

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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SENT AS AN E-MAIL

Mr. P Isbell
Corporate Manager – Development Management
MSDC
131 High Street
Needham Market
IP6 8DL

February 10th 2017

Dear Mr. Isbell,

Proposal: Planning Application 4942-16 – application for residential development consisting of 64 dwellings and associated highway, car parking and public open space @ land at Meadow Lane

Case Officer: Ian Ward

The Parish Council wishes to place on record that it objects to this proposal in its current guise and that the proposal is considered not to form a sustainable development within the dimensions set out in the NPPF, risks harm to biodiversity and fails to address adequately the economic and social benefits. Furthermore, the Parish Council feels that given the size of the development being proposed, the likely CIL yield for the provision of additional educational facilities and medical facilities will not be able to offset the cumulative effects of this proposal and as such will overburden existing infrastructure.

The following reasons should be considered and form the basis for the objection:

The site and surrounding area are within the countryside and therefore outside any settlement boundary for Thurston as defined by Mid Suffolk's Local Plan and would result in the development of new dwellings that would be visually, physically and functionally isolated from the facilities and services offered by Thurston as a Key Service Centre. Whilst it is acknowledged that part of the development abuts the settlement boundary of Thurston, it is felt that development of the site to the North of Norton Road would neither protect nor enhance the character of the village which is currently rural and would therefore not only be contrary to GP1 – Design and Layout of Development but also be contrary to csfr-fc2 provision and distribution of housing and cor2 development in the countryside and countryside villages. The Parish Council further feels that the application submitted will harm the character and appearance of this open area and will be contrary to Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy, Policy FC1.1 of the Core Strategy of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focus

Review (2012) and saved Policies H13 and H16 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan. Furthermore, it is felt that the development fails to ensure that it reflects the local character and identity of the area immediately surrounding the proposed development and is therefore inconsistent with paragraph 58 of the NPPF and that the application, if approved, will fail to consider the loss of public viewpoints from this site, will fail to protect the quiet recreational enjoyment enjoyed by those accessing Meadow Lane and will fail to protect the wildlife habitats at this point in the village and will therefore be contrary to policies H16 – protecting existing residential amenity CL8 – protecting Wildlife Habitats.

The Parish Council feels that the application fails to consider policy cor9 (cs9 density and mix) and fails to demonstrate that it has achieved a mix of house types, sizes and affordability to cater for accommodation needs. Whilst it is acknowledged that Policy CS9 recognises that housing sites may range from town to village, all applications for housing should be expected to respect the traditional form of development rather than follow a standardised suburban form of development. The Parish Council is concerned that the application submitted fails to show that it has considered the current mix of housing within the village of Thurston and that it fails to have taken account of the findings of tenure type and mix within the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, nor the 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. The Parish Council is also concerned that the application fails to take significant regard for the District wide need on the housing register for 1 and 2 bedrooms with a smaller element requiring 3+ bedroom properties.

The Parish Council also supports the comments made by Suffolk Constabulary Design Out Officer with regards to landscaping and hedging and has concerns that the proposed boundary hedging, unless kept under control, may well form barriers where passive natural surveillance may not be possible and/or may be permeable for an offender to gain access to properties. There is also concern that such hedging may well impede on the highway along Norton Road and Meadow Lane. Furthermore, the Parish Council is concerned that the application fails to take into account the Department of Transport's Manual for Streets which expects planning applications to follow the general principles for reducing the likelihood of crime in residential areas and that "the desire for connectivity should not compromise the ability of householders to exert ownership over private or communal 'defensible space' and that 'access to the rear of dwellings from public spaces, including alleys, should be avoided and layouts should be designed with regard to existing levels of crime in an area'

The Parish Council considers that the application fails to take into account the current road infrastructure and the lack of pedestrian route-ways and cycle ways leading from the site to the amenities and Primary School and Secondary School within the village and as such would have a negative impact on road safety and therefore a detrimental impact on the amenities enjoyed by the surrounding area vis-à-vis traffic generation (SB2 Development Appropriate to its Setting & T10 Highway Considerations in Development).

