

Committee Report

Committee Date: 12th July 2017

Item No:

Reference: 5070/16

Case Officer: Dylan Jones

Description of Development: 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)

Location: Land at Norton Road, Thurston

Parish: Thurston

Ward: Thurston & Hessett

Ward Members: Councillors Esther Jewson & Derrick Haley

Site Area: 18.1

Conservation Area: No

Listed Building: Manor Farm – Grade 2*, converted Manor Farm Barns - Grade 2, Church of St Peter Grade 2 – These are all buildings in the surrounding locality.

Received: 22/12/2016

Expiry Date: 30/06/2017

Application Type: Outline Planning Permission

Development Type: Large scale Major Dwellings

Environmental Impact Assessment: Schedule 2 development – EIA not required.

Applicant: Pigeon Capital Management 2 Ltd and Mr Peter Hay

Agent: Beacon Planning Ltd

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION

The defined Red Line Plan for this application is drawing number 016-032-002 received on the 22nd December 2016. This drawing is the red line plan that shall be referred to as the defined application site. Any other drawings approved or refused that may show any alternative red line plan separately or as part of any other submitted document have not been accepted on the basis of defining the application site.

Submitted Documents:

Illustrative masterplan – 016– 032–001 B received on 09/05/2017

Existing site levels – 016-032-003 received on 22/12/2016

Affordable housing layout - 016-032-004 B received on 09/05/2017
Parameters plan - 016-032-005 B received on 09/05/2017
Street elevations plan - 016-032-006 received on 22/12/2016
Access options plan - 016-032-007 received on 22/12/2016
Bungalow plan – 016-032-008 received on 09/05/2017
Landscape masterplan – 1892 01 Rev C received on 24/05/17
Existing site plan – 5802 – D received on 22/12/2016
Proposed site access - 618212/SK02 Rev E received on 09/05/2017
Western junction swept path analysis – 618212/SK04 Rev C received on 09/05/2017
Eastern junction swept path analysis - 618212/SK05 Rev c received on 09/05/2017
Eastern access road swept path analysis - 618212/SK09 Rev B received on 09/05/2017
Norton Road access drawing – 618212/SK11 Rev B received on 09/05/2017
Access Road forward visibility splay - 618212/SK12 Rev C received on 09/05/2017
Eastern access road junction visibility splay - 618212/SK13 Rev C received on 09/05/2017
Eastern access road junction visibility splay - 618212/SK14 Rev C received on 09/05/2017
Western access road junction visibility splay - 618212/SK15 Rev C received on 09/05/2017
Highway swept path analysis - 618212/SK16 Rev A received on 09/05/2017
Western access road junction visibility splay - 618212/SK17 Rev A received on 09/05/2017
Western access road junction visibility splay - 618212/SK18 Rev A received on 09/05/2017
Archaeology and geophysical report received on 22/12/2016
Design and Access Statement received on 22/12/2016
Ecological appraisal received on 22/12/2016
Flood risk assessment and drainage strategy reference number 618211-REP-CIV-FRA Rev3 received on 24/05/17
Heritage statement received on 22/12/2016
Landscape and visual impact assessment received on 22/12/2016
Statement of community consultation received on 22/12/2016
Sustainability statement received on 22/12/2016
Transport plan received on 22/12/2016
Tree Survey and constraints plan received on 22/12/2016
Transport Assessment received on 22/12/2016
Contaminated land report received on 22/12/2016
Attenuation basis risk assessment report received on 08/03/2016
Landscape masterplan reference number 1892 01 Rev C received on 24/05/2017

The application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online at www.midsuffolk.gov.uk via the following link:
<http://planningpages.midsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do;jsessionid=21B48B527E2BD08F40E75921C01A51A8?action=firstPage>.

Alternatively, a copy is available to view at the Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Council Offices.

SUMMARY

The proposal has been assessed with regard to adopted development plan policies, the National Planning Policy Framework and all other material considerations. The scheme is contrary to the adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy; however, the Council cannot demonstrate

a 5 year supply of housing and the scheme falls to be considered under paragraph 14 of the NPPF where the adverse impacts of the scheme have to be balanced against the benefits of the scheme to demonstrate that it constitutes sustainable development. Officers are recommending a minded approval of this application as it is considered to be sustainable development as the as the significant public benefits that the scheme will deliver (contributions towards a new school, pre-school, highway improvements, health provision, affordable housing and library facilities amongst others) are considered to outweigh the negative aspects of the proposal.

PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason:

- It is a “Major” application for residential land allocation for 15 or over dwellings.

PART TWO – APPLICATION BACKGROUND

1. This section details history, policies, advice provided, other legalisation and events that forms the background in terms of both material considerations and procedural background.

History

2. The planning history relevant to the application site is listed below. A detailed assessment of the planning history including any material Planning Appeals will be carried out as needed in Part Three:

There is no relevant planning history for this site.

3. The following applications are also considered to be relevant to the consideration of this proposal as they represent the other major applications for residential development in Thurston that are currently with the Council for consideration:

2797/16 Application for Outline Planning Permission (with all matters other than means of access reserved) for residential development of up to 175 dwellings with associated car parking, landscaping, public open space areas, allotments, and vehicular access from Sandpit Lane. The applicant is Hopkins Homes and this proposal is identical to appeal 5010/16.

4386/16 Full planning application for the erection of 138 dwellings on land on the west side of Barton Road, Thurston. The applicant is Bovis Homes.

4942/16 Full planning application for the erection of 64 dwellings on land at Meadow Lane, Thurston. The applicant is Laurence Homes.

4963/16 Outline application for the erection of up to 250 dwellings and associated infrastructure including the provision of up to 2.4ha of land for use by the Thurston Community College and the provision of land for a new primary school on land west of Ixworth Road, Thurston. The applicant is Persimmon Homes.

5010/16 Outline Planning Application (with all matters other than means of access reserved) for residential development of up to 175 dwellings with associated car parking, landscaping, public open space areas, allotments, and vehicular access from Sandpit Lane and Norton Road (This case is at appeal for non-determination in the statutory period of 13 weeks for a major application). The appellant is Hopkins Homes and this proposal is identical to application 2797/16.

4. **The consideration of the cumulative infrastructure issues that this group of applications present has been explored in a collaborative, but without prejudice, working group including County and District Council Officers with the five respective applicants and their technical advisers. This has enabled a constructive and timetabled analysis of the proposals and their cumulative impact.**

Details of Previous Committee / Resolutions

5. None

Details of Member site visit

6. Members visited Thurston on the 13th June to look at this site and the four other residential development schemes that are currently with the Council for consideration.

Details of any Pre Application Advice

7. The applicant engaged with the Council and received pre-application advice on the principle of the development and its acceptability having regards to the fact that the Council does not have a 5 year supply of housing.

PART THREE – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION

8. Summary of Consultations

Thurston Parish Council (which includes the comments of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan Team) – Strongly objects to the scheme on the following grounds:

The following points which have been raised by the Neighbourhood Plans team relate to the

impact of all 5 applications (and appeal) currently with the Council for residential development in Thurston:

- Thurston is to face an unprecedented level of growth due to the submission of 6 planning applications proposing over 800 houses between them.
- The 6 applications need to be considered on a cumulative basis as failure by the District Council to do so would result in the individual schemes having a significant impact on the local community and it wouldn't meet the requirements of the NPPF.
- Consider that the Neighbourhood Plan should be given some weight in the consideration of this proposal as it has been the subject of public consultation despite not allocating sites or proposing planning policies.
- The speed of the submission of the applications in Thurston and the amount of dwellings proposed between the five undetermined applications and the Granary site will result in Thurston losing its 'village feel' and for it to become 'a small dormitory town'.
- The cumulative impact of the scheme needs to be considered in the light of the 101 residences (92 dwellings and one block of flats incorporating 9 units) already granted at the Granary site.
- The current primary school is at capacity and it is landlocked and cannot be extended. Any additional houses would need additional primary school places. Agree with the County Council's stance that a new primary school is required and it should be provided before the dwellings are occupied. However, a new school causes its own infrastructure issues and there is nowhere in Thurston that has current adequate provision to assimilate the pedestrian and vehicle movements particularly at the beginning and at the end of the day in school term.
- Development is proposed on the best and most versatile agricultural land