

Sustainability Theme/ Objectives	Detailed Assessment Criteria	Commentary on Criteria	<b>13. Land adjacent to Heath Road/Genesta Drive and Heather Close</b>  <b>33 acres.</b>  <b>Revised 24.08.22</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Is the site available/has it been put forward by the landowner or a developer?</b>		<p>The site has been offered to a registered charity by a landowner as a potential site solely for recreational use with an area for parking. The land however is not located in Thurston but in a neighbouring parish which is in a neighbouring district. The parishes of Great Barton and Rougham will also be impacted by its development. 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.</p>
<b>1/Env</b> To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Thurston in terms of its geology, landform, soils, water systems and climate.	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. <i>Comments awaited on soil properties.</i>
	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
<b>2/Env</b> 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	Yes. Whilst the land is not located within the NDP, it does abut the parish boundary and the built up settlement boundary. A line of 10 mature Oak trees, all of which have Tree Preservation Orders against them, support a thriving bat population, as well as provide an established natural habitat for native birds and insects.

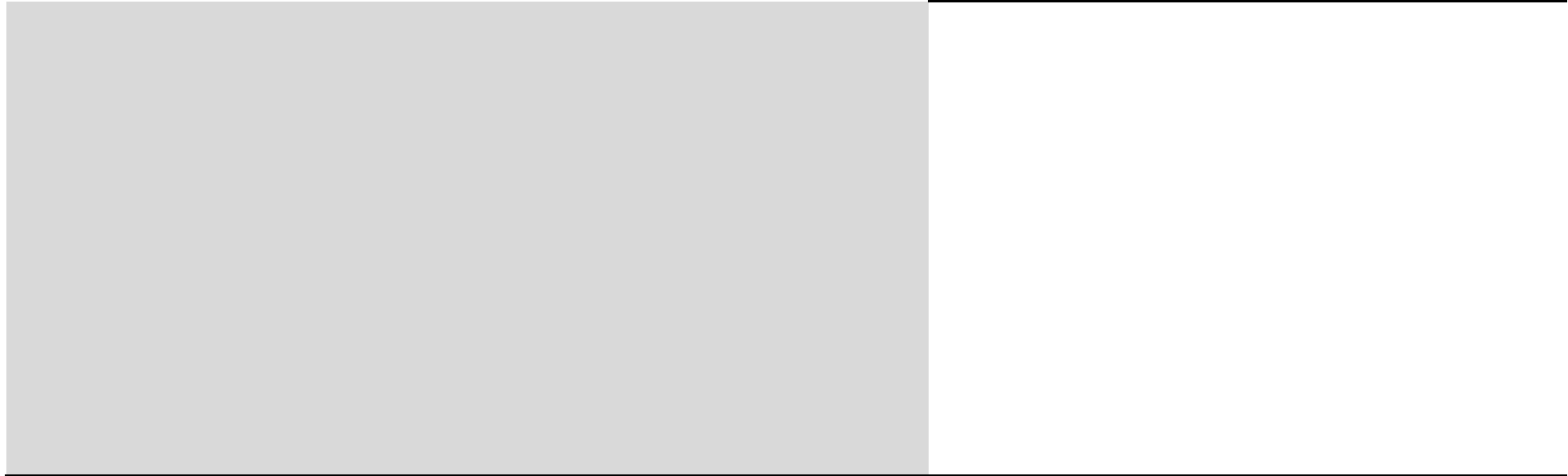
<b>3/Env</b> To protect the landscape setting of Thurston village through use of land with a low landscape impact and by focusing development on previously developed land	- Is the site in open countryside/will it encroach unacceptably on open countryside? - Will the site have a detrimental impact on 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 abuts the Thurston parish boundary and the built up settlement boundary, however the site location is within the rural open countryside of Great Barton. A built form set in this landscape would have an impact on the setting in which it is located and contravene the Bury Rural Vision. Given the nature of the development, the built form will be limited and low level, with the majority of the site remaining green space. However, an acoustic survey would be recommended to establish the potential increase in noise generated by the skate park and football facilities to surrounding residents and mitigation measures applied.
	- Is the site greenfield or previously developed land?	Development of brownfield sites is preferable to use of greenfield land.	Greenfield
<b>4/Econ</b> 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?	Due to the size of the site being offered there is potential for incremental growth, however the landowner has gifted the land on the condition that it remains as a recreational facility, so any growth would need to reflect this caveat. It is imperative to ensure that such a site is designed with its rural location in mind to ensure that the area is not prone to ASB but as a facility that could be enjoyed by all ages.
	- 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.