The Parish Council also finds that the development fails to demonstrate that it has considered safe and suitable access points for all people and as such is contrary to paragraph 32 of the NPPF. As the development fails to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and given the location of the site, it would not support the transition to a low carbon future and is therefore unable to meet the environmental dimension of sustainable development and would be contrary to paragraph 17, 30, 35 and 55 of the NPPF and Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review.

Furthermore, the Parish Council is concerned at the impact of the location of an entrance very close to that of Rylands Close and the junction of Sandpit Lane. The increased traffic that this development will produce if the tenure and mix of housing is approved as submitted, will have a detrimental impact on Norton Road and it is felt that insufficient detail has been given to ensure that, with reference to NPPF paragraph 32 'safe and suitable access can be achieved for all people.' It is also acknowledged that Suffolk County Council in its response to Planning Application 2797/16 recommended refusal for an exit onto Norton Road as the proposal 'could not be considered to be safe for all'.

The Parish Council also feels that that assessment holds true for this application and would ask that Highways be asked to comment further on the siting of an additional entrance onto Norton Road serving plots 1 – 4 – in addition to the one serving the main area. The Parish Council is concerned that this entrance does not follow the Suffolk Design Code for Residential Areas which states that from the point of safety and the need to consider access in emergencies, not more than 150 dwellings will normally be served by a single means of access. The Parish Council is further concerned that, by inserting 2 entrances onto Norton Road within close proximity of one another, the application fails to consider the layout of Norton Road and its proximity to the junctions of Norton Road/Sandpit Lane and Norton Road/Ixworth Road, does not take into account the expected volumes and speeds of vehicular traffic along Norton Road and fails to show that it has considered the dangers associated with vehicular and pedestrian movements at such junctions.

The Parish Council feels that given the location of the site, a reliance on the private motor car will be generated in order to access amenities and services within the village which will also be contrary to the sustainability objectives of Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (2012) and the NPPF paragraphs 14, 17, 55 and 56 and will place a further burden on the current road network at (but not confined to) points such as Fishwick Corner, Pokeriage Corner, the narrow railway bridge crossings on Barton Road, the Priority System on Thedwastre Road and entry and exit points onto the A14.

The Parish Council is aware that, until the Order for the Neighbourhood Plan is laid, it is expected to respond to current planning applications in line with policies set out in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan. It is recognised and understood that, as defined by Mid Suffolk's Local Plan, Thurston is a Key Service Centre and growth is assumed to be in line with current policy. Policies cor1 (cs1 settlement hierarchy) and cor2 (CS2 development in the countryside and countryside villages) have been considered in the Council's response to this application.

The Parish Council has not only looked at current policy, but has also taken on board views of the members of the public who attended the Planning Committee Meeting held to discuss this application amongst others as well as those of the Neighbourhood Plan Team who are in the process of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan for Thurston.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team reports to the Parish Council on a regular basis and all Parish Councillors are fully aware and in agreement with the views of the Neighbourhood Plan Team, some of whom are indeed both Parish Councillors and Neighbourhood Plan members. The Parish Council has received correspondence from the Neighbourhood Plan

Team on this application and has agreed that the viewpoints contained within its letter are so relevant to this application that they are to be included within its submission.

It is known that that letter was submitted to the Planning Department at Mid Suffolk on 3rd February and its contents should be taken as being fully endorsed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council would further wish to reiterate the concerns of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan Team with regards to the speed at which this and other applications have been submitted for new housing in the village. It is recognised within the village that as a Key Service Centre the village of Thurston will appeal to developers and that a certain amount of growth is desirable and non-objective, however the Parish Council is concerned that piecemeal development will have a negative impact on the current infrastructure and that there should be a strict control over new housing proposals and the associated numbers until the general infrastructure of Thurston and the surrounding areas has been given time to absorb new residents and the impacts that this associated growth will have on a rural village.

As such, the Parish Council formally requests that there is a change to the process and approach undertaken by the District Council in dealing with this and the other significant planning applications before it and that they are considered in a holistic manner with the impact from all development being considered once a thorough and engaging review has been undertaken with all the service providers to include NHS England; Education, Highways and Transportation Providers.

As confirmation, the Parish Council is unable to support, in its current form, the application that has been submitted for this site.

Yours sincerely,

Victoria S Waples

**V. S. Waples, BA(Hons), CiLCA
Clerk to the Council**

