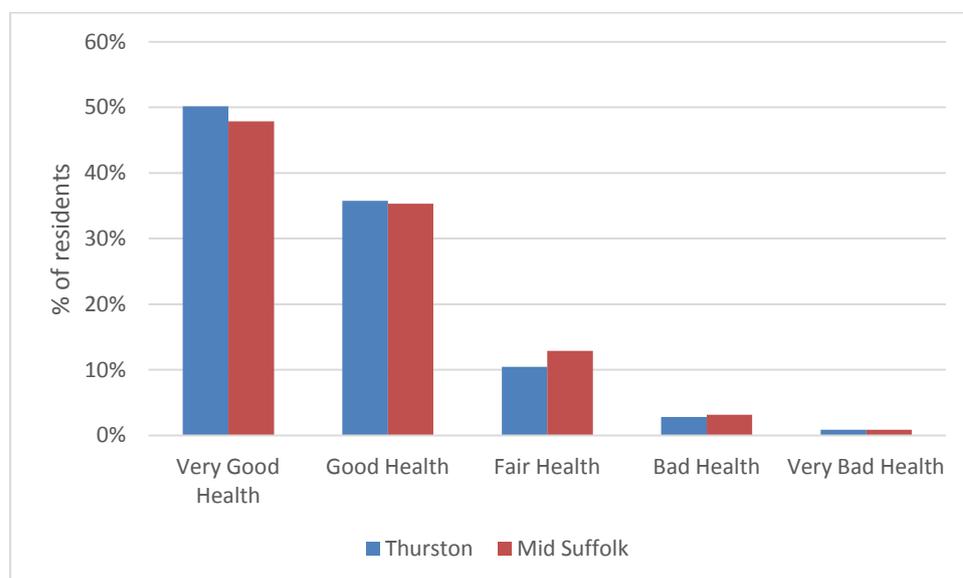
Air and Climate

3.16 Generally air pollution is low and most emissions are generated by traffic passing through Thurston Village. There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Human characteristics

3.17 Figure 3.5 shows that the general health of Thurston residents is good. Those with 'very good' or 'good' health are slightly above the district average and those with 'bad' or 'very bad' health represent only 4% of the population.

Figure 3.5: General health, 2011



Source: 2011 Census

Roads and transport

3.18 The local roads serving Thurston Village are generally small, rural roads that are inappropriate for carrying significant volumes of traffic.

3.19 The 2014 Mid Suffolk IDP did not identify any specific transport infrastructure requirements to support growth in Thurston.

Infrastructure

3.20 Thurston has the following community infrastructure assets focused in Thurston Village:

- A primary school
- A secondary school
- A Children's Nursery
- A Pre-School
- A Pharmacy

- Various places of worship
- Two community centres
- Various recreational spaces used for formal and informal recreation, including play areas
- A number of pubs and restaurants
- Two convenience shops including Post Office
- Garage
- Vehicle repair workshops
- Car Accessories
- Railway Station
- Butchers
- Sandwich Shop
- Community Library
- Fish & Chip shop
- Hair Dressers
- Dog Grooming
- Estate Agents

3.21 The 2014 Mid Suffolk IDP did not identify any specific education, health or utilities infrastructure requirements to support growth in Thurston.

