

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM

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Councillor P Robinson
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Mr P Isbell
Corporate Manager, Development Manager
Mid Suffolk District Council
131 High Street
Needham Market
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30th January 2017

Dear Cllr. Robinson,

5070/16 – Outline Planning Permission sought for the erection of up to 200 homes (including 9 self-build plots), primary school site together with associated access, infrastructure, landscaping and amenity space (all matters reserved except for access) @ land at Norton Road

Thank you for allowing the Neighbourhood Plan Team to comment on several planning applications that have been submitted to the Parish Council by a number of agents acting on behalf of Developers. The Neighbourhood Plan Team is aware that, with the submission of 6 applications (one is a duplicate) for a total of over 800 dwellings, Thurston is facing an immediate, exceptional planning issue. The Neighbourhood Plan Team is concerned that if the major applications now submitted are to be dealt with on an individual basis there will be a failure by the District Council to understand the cumulative impact such growth will have on the community of Thurston. It is also held that consideration of each individual planning application will not provide an appropriate response to the National Planning Policy Framework requirements nor to the impact on Thurston itself. It is for this very reason that the Neighbourhood Plan Team have concentrated their efforts at looking at the common issues facing each application as well as looking at the fundamental principle of development for each individual site and where provided, specifically the more detailed layout proposals and their impact given each location.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team would also like to state that in accordance with the Parish Council Protocol's for Pre Planning Application Developments – no comments on the suitability of the site for development or how the site performs in relation to others ahead of the site assessment work were made during the attendance of representatives from any of the Developers/Land Owners or their agents at Neighbourhood Plan Meetings and that whilst all applicants who attended such meetings had been informed that they could state that they had met with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group they could not in any forthcoming developer public meetings state that their proposals have in any way, shape or form, been endorsed by the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group.

Whilst Thurston Parish Council is at a relatively advanced stage in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and whilst the plan has not yet reached the final stage of allocating sites or proposing policies, following consultation with the public and land owners and agents on the site assessments carried out during Summer – Autumn 2016 it should be afforded some weight in responding to this application. The results of the site assessments as carried out under the Parish Housing Land Availability Assessment, has raised some issues which the Neighbourhood Plan Team feel are so major and fundamental that they must be taken into account by Mid Suffolk District Council in determining these applications.

A copy of all site assessment work can be seen within Thurston's Village website:
<http://thurston.suffolk.cloud/neighbourhood-plan/site-assessment-of-sites-for-development/>

The Neighbourhood Plan Team would like to state that it is disappointed at the speed at which this and other applications have been submitted for new housing in the village. There seems to be a general haste to ensure that each development is the first to submit with little regard for the cumulative impact that each development will have on the general infrastructure of Thurston which requires time to evolve and time to absorb new residents and associated growth. There is a general concern that the size of new developments being proposed will result in Thurston losing its 'village feel' and for it to become 'a small town'.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team is also disappointed that despite reassurances from Mid Suffolk that work on its Local Plan is proceeding, there is still no information being released as to the expected housing growth in the area and that work on the Councils Housing needs (Objectively Assessed Needs) is ongoing.

Given the scale of proposed housing development, the Neighbourhood Plan Team would request that the District Council adopts a cohesive approach that looks at the totality of applications and their impact on all of Thurston's infrastructure and social development. As way of emphasis the following table demonstrates the applications that are facing Thurston:

Owner/Builder	Planning Reference	Status of application	Description of development	Number of dwellings
Playdri Products Ltd, Granary Site, Station Road	2430/08	Outline granted. Phase 2 delayed.	Remainder of site with blocks of flats.	92
Playdri Products Ltd, Granary Site, Station Road	3181/13	Preliminary work started on phase 1 in 2016.	Single building commercial centre with 9 flats above	9
Bovis Homes, Barton Road	4386/16	No decision Comments closed	Purely residential	138
Hopkins Homes, Sandpit Lane	2797/16 & 5010/16	No decision No decision	Purely residential	175
Pigeon Developments, Norton Road	5070/16	No decision	Residential with 2 form entry primary school	200
Persimmon, Ixworth Road	4963/16	No decision	Residential with primary school (no size given)	250
Laurence Homes, Norton Road	4942/16	No decision	Purely residential	64
Possible number of dwellings to be added to Thurston				928