<b>5/Env</b> 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. A PROW linkage will be formed to link up the new housing development on Barton Road (Grange Park) and run alongside the site exiting 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?		There are 10 mature oaks that abut the site boundary, mitigation measures will need to be in place to ensure that they are not disturbed.
<b>6/Soc</b> 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, with a number of facilities planned to provide for community users of all ages. However, access to the numerous planned football pitches and clubhouse needs to be agreed to ensure that they are accessible to everyone and not solely for the use of the football club.

<p><b>7/Soc</b> To ensure the provision of a range of community facilities that provide for the needs of the community</p>	<p>Is the site capable of providing safe and improved linkages to community facilities?</p>	<p>Will the site provide for improved outdoor recreational facilities - gym trail, gym and football goals/better football goals?</p>	<p>Heath Road is currently considered reasonably safe for both cyclists and walkers as it is a quiet residential area that opens into countryside and is a no through road for cars. It is also noted that the railway bridge at the end of Heath Road has been so constructed to accommodate horses and their riders. An increase in traffic along this road could have a detrimental impact on all those using this route. Currently the narrow pavement along Heath Road finishes at the end of the built up area and there is no pavement along the narrow stretch of the lane that approaches the site. This could be considered dangerous to pedestrians. Whilst local users could walk to the site, the nature of the football facility planned would mean that the visiting teams would arrive by car or bus thus impacting the quiet road.</p>
<p><b>8/Soc</b> To ensure that there is safe movement around the parish and to the facility by a range of modes</p>	<p>- 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?</p>		<p>There can be no guarantee of reasonable safety of movement given the potential increase in vehicle movements. 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.</p>
	<p>- Will the site impact on any existing footpaths or other public rights of way (PROWs)?</p>		<p>The site will not impact on existing footpaths or PROWs however a new footpath would need to be constructed to link the existing footpath along Heath Road to the new site.</p>
	<p>- Will the site have the potential to offer limited car parking facilities?</p>		<p>It is proposed that there will be facilities for car parking. However, it is important to ensure that green modes of transport are encouraged and that alternative modes of transport in terms of accessibility are used.</p>

	- Does the site, by virtue of its location and scale, have a severe impact on the existing highway network?		There would be a severe impact on the highway network and the road and a traffic impact assessment should be carried out before any decisions are made. The access to the site is from the top end of Heath Road that narrows to a single track before reaching the site and is unsuitable for buses, HGV and large amounts of traffic trying to pass each other. Also to be noted is the turning into Heath Road off Barton Road which has a limited sight line and is prone to flooding and icy conditions in the winter.
<b>9/Soc</b> 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?		There is currently no footpath linkage beyond the built dwellings along Heath Road to the site. The route into the village once on Heath Road is reasonably safe for pedestrians and cyclists, 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?	The land is not being offered for anything other than use as a recreational facility. Given its location outside of the parish of Thurston permission for change of use for such a facility has not yet been sought.

<p><b>10/Soc</b> 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 the charity have established that it could be made available. Given its location, there would need to be infrastructure put in place for CCTV surveillance and/or lighting. Policing of the site would fall to the West Suffolk Rural Division. Consideration should be given to concerns raised over invasion of privacy along Genesta Drive, Heather Close and Heath Road. Emergency vehicle access would be achievable. With reference to its location consideration should be given to the railway bridge safety and the railway line beneath. Network Rail should be consulted for suggestions that would help mitigate any potential ASB related problems.</p>
<p><b>Overall judgement</b></p>	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p><b>The area in general is not well situated given the access road, 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 scores highly on its provision of recreational facilities for the parish it lies outside of the parish and district boundaries. Funding could hinder development of this site as well as the detrimental impact it imposes on surrounding residents. 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.</b></p>



**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)