Economic characteristics

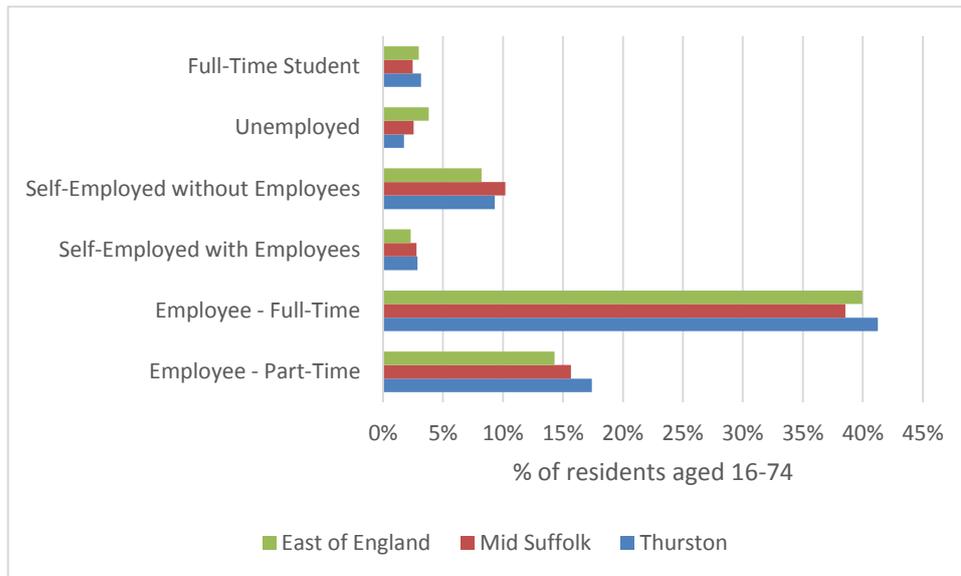
3.22 The 2011 Census recorded that the population of the Thurston parish was 3,232 persons, living in 1,355 households. Since 2001, the population has grown by 66 persons, or 2.1%. Comparatively, the Mid Suffolk district population grew by 11.4%. Over the same period, the number of households grew by 85 (6.7%) in Thurston and by 18.4% in Mid Suffolk district. This number will reflect the number of new houses built over the decade and also possibly the sub-division of existing properties into multiple households.

3.23 There has been a broad trend in the increase in population and number of households across the wider district but the rate of increase appears to be considerably lower in Thurston.

3.24 Thurston's levels of economic activity are broadly in line with the district and county figures. It does have slightly higher levels of employees, both full-time and part-time and unemployment is slightly lower than the district average.

3.25 This is shown in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Economic activity, 2011

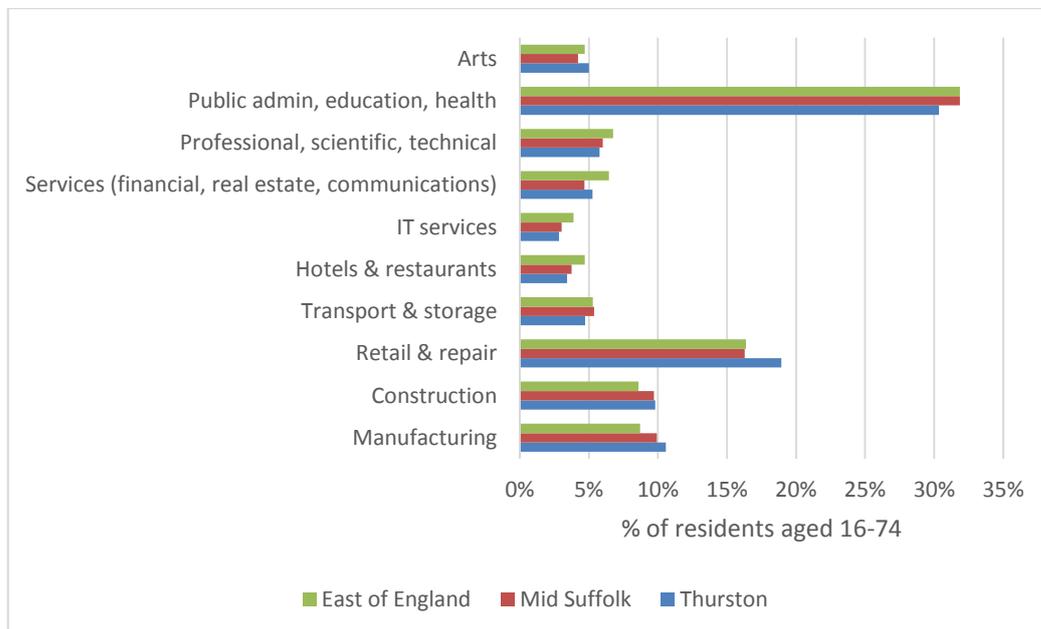


Source: 2011 Census

3.26 Thurston is comparatively strongly represented in the retail and repair sector, despite being a relatively rural location. It is likely that a number of people work in Bury St Edmunds which is very close to Thurston. The other sector that it is strongly represented in is manufacturing.