Regarding the common issues for all six applications submitted (4942/16; 4963/16; 5010/16; 5070/16; 4386/16 & 2797/16), the Neighbourhood Plan Team has broken these down into 4 main areas: Education; Housing and Transport and Social Challenges

- **Education:**

Currently primary education facilities are landlocked and full. Any future housing requires functioning primary education facilities before housing occupancy. The footpath and road network also needs substantial improvement to accommodate additional education provision. It is felt that multiple housing planning applications in Thurston demand a cohesive approach that looks at the totality of applications as well as individual consideration considering the impact of all of them on education and other infrastructure issues. In addition, Secondary students 11-16 currently attend Thurston Community College. Post 16 students are located in Beyton. It is understood that at some point in the future students may relocate to the Thurston site. Further secondary provision is available in both Ixworth and Bury St Edmunds. Suffolk County Council Education Department has indicated that were sufficient housing to be built in Thurston, Woolpit and Elmswell further secondary provision would be required somewhere along the A14 corridor.

Any significant housing would require additional primary education places. Suffolk County Council (letter from Peter Freer to Lisa Evans, MSDC) referring to Planning Application 2797/16 outlines its position:

'NPPF paragraph 72 states 'The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education'.

'The NPPF at paragraph 38 states 'For larger scale residential developments in particular, planning policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site. Where practical, particularly within large-scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties.'

'We currently forecast to have no surplus places at the catchment Primary School to accommodate children arising [from new developments], but there is some capacity at the Community College. The Primary School site is landlocked and cannot be expanded and the Community College has the largest secondary catchment in the County and is unlikely that expansion would be supported in the future.

'The County Council has been in discussions with the District Council regarding the emerging Thurston Neighbourhood Plan and has provided pupil yields and possible strategies to deal with mitigation from the growth scenarios being assessed.

'The anticipated approach to mitigate the impacts of housing growth in the area is to provide a new primary school which would incorporate the existing primary school. This new primary school would be constructed as a 315-place school initially, capable of being expanded to 420 places to meet future development. The estimated construction cost of a 420 place primary school is £6.9 million on a 2.2 hectare site.'

In addition, given capacity and legislative issues

'... the most practical approach is to establish a new early education setting on the site of the new primary school which would be a 26 place setting, providing sufficient capacity for 52 children in total.'

The Thurston Neighbourhood Plan Team recognises and endorses the County Council position. New housing development on any scale in Thurston requires provision of a functioning primary school with early education places before the occupation of housing. There is no spare capacity in existing provision.

Any chosen location for a Primary School will have an impact on roads and footpaths in the village. There are major transport issues associated with the Community College. Over 25 coaches bring and take students to and from the College daily. The road network is under pressure: the coaches and parents' cars delivering and collecting students near the College create a daily problem. When there are parents' evenings, cars are parked inappropriately on footpaths, verges and close to road junctions.

In the current location, the Primary School presents associated pedestrian and vehicle concerns. In a new location, a larger school will bring added demands. Appropriate footways, road crossings, vehicle access (immediate and wider) and car parking will need to be accommodated. There is nowhere in Thurston that has current adequate provision to assimilate the pedestrian and vehicle movements particularly at the beginning and the end of the day in school term time.

- Housing

Thurston has received 5 planning applications over recent weeks from 5 separate developers. The total number of dwellings proposed by these applications amounts to 827 homes – which would result in approximately a 64% increase in the current total housing stock of Thurston. These figures do not include the 2 applications at The Granary which add a further 101 dwellings to the tally. Should all applications be approved, there is a concern that not only will the village infrastructure be insufficient to cope, but the whole nature and ambiance of Thurston will change from that of a large vibrant village to that of a faceless dormitory town. The determination of these applications should be viewed as a whole if the development within Thurston is to be sympathetic and sustainable. Considering each application individually has the potential to allow by default considerably more development than the village could cope with.

