

Sustainability Theme/ Objectives	Detailed Assessment Criteria	Commentary on Criteria	12. Land adjacent railway footpath bridge on Heath Road Unknown size at this point.
Availability	Is the site available/has it been put forward by the landowner or a developer?		This would need to be ascertained as currently the site has been offered to a registered charity by a landowner as a potential site for a skatepark along with an area for parking. The land however is not located in Thurston but in a neighbouring parish which is in a neighbouring district. Initial discussions with the Infrastructure Team at Mid Suffolk District Council have indicated that whilst CIL funds could be used as a potential funding source, there are certain criteria that will need to be met for CIL funding for a project outside of the District. Match funding might be sought from the neighbouring district. Any planning issues would need to be resolved by the neighbouring district.
1/Env To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Thurston in terms of its geology, landform, soils, water systems and	Is the site at risk from fluvial flooding?	- Sites in flood zone 1 should be prioritised over sites in flood zone 2 and those over sites in flood zone 3	Site is not at risk of fluvial flooding. Site is in Zone 1
	Is the site at risk from surface water flooding?	Is there a high, medium or low risk of surface water flooding on the site?	No
2/Env To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish, its wildlife habitats and species.	Will the site impact on priority habitats within the NP area?	This includes deciduous woodland, wood pasture and parkland	No

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	- Is the site in open countryside/will it encroach unacceptably on open countryside? - Will the site have a detrimental impact on the landscape?	- If in open countryside, can the settlement edge be integrated with surrounding rural countryside to minimise impact on the character of the wider countryside (as recommended in 11 Guidance Note Plateau Estate Farmlands Suffolk County Council)? - Does the site fall within a Visually Important Open Space as defined in Saved Policy SB3 of the Local Plan?	The site is not adjacent to settlement. A built form set in the countryside would have an impact on the rural setting in which it is located. However, given the possible location next to the extensive bridge over the railway line, any impact, whilst being negative, would have no significant further detriment to the area in which it is located. Its rural location and proximity to the railway line would however give cause for concern in terms of safety and passive surveillance and mitigation measures would be needed to counteract this concern.
	- Is the site greenfield or previously developed land?	Development of brownfield sites is preferable to use of greenfield land.	Greenfield
4/Econ To maximise the potential of existing employment and support the need for new employment opportunities.	- Will the site be capable of sustainable growth should a requirement for expansion be proven?	Would the site allow incremental growth on an as and when basis?	The site being offered has limited potential for incremental growth. At this stage the plans for a skatepark / skate dot on this site are in their infancy. An appropriate designed space would be required for such an area to ensure that it is accessible for all with smaller obstacles used by beginners. It would be imperative to ensure that such a site was designed with its rural location in mind to ensure that the area was not prone to ASB but was a facility that could be enjoyed by all abilities.
	- Will the development provide new employment to serve local needs?	Would the expansion of recreational facilities result in increased localised employment. Would this be supported or undermined through the proposal?	There would be limited potential for employment opportunities other than the build project itself.

5/Env To protect the identity and local distinctiveness of Thurston as a rural settlement.	- What is the relationship of the site to the settlement?	- Is the site within or on the edge of the settlement? - Does the site border the settlement on 1, 2 or 3 sides? Sites that are surrounded by existing development will be considered more favourably.	The site is beyond the settlement boundary of Thurston as well as beyond the boundary for Mid Suffolk District Council. For the site to come forward, approval would need to be given from a neighbouring parish with planning permission for change of use from a neighbouring district. Given its location it is not considered to be well located close to existing services, however it is accessible from the main road network and is on the Sustrans 51 cycle route. It is noted that further along Heath Road, a PROW linkage will be formed to link up the new housing development on Barton Road (Grange Park) which will exit opposite the current recreational area on Heath Road.
	- Does the site impact on the setting of any listed buildings?		There are no listed buildings nearby
	- Does the site have any trees with TPOs that would have to be removed?		No
6/Soc To ensure that the community has a high quality and healthy lifestyle.	- Does the site create the opportunity to provide new community infrastructure and/or green open space in an accessible location for the wider community?	- Will the site provide for other facilities to be included, such as a youth shelter with Wi-fi capability, or other amenities, such as a café.	The site is reasonably well located for the community to access but no further community facilities are planned for this site.
7/Soc To ensure the provision of a range of community facilities that provide for the needs of the community	Is the site capable of providing safe and improved linkages to community facilities?	Will the site provide for improved outdoor recreational facilities - gym trail, gym and football goals/better football goals?	Heath Road is in the main considered reasonably safe for both cyclists and walkers. There would be no severe impact on the highway network and the road can be used to access further community facilities. As the site is outside of the boundary for Thurston, it is not being proposed for other outdoor recreational facilities.
8/Soc To ensure that there is safe movement around the parish and to the facility by a range of modes	- Is the site on a safe cycling route to the main residential areas in village or does it create the opportunity to deliver a new cycle route?		There would be reasonable safety of movement. The route into the village along Heath Road is reasonably safe, this not being a main road. Once into the village, routes along Barton Road and Station Hill are busier but relatively safe for cyclists. Sustrans Route 51 runs along Heath Road crossing Barton Road up to Norton Road.