3.27 This is shown in Figure 3.7.

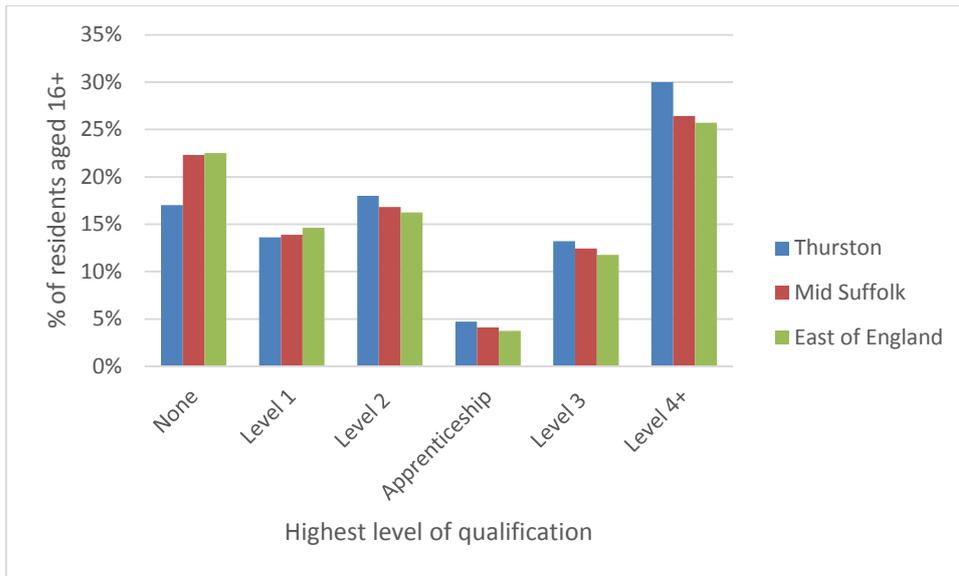
Figure 3.7: Type of industry, 2011



Source: 2011 Census

3.28 Figure 3.8 shows that the population is very well qualified. It has well above-average proportions of people with at least Level 3 qualifications. Equally, the proportion with no qualifications or only Level 1 is low.

Figure 3.8: Qualifications of residents aged 16 and over



Source: 2011 Census

4 KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

SWOT analysis

4.1 Table 4.1 has been informed by the issues identified in the Neighbourhood Plan public workshops and consultation, and the baseline information collected in Section 3.

Table 4.1: SWOT analysis of issues facing Thurston parish

<p>Strengths Quality rural setting, good range of accessible open spaces. Historical buildings protected. Good transport links with road, rail and bus service. Good mix of housing for current population. Friendly thriving village. Good facilities for younger children. Accessible public right of way. Good educational facilities.</p>	<p>Weaknesses Lack of health centre. Limited range of sports and leisure activities. Lack of linked pavements, footpaths and bridleways Traffic speed and parking issues Pedestrian vulnerability Limited activities for older children Lack of learning opportunities for older people Lack of suitable housing for older residents Limited range of retail facilities within the village Lack of recycling facilities</p>
<p>Opportunities Improve pedestrian safety. Shaping the development of the village. Increase leisure opportunities for all ages. Build housing developments with a variety of housing types, including affordable developments. Build appropriate housing for the elderly. Implement traffic calming management. Improve community infrastructure including medical and social services. Encourage local businesses, and associated local employment Expand community activities including learning & leisure opportunities for all age groups Improve the range of retail facilities</p>	<p>Threats Climate change, loss of biodiversity. Diminution of bus and rail services. Inappropriate developments including sprawl towards Bury St Edmunds. Lack of utilities capacity. Lack of affordable housing for current and future residents. Lack of mix of housing for all ages with particular reference to retirees/vulnerable Increased vehicle use of narrow roads. Increased inappropriate vehicle parking. Reduction in range of retail facilities. Inappropriate development of open spaces.</p>

Key issues

4.2 There are a number of sustainability issues and challenges facing the parish. While Thurston parish offers a high quality environment to residents and local businesses, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to manage and seek to resolve a series of issues over its lifetime if the parish is to continue to be successful while respecting its outstanding landscape setting.