A break-down of housing types and numbers (where known) is provided below:

Site	Land west of Ixworth Road 4963/16	Land at Norton Road 5070/16	Land at Meadow Lane 4942/16	Land south of Norton Rd 2797/16 5010/16	Land west of Barton Rd 4386/16	Land west of Ixworth Road 4963/16	Land at Norton Road 5070/16	Land at Meadow Lane 4942/16	Land south of Norton Rd 2797/16 5010/16	Land west of Barton Rd 4386/16	Land west of Ixworth Road 4963/16	Land at Meadow Lane 4942/16
Bedrooms	Market Housing					Affordable Housing					Intermediate/shared equity	
1		5										24 appts
2		4 terraced 12 bungalows	6		4 bungalows		9 bungalows 5 appts					16 houses
3		25 semis 26 detached	13		3 bungalows 22 houses		3 bungalows 5 appts 12 terraced					6 houses
4		31 detached	17		46 houses		31 semis 5 detached					2 houses
5		18 detached	6		13 houses 2 4/5 houses							
Self-build		9										
Sub Total	163	130	42	114	90	65	70	16	61	48	22	6
Total	539					260					28	
Final total 827 dwellings												

NB: Types and numbers of dwellings are shown where they have been made available in the Planning Application.

Generally, all the proposed sites are situated on land currently used for agricultural purposes on the outer boundaries of the village. The Neighbourhood Plan Team having considered the agricultural classification of land upon which these sites are situated had been made aware that, based on the generalised 1:250000 maps, the best and most versatile land generally occurs to the north of the village. Whilst it is recognised that individual site classifications are usually fully determined following detailed field work, the Neighbourhood Plan Team is concerned that development is being proposed on the best and most versatile land. Furthermore, all of the sites that have been submitted under planning applications that have come forward, are situated outside the Settlement Boundary and face out onto open countryside. The visual impact of each proposed development on approaching the village will be significant and will have an impact on the existing character and appearance of the countryside.

In general, the sites are of a higher density than those in their immediate vicinity. The plans reflect housing more appropriate to an urban landscape rather than a rural village. Several of the proposals include 2.5 to 3-storey dwellings with ridge heights of up to 12m. No other housing of this type can be found nearby. All the sites have at least one boundary abutting existing bungalows, dormer bungalows or small cottages. The designs are therefore not in keeping with the scale, type or density of housing in their locality.

Feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan Survey indicates that residents accept the need for expansion but in a sympathetic and controlled manner in order that infrastructure can keep pace with demand. Furthermore, they expressed, inter alia, a desire for relatively small developments of up to 50 dwellings with open spaces which reflect those found in other parts of the village. The survey indicates that during the next 15 years, 47% of respondents would be looking for bungalow accommodation, 44% homes suitable for retirees and 17 % for assisted living and care homes. The proposed plans do not reflect the residents' future needs and are not, therefore, considered to be sustainable. Neither do the applications reflect the continuing need for housing across all tenures and a growing need for affordable housing. The Ipswich Housing Market Area, Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Document and 2014 Suffolk Housing Needs Survey all show that there is a high demand for smaller homes across all tenures

from those who maybe starting households to those who may be looking to downsize. The Enabling Housing Officer at Mid Suffolk in her response to Planning Application 4386/16 makes reference to the fact that affordability issues are the key driver for the increase in smaller homes and that there is a strong demand for one and two bedroom flats/apartments and houses.

The large number of dwellings proposed would result in a substantial increase in the number of motorized vehicles within the residential areas. The Neighbourhood Plan Team does not consider the plans take sufficient heed of on-site parking requirements. This failure will inevitably lead to overspill onto and congestion within adjacent roads.

- Transport

Thurston is situated inside a triangle of A roads, the base of which is the A14, the eastern side is the A1088 and the western side is the A143. The apex of the triangle is just north of Pakenham where the A1088 crosses the A143. There are no B roads inside this triangle. All the interior roads are just for local access and by-roads, which are not maintained by the council to a standard suitable for heavy traffic. Current potholes in some places are described as “a death trap for cyclists”. Access to the A14 towards Bury St Edmunds is often via Fishwick Corner where Barton (New) Road makes a junction with Mount Road. This has already been found to be an accident-prone congested junction with current traffic flows. At the other end of Barton Road there is access to the A143 and this junction is also often congested and subject to accidents. All of the applications submitted fail to take into account the committed schemes within Bury St Edmunds, Ixworth and Stanton which will alter the traffic flows along these road networks.

