

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Office
New Green Centre
Thurston
Suffolk
IP31 3TG

Tel: 01359 232854
e-mail: info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk



SENT AS AN E-MAIL

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

February 7th 2017

Dear Mr. Isbell,

Proposal: Planning Application 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

Case Officer: Dylan Jones

The Parish Council wishes to place on record that it strongly objects to this proposal and that the proposal is considered not to form a sustainable development within the dimensions set out in the NPPF and that the proposed application risks harm to biodiversity and fails to address adequately the benefits on an economic and social benefit.

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 of 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. At this point in the village development of the site would significantly change 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 feels that the application submitted is not sympathetic to the countryside in which it is situated and that it fails to protect the intrinsic character of the countryside by the density and mix of properties being proposed.

It is felt that the development of 200 dwellings will intrude into an area of currently open, undeveloped, countryside resulting in an encroachment of built development extending significantly beyond the settlement boundary of Thurston. This 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 permanent pastureland and will fail to protect the wildlife habitats at this point in the village and will be contrary to policy CL8 – protecting Wildlife Habitats.

The Parish Council is also concerned that the application fails to consider the historic architectural and visual landscape connections between Manor Farm and Nether Hall and as such fails to uphold the protection of a Grade 11* listed building and will neither safeguard nor enhance this listed building and its settings and as such is contrary to Policy HB1.

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 would also recommend that Highways be consulted as to the suitability of the location of the site; the access roads leading to the development; and pedestrian safety with regards to crossing points. 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 considers 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 that will be had by the location of a site for 200 houses and a 420+ pupil primary school with 2 entrances near the Victoria Public House Car Park. The increased traffic that this development will produce 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 as the proposal 'could not be considered to be safe for all'. The Parish Council feels that that assessment holds true for this application and would ask that Highways be asked to comment on the suitability of two site entrances situated close to one another. The Parish Council is concerned that very little assessment has been carried out on the impact of vehicular movements on the two entrances and that consideration should be given to the dangers associated with vehicular and pedestrian movements at the single entrance to the proposed primary school.

The Parish Council is also concerned that the development of the site will not be able to allow for the convenient integration of public transport within the site and that the traffic that will be generated will not be able to be accommodated on the existing road network (CS6 – services and infrastructure).

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, Pokeridge 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, until the Order for the Neighbourhood Plan is laid, 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. It cannot be disputed that Thurston has a settlement boundary and as such the location of this site is outside of that boundary and apart from one very small corner, cannot be acknowledged to be adjacent.

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, whilst the Parish Council recognises from conversations held with SCC Educational and Infrastructure Officers that a new primary school is required prior to any further growth within Thurston, it does not support, in any way, the application that has been submitted for this site.

Yours sincerely,

Victoria S Waples

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