4.3 In the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan (and as a consequence a lack of vision and strategy for Thurston), there will be fewer opportunities to address the issues and challenges facing the parish, as well as contributing to a reduction in the potential benefit to the community.

Table 4.2: Challenges and impacts of not having a neighbourhood plan

Challenges facing Thurston Parish	Effect of not having a neighbourhood plan
Problem of traffic speed and lack of pedestrian/cyclist safety.	Residents lives will be blighted and safety will be worsened.
Scale of housing growth	District Plan policies are strategic in nature but do require growth of Key Service Centres, therefore Thurston could be exposed to speculative applications for major housing
Lack of affordable housing for parish residents	No suitable sites for housing for local people would be delivered
Supporting an ageing population	Potential issues of care/support/transport and a lack of local homes suitable for the needs of older people
Inadequate and potentially reducing public transport options	Increased dependence on the private car and increasing isolation for those unable to afford a car
Support and flexibility for local businesses	The needs of businesses to grow and change may be restricted.
Infrastructure improvements such as roads, crossings, parking, community facilities	Funding for infrastructure requirements, for example leisure facilities, may not arise
Pressures for development in countryside including sprawl towards Bury St Edmunds.	District Plan policies are strategic in nature but do require growth of Key Service Centres which could therefore be ad-hoc and unplanned
Loss of agricultural land to development	Could result in unnecessary loss of agricultural land due to unplanned development coming forward through speculative applications
Poor access to services and facilities, for example Health Services remain distant from the village.	Increased dependence on the private car to access services and inability to do so for those unable to afford a car.
Need to maintain and enhance the high quality natural environment, wildlife networks and biodiversity of the parish	Could result in unnecessary impacts on biodiversity due to unplanned development coming forward through speculative applications
Need to protect and enhance the historic buildings and environment of the parish	Could result in unnecessary impacts on heritage assets due to unplanned development coming forward through speculative applications

5 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK (STAGE A4)

5.1 In order to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal process for the Neighbourhood Plan, it is necessary to identify sustainability objectives and indicators to enable an assessment to be made of the emerging options and allow for recommendations and mitigation measures to be proposed. The sustainability objectives have emerged through the following considerations:

- through the review of documents listed in Section 2
- as identified in the baseline section (Section 3)
- to help address sustainability issues known locally
- to help address the 'weaknesses' and mitigate the 'threats' outlined in the SWOT analysis (Section 4)

5.2 The proposed sustainability objectives and indicators (Sustainability Framework) for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan are as shown in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1: Sustainability objectives and criteria for the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan

Sustainability theme	Objectives	Criteria
1/Env	To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Thurston in terms of its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - geology, landform, water systems and climate - ancient woodlands - tranquillity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area of Ancient Woodland/SSSI within the parish. - Number of developments in 'highly vulnerable' or 'more vulnerable' flood risk areas. - Loss of any of these features through grant of planning consent.
2/Env	To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish, its wildlife habitats and species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area of priority habitats within the parish (data from Suffolk Biological Records Office) - Condition of ancient woodland in parish - Number of trees with TPOs. - Area/grade of agricultural land classification (ALC) land lost.
3/Env	To protect the landscape setting of Thurston Village through use of land with a low landscape impact and by focusing development on previously developed land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of views of value. - Loss of accessible open spaces. - Number of planning applications granted in areas with low landscape capacity. - Development on previously developed land.
4/Soc	To ensure that housing addresses the needs of the existing community of Thurston before addressing wider needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mix of housing built by dwelling size. - Number of people with a local connection on the Housing Register that are newly housed. - Number of affordable homes completed. - Widening and straightening access roads - Accessible public rights of way
5/Econ	To maximise the potential of existing employment and support the needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of existing businesses retained.

