

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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The Parish Council is disappointed to report that Members of the Mid Suffolk Planning Referrals Committee, via majority decisions, followed advice from their Planning Officers and approved applications to build over 800 homes in Thurston at its meeting on 1st November 2017.

The Parish Council and Thurston's District Councillors reminded members of the Planning Referrals Committee present that they were representing the people who voted them into power in the belief they would do the right thing by them, represent them on key issues, and stand up for them when the chips were down.

They were assured that the Parish Council and residents of Thurston understood the pressure from the government, their officers and the developers to build and reminded them that they had more than enough evidence to support a decision not to approve.

Unfortunately, the arguments put forward by Residents, Thurston Parish Council, Thurston Neighbourhood Plan Team and Thurston's District Councillors were at best dismissed as solvable and at worst ignored.

Approval for housing has been given without an Infrastructure Development Plan for Thurston; any certainty of a solution to the safety problems at the railway station foot crossing which will increasingly put lives at risk or lead to possible closure of the Cambridge-bound platform; any regard to continued concerns to mitigate highway solutions and approving questionable proposals for Fishwick Corner and the A143/Thurston (Bunbury Arms) Junction; any certainty of health provision for the village; or any solution to the current parking problems, never mind parking problems associated with increased railway station usage.

Thurston, as one of 12 Key Service Centres, is now shouldering a huge share of the District's long-term needs in one fell swoop: some 818 dwellings plus the 97 apartments at the Granary by the station and numerous in-fill sites already agreed. It is in no way an equitable share.

However, as some of these applications are only outline they will need to come back to both Mid Suffolk for further deliberation. The Parish Council, as a statutory consultee will also have the opportunity to comment further on detailed plans for the type of dwellings, tenure, landscaping and materials to be used and the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Team will continue to represent the residents of Thurston in these matters. The Neighbourhood Plan Team will continue its work on the Neighbourhood Plan and is actively working on producing a

draft plan by the end of the year. Developing the Neighbourhood Plan can still help the residents of Thurston play a greater role in determining the future of their area. As has been stated many times before, a Neighbourhood Plan is not a tool to stop development where such development is already included in the Core Strategy/Local Plan but is a tool to give residents of Thurston the opportunity to shape what that planned growth will look like.

The Parish Council will continue to respond to all planning applications that come before it and ask that residents continue to make it known of their comments and concerns and attend Planning Committee Meetings (which are open to the public) where able.