	- Will the site impact on any existing footpaths or other public rights of way (PROWs)?		The site will not impact on existing footpaths or PROWs
	- Will the site have the potential to offer limited car parking facilities?		It is proposed that there will be facilities for car parking. However, given that its use is primarily aimed at those wishing to expand their use of wheeled sports, it is important to ensure that green modes of transport are encouraged and that alternative modes of transport in terms of accessibility are used.
	- Does the site, by virtue of its location and scale, have a severe impact on the existing highway network?		No
9/Soc To ensure that the community has adequate access to the facility	- Is the site within a desirable or acceptable walking distance of the main residential area of the village?		The site is beyond the preferred maximum distance from the main residential area of the village although it is not beyond the distance at which sustainable modes of transport could be used.
	- Are there safe crossing points and walkways between the main residential areas and the facility?		The route into the village along Heath Road is reasonably safe, this not being a main road. Once into the village, routes along Barton Road and Station Hill are busier but relatively safe for cyclists.
	- Is the site within a desirable or acceptable walking distance from nearest bus stop?		The site is beyond the preferred maximum distance from the nearest bus stop however it is not beyond the distance at which sustainable modes of transport could be employed.
	- Will the site, by virtue of its location and scale, have an impact on other users of that land?	Is there sufficient space to allow for a range of activities to be undertaken?	

<p>10/Soc To ensure that the administrative processes of instigating policies and practical management activities are in place for the completion of the project's long term success</p>	<p>- Is there an organisation within the community that can carry out maintenance plans, hours of operation, enclosure gates, signage, supervision plans, life cycle, and any other issues that should be considered to ensure that the project is not just built and then left to the elements.</p>	<p>- Is the site in a suitable location that will allow passive surveillance; emergency vehicle access; lighting and CCTV.</p>	<p>The area is currently held by a landowner and discussions between the landowner and charity have established that it could be made available. Given its location, there would be limited opportunity for passive surveillance, lighting or CCTV. A concern must be raised as to its close proximity to the railway line. Emergency vehicle access would be achievable.</p>
<p>Overall judgement</p>	<p>This site has been judged against the criteria listed above to allow an informed judgement to take place on the suitability of the area of the site for further recreational and leisure facilities.</p>	<p>The rationale for such a judgement lies with the decision taken by Mid Suffolk District Council's Referrals Committee on 1st November 2017 to grant planning permission for 5 sites within Thurston to come forward and that little or no account has been taken of the requirement for additional play facilities for all age groups within the parish.</p>	<p>The area in general is not well situated given its proximity to the railway line and limited ability for surveillance and security. It does however lie on the Sustrans 51 cycle route which provides access to existing services such as bus routes and paths in Thurston. Whilst the site might have relative highway safety and ease of accessibility, security, proximity to a railway line and the fact that it lies outside of the parish and district boundaries would hinder this site coming forward at this stage. Clarity would also need to be given as to how the land would be held - leasehold or freehold and the restrictions that might be imposed. For the site to be considered further, all other sites within the parish boundary should be explored to ensure that sites can come forward in accordance with the adopted Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan.</p>

30.03.22 - Recreational and Leisure Facilities Committee agreed to amend the overall assessment to neutral on the understanding that pre-application advice is sought by the Skatepark Charity from the planning department at West Suffolk Council as to whether an application for a skatepark would be supported on this site. Once this has been ascertained, the site will be returned to the Committee for further consideration.

29.06.22 - Pre-application advice has been sought from West Suffolk Council to obtain planning officers view on the merits of a formal planning application for a skate park on this site. Officers were not supportive of the proposal of a skate park at this location for the following reasons: significant distance from existing housing, isolated development in the countryside; lack of passive surveillance; risk of anti-social behaviour. It was also confirmed that there were no special considerations for a site located in another village that was for the benefit of residents in a village within the Mid Suffolk District Council jurisdiction. The Ben Wragge Skate Park Charity have confirmed that based on the discusison had they would not pursue this option at the time.

Assessment

Strongly positive
Slightly positive
Neutral
Slightly negative
Strongly negative

Notes: * This is based on the following guidance provided by the Institute of Highways and Transportation:

	Facilities, e.g shops, bus stop.	Commuting / school	Other
Desirable	200m	500m	400m
Acceptable	400m	1000m	800m
Preferred maximum	800m	2000m	1200m

Source: Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (IHT 2000)