The standard S2 single carriage way in each direction type of road, upon which the Transport Assessments base their computer models, is described as 7 m in width. The roads leading into and out of Thurston do not have consistent widths and can be as narrow as 4.3 m. Norton Road, Church Road and School Road have places, unencumbered by parked vehicles, where two cars cannot pass safely and vehicles have to draw right off the road if a bus or larger vehicle comes along. Furthermore the Grade II listed Railway Bridge on Barton Road warns high vehicles to drive in the middle of the narrow road to get through under the arch. While one footway varies in width from 1 m to only 0.7 m, the opposite one tapers to nothing at all. Currently there is only room for one way vehicle flow over the other railway bridge on Thedwastre Road and no safe footway for pedestrians, just a white line one metre from the wall. Thedwastre Road leads to the junction with Beyton Road where congestion in the morning is already well recorded.

The traffic in and around Thurston varies enormously depending on the time of day as the Community College, Beyton Sixth Form College and Ixworth Free School educate students from a wide area, with many students being carried in coaches twice a school day. Travelling through and to the Community College and the Village are Bus Routes TN112; TN114; TN118; TN120; TH140; TN144; TN161 and TN163. In the morning and afternoon 25+ coaches and numerous vehicles deliver and pickup students and have a negative impact on the flow of traffic along Norton Road, Barton Road and Station Hill. In the afternoon this congestion is more noticeable as the coaches arrive in 2 dedicated waves with early arrival by the second wave creating issues. Some routes have a note to coach drivers to approach the College via Station Road to avoid other blocks near the Post Office/village stores on Barton Road where there are usually cars parked, narrowing the road. Other buses, provide a service to Stowmarket to Bury St Edmunds via Beyton and a service from Stowmarket to Bury St Edmunds via Norton. Combined, these give an hourly service to people in Thurston in each direction throughout most of the day Monday to Saturday. The route in Thurston is via School Road, Church Road, Norton Road, Heath Road, Genesta Drive and Barton Road. This means that in addition to the school transport at peak times, buses are travelling through the village throughout the day. Furthermore on a Monday to Saturday there is a bus service to Diss which stops outside Thurston Community College at 0855 and arrives back in Thurston (opposite Community College) at 1605.

From Monday to Saturday, there are hourly train services in each direction throughout the day, generally at 29 minutes past the hour to Stowmarket and Ipswich (east), and 12 minutes to the hour to Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge (west), with variations in the evenings and early mornings. There are slightly fewer trains on Saturdays. On Sundays and Bank Holidays there is a two-hourly service, but there are alternative two-hourly services to Ipswich and Peterborough from Bury St Edmunds. The main drawback to train travel for future growth for those unable to walk to the station is that there are only 12 official parking places are provided and these are filled very early in the day. Cyclists also have only 1 cycle rack to hold 4 cycles and a notice telling them that only the official rack may be used. Overflow parking up Station Hill already happens. The rest of the Granary site is the subject of development plans belonging to a private developer and there is no room for the provision of extra parking. Of significant concern to the Neighbourhood Plan Team is the necessity for passengers having to walk across two tracks which carry non-stop passenger and goods trains to access one of the platforms. Although there is a siren the risk will be heightened the more footfall there is at the station. The Team is concerned that there are no plans to see improvements made to this station at a time when Network Rail are closing rural footpaths that

cross rail tracks due to the dangers posed, and yet this dangerous crossing, which has to be used every day by many including schoolchildren, is deemed to be safe.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team is concerned that, having viewed the documents still available on Mid-Suffolk's District Planning site for the development at the Granary, no Transport Assessment can be found, although a commercial centre will involve delivery vehicles as well as visits from customers, besides the trips made by the cars and vans used by residents of the proposed 100 or so flats.

The more recent planning applications from agents acting on behalf of Bovis Homes, Hopkins Homes, Persimmon Homes and Pigeon Capital Management 2 Ltd include lengthy Travel Assessments. All state that they have examined the traffic flow at various key junctions in Thurston at AM and PM peak times and supply all their data and name the computer programs they have used to calculate capacity and degrees of congestion. It is noted that the Laurence Homes application for 64 homes is apparently a borderline size which may not need an assessment.