Sustainability theme	Objectives	Criteria
	of local employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new businesses in the parish. - Number of local start-ups. - Data on employment levels. - Number of businesses and dwellings (for home workers) with access to superfast broadband.
6/Env	To protect the identity and local distinctiveness of Thurston as a rural settlement and to enhance the town streetscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of listed buildings in built-up area. - Number of applications for listed building consent. - Number of developments within or adjacent to a Conservation Area.
7/Soc	To ensure that the community has a high quality and healthy lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Census figures on long term illness and general health. - Number/area of green spaces within walking distance of homes. - Usage of formal green spaces within the parish. - Number of formal recreation facilities within walking distance of homes. - Number of homes experiencing unacceptable levels of noise.
8/Soc	To ensure the provision of a range of community facilities that provide for the needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of community facilities within the parish. - Provision of accessible activities for those beyond school age.
9/Soc	To improve safe movement around the parish and to key service centres outside the parish by a range of modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levels of traffic at key junctions in the village and in particular around the schools. - Number and distance of new footpaths/cycle-paths. - Speed data from police. - Accident data from police. - Number of safe crossing points serving the areas leading to the Community College and the Primary School.
10/Soc	To ensure that the community has adequate access to the key services it needs, including health facilities, convenience shops, and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distance the population of the parish live from key services. - Availability of regular public transport. - Number of shops in the town centre. - Speed of broadband services.

6 ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY OF PLAN POLICIES AND SITE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The sustainability appraisal objectives shown in Table 5.1 will be used to assess the sustainability of the plan policy options and of the site options. In respect of the sites, this appraisal will be undertaken on all of the sites submitted and the information presented to the community as part of the ongoing engagement process in order to understand which sites are the most sustainable and are best able to deliver against the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.2 In order to ensure a comprehensive approach, possible sites for development were gleaned from two sources:
- The MSDC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process
 - A separate Call for Sites process undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan
- 6.3 For each sustainability objective, the assessment will give a score in respect of the relevant criterion. The score will be made on the following scale:
- Strongly positive
 - Slightly positive
 - Neutral
 - Slightly negative
 - Strongly negative
- 6.4 A commentary will also be provided for each criterion on each site in order to provide more context to the 'five-point' assessment.
- 6.5 The same assessment will be used to address the plan policies against alternatives.
- 6.6 Table 6.1 below relates the sustainability objectives back to the key concerns and valued aspects of the parish that were raised by the community. These were identified by the community through the engagement process on the neighbourhood plan and informed the SWOT analysis in Section 4.

Table 6.1: Comparison of sustainability objectives with valued aspects and concerns raised by the community of Thurston

	1/Env - Countryside	2/Env - Biodiversity	3/Env – Landscape/Views	4/Soc - Housing	5/Econ - Commercial	6/Env - Heritage	7/Soc - Health	8/Soc - Community	9/Soc – Transport & Movement	10/Soc - Services
VALUED ASPECTS										
Countryside and landscape	√	√	√							
Heritage of town						√				
Range of community facilities							√	√		
Shop and pubs in town centre					√					√
CONCERNS										
Traffic speed/volume									√	
Public transport									√	√
Cycling/walking							√		√	
Vulnerability of services					√					√
Lack of affordable housing				√						
Housing mix not suitable for local needs				√						
Loss of rural character	√	√	√							
Local employment opportunities					√					

7 NEXT STEPS (STAGE A5)

- 7.1 This Scoping Report will be subject to consultation for a 5-week period. Following the close of consultation, all comments will be considered and will help influence the draft SEA/SA Report.
- 7.2 As the Neighbourhood Plan is developed, the strategy, policies and site options will be tested against these sustainability objectives, to identify appropriate policies for inclusion in the Plan. All realistic policy options will be appraised against the Sustainability Framework set out in Section 5 of this report, in order to ensure that the policies chosen for the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan are the most sustainable, given all realistic alternatives.