It is also stated in the assessments that the key junctions were decided on in pre-application consultations with Suffolk County Council. These were often examined by more than one developer however the Neighbourhood Plan Team is concerned that none of them examined the flow over the narrow one-carriageway railway bridge on Thedwastre Road and that not all of the applicants included within their crash assessments included Fishwick Corner which has a higher proportion of incidences than other areas quoted.

Developer	Road	Junction	AM 2016	PM 2016	Accidents 2010-2014	AM Future	PM Future
Pigeon Developments	Norton Road	Peak traffic	160→	110←			
Bovis Homes	Barton Road		A	A		+29%	+29%
Pigeon Developments Hopkins Homes		Norton Rd/ Church Rd/ Pakenham Rd	A	A		A	A
Pigeon Developments Hopkins Homes		Norton Rd/ Sandpit Lane/ Meadow Lane	A A	A A		A A	A A
Pigeon Developments Persimmon Homes Bovis Homes Hopkins Homes		Barton Rd/ Station Hill/ Mini Roundabout	A B A B	A A A B	1 Slight 1 Serious	A A B	A A C
Pigeon Developments Hopkins Homes		Beyton Rd/ Thedwastre Rd	D B	C A		D D	C A
Pigeon Developments Persimmon Homes Bovis Homes		Barton Rd/ Norton Rd	A A B	A A A		A A B	A A A
Persimmon Homes		Ixworth Rd/ Norton Rd	C	A		C	B
Bovis Homes		Barton Rd/ A143	D	F	5 Slight 1 Serious	F	F
Bovis Homes		Barton Rd/ Beyton Rd	C	A		D	C
Bovis Homes		Barton Rd/ Pakenham Rd	B	A		B	A
Bovis Homes		Barton (New) Rd/ Mount Rd	D	B	7 Slight 1 Serious	F	B

Using the data provided in the various individual assessments which were undertaken on different dates, the two roads and most of the junctions were recorded in AM and PM as “A” which means Free Flow. “B” is Reasonably Unimpeded. “C” is Stable, “D” is Lightly Congested. “E” is Significantly Congested and “F” is Heavily Congested. The after-development estimates were taken to be in 2021 except Bovis Homes who used 2023. Where different arms of a junction had different levels of flow, the highest was recorded above. It is noted that these records show only a slight increase in congestion after the development has gone ahead. However none of these estimates of future traffic took the other proposed developments into consideration only “background growth” and again the Neighbourhood Plan Team is concerned at the cumulative impact all of the developments would have on the current infrastructure.

Currently, with none of these developments completed, the surveys showed congestion points for commuters leaving Thurston for the A14 and A143 at the edges of the village. Thedwastre Road has the one carriageway railway bridge and its junction with Beyton Road on the way to the A14 is shown already as lightly congested. This involves a long queue of vehicles every morning, Monday to Friday at the junction. The mini roundabout near the station is the most likely junction to become more congested when the Granary development, which has already been passed by the planners, is completed. Records indicate that there have already been accidents there. This route leads to the Grade II listed railway bridge where passage is narrow, the road surface is often flooded, the footways are too narrow to be safe and it is another route to the A14, via Mount Road with a junction that is already highly congested with a record of accidents. At the other end of Barton Road the junction with the A143 is already heavily congested and accident-prone.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team recognises that current guidelines on rural traffic in general and in particular TA23/81 which gives official advice on new road developments, emphasises that rural roads should not be planned to carry more than 75% of their capacity, whereas urban roads are acceptable at 85%. This recognises the difference in quality and ambience between rural and urban living. Urbanites may balance long queues of traffic at peak times against shorter routes to work and more amenities close at hand. Village dwellers know how to duck and weave round huge agricultural vehicles travelling along narrow and winding roads and they pull up and give way with a wave, but they don't expect to have urban conditions of continuous traffic flowing through the village, even if it is a smooth flow as judged by most of the assessments done for Thurston. Villagers expect clean air, the opportunity to cross roads on foot without a long wait and the chance to hear birds singing rather than the continuous drone of traffic.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team recognises that Paragraph 17 of the NPPF is given as the justification for planning applications to be accompanied by a Transport Plan as well as a Transport Assessment: “Planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.”

Following the recommendation by Suffolk County Council, Persimmon Homes, Bovis Homes, Pigeon Developments Ltd and Hopkins Homes have each prepared their Transport Plans. These plans emphasise the opportunities for using public transport, walking (up to 2 km) and cycling. Their aim is clearly to try and reduce the use of private cars, as the plans involve employing someone to monitor the use of private cars in and from the development over a period of five years or so. This would be an intrusion into the private lives of residents which they would have to pay for in the price of the development. The Cycle Trail 51 which is widely quoted is very misleading and should be noted that within the village there is only a short distance along Station Hill and across New Green where it is marked on the ground and separated from other traffic. Children would not be safe to follow it on their own as to access this separated route, they would need to travel along Norton Road and over the crossover close to the junction with Norton Road/Ixworth Road/Station Hill. It should also be noted that should cyclists wish to travel east up Station Hill from Barton Road there are no safe crossing points onto the cycle route and that to access this point, Station Hill would need to be crossed on a bend on a steep hill with poor visibility.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team is therefore concerned that although some of the new applications propose small improvements to footways, crossings, bus shelters and the 30 mile speed limit on Ixworth Road, none of them can substantially improve the key junctions or the railway bridges where conditions will inevitably get worse with any extra traffic. The road system in Thurston was crystallised over a hundred years ago, based on the movement of mainly agricultural vehicles in a rural environment. The borders and junctions of these roads and the railway bridges fitted the traffic flows of that time. In many cases the borders are now built up so that roads cannot be widened and certainly the railway bridges are immovable. Each of the proposed developments would inevitably add more traffic despite efforts to wean people away from driving their own vehicles.

- Social Challenges

The Neighbourhood Plan Team is aware that with all growth the village faces a number of challenges and that whilst there are policies in place to ensure all developments provides a safe community; protects the environment from adverse impacts; reduces the level of crime or overcomes the fear of crime and provides a safe and secure environment, often the social impact of such growth is overlooked.

As such the Team has drawn up a list of the social challenges that will take place in Thurston with an increase in its population, the findings of which are replicated in the table below:

Pros of increase in population	Cons of increase in population
<p>A new purpose-built primary school, more suited to the 21st century, would contribute to the life of the village.</p>	<p>A larger school will support more housing, which Developers will capitalize on. It will trigger more planning applications with family homes. Suffolk County Council work on 25 primary pupils per 100 houses, so there will be many more children which will affect the social dynamics of the village. Pupils will need appropriate cycle ways and paths to get safely to school, as our current school children do. The possible sites for a new school do not lend themselves so easily to safe walking or cycling. This is unfortunate, as it is valuable time for social interaction of children and parents.</p>
<p>Clubs and organizations for all age ranges will have increased numbers and for some this will help their sustainability. This includes the library and churches.</p>	<p>Newcomers to the village will put an extra strain on current organizations. If there are more problems with waiting lists it will give rise to bad feelings. Leaders will need support to ensure that they have enough resources to meet extra demands.</p> <p>The popular children's organizations of Brownies, Scouts and the ATC provide valuable social activities for the youth of the village. For the new children to feel welcome in Thurston and be able to have friendships outside school, it is vital that they are able to access such groups. Finding extra leaders and, possibly venues, will not be easy.</p> <p>The Cavendish Hall and New Green may be over-stretched, including their provision for parking. There will be many more demands on these venues with an increased number of young families.</p> <p>Sports clubs may need extra outdoor facilities. Footballers in the village have already highlighted the need for another pitch so this would be even more of a priority.</p> <p>There would be a rise in cycling on the primary traffic routes, which will also have an increase in vehicular movements, around the village for all age groups. A new larger primary school will increase the number of children cycling to school, but also those cycling as a leisure activity.</p>
<p>More residents would support a greater variety of leisure activities than are currently available in the village. Teenagers, particularly, could benefit from this and will find more support for a Skateboard Park.</p>	<p>Difficulties are as described above with leaders and venues.</p>

<p>A greater variety of shops and facilities would be supported, giving residents more choice of various facilities within the village. This could be helpful to elderly people who do not want to travel into town.</p>	<p>More shops and other facilities will change the village atmosphere to one of a small town.</p> <p>This will impact on the social dynamics of Thurston, which views itself very much as a village. Residents may resent the extra shops and facilities rather than welcome them. This will, again, give rise to bad feelings towards the new developments.</p>
<p>More residents would help to support and sustain bus and train services, which add to the choice of social activities outside the village.</p>	<p>The pressure on these services is expected to increase with additional use being promoted through each applicant's Travel Plan with the implementation of measures designed to promote sustainable travel. Young families may however travel by car which will see an increase on the current road infrastructure. Unless improvements are made to the car parking facilities at the Railway Station along with additional cycle facilities there will be a detrimental on surrounding residential areas</p>
<p>More pressure for a Doctor's surgery or Medical Centre.</p>	<p>Medical provision will be impacted within the health catchment area. Currently the nearest practice does not have sufficient capacity for additional growth resulting from further development. As currently stands NHS England is only looking for a Developer Contribution to increase capacity within the GP catchment area. This increase is unsustainable if all applications were to be determined favorably.</p>
<p>Additional footpaths and cycle-ways arising from the new developments would offer more variety of routes for walkers and cyclists. This would help all residents to achieve a healthy life style.</p>	<p>Thurston takes a pride in its footpaths and natural environment. This is the result of well-known residents promoting the paths and looking after its trees and wildlife. A larger population which suddenly arrived in the village would not be familiar with these values and this could also give rise to ill feeling towards newcomers. Such concerns include people not following the country code while walking in the countryside, leading to friction with the landowners. Others are that more dogs may cause problems by being off the lead, worrying live-stock, damaging crops and disturbing ground nesting birds. There is also the matter of dog-mess which is already a cause of irritation if not dealt with correctly.</p> <p>The Suffolk Wildlife reserve at Grove Farm is situated within the Parish of Thurston where walkers can see different habitats, flora and fauna. The reserve can be part of a pleasant destination for leisurely walks and cycle rides. With an increasing population and more visitors, it will be necessary to ensure it is not at risk</p>

As stated previously whilst the Neighbourhood Plan has not yet reached the stage of allocating sites or proposing policies, it has followed a period of extensive consultation with the public and land owners and agents on the site assessments carried out during Summer - Autumn 2016 following the Neighbourhood Plan Team's Call for Sites of January 2016, under the Parish Housing Land Availability Assessment. Throughout this process of consultation, the Neighbourhood Plan Team felt that as there were major and fundamental issues preventing sustainable development the site could not be submitted for detailed assessment and would not be considered further within the Neighbourhood Plan sites assessment work. It was felt that the site was very open and would encroach significantly into the countryside and that the site was separate from the settlement boundary.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team stands by the assessment given to this site and would ask the Parish Council to consider its major concerns for this application on this site for the following reasons:

- Separate from the settlement boundary

- Site encroaches into countryside
- Site is regarded as prime agricultural land
- road safety with emphasis on the junctions of Norton Road and Ixworth Road which is very close to the Community College at the AM and PM peak times.
- road safety issues with emphasis on those accessing the A14 via the pinch point at the railway bridge on Sandpit Lane – Thedwastre Road and onto Pokeriage Corner
- pedestrian safety along Norton Road for accessing village facilities as there are no safe crossing points
- impact of the vehicular movements from a double point of entry onto Norton Road.
- development inappropriate to that of land abutting the countryside
- impact on village infrastructure particularly education and health provision
- type and density of housing mix not in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan findings of the Ipswich Housing Market Area, Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the 2014 Suffolk Housing Needs Survey, all of which indicate that there is a high demand for smaller homes across all tenures both for younger people and for older people.
- cost of affordable homes for local residents – the application fails to take into account the District Wide need on the housing register for 1 and 2 bedrooms with a smaller element requiring 3+ bedroom properties.
- Proximity of and impact on Grade II* listed building Manor Farm House – visual and historic architectural
- Size of school being proposed – 2 form entry with the possibility of expanding to 3

In summary, whilst the Neighbourhood Plan Team recognises the need for future development to take place within Thurston it does not in any way support this application for the reasons mentioned above.

Moreover, given the scale of proposed housing development, the Neighbourhood Plan Team would ask that the Parish Council requests that the District Council adopts a cohesive approach that looks at the totality of the applications submitted and their impact on all of Thurston's infrastructure and social development.

Yours faithfully,

Victoria S Waples

Victoria S Waples, BA (Hons), CiLCA
Secretary to Thurston Neighbourhood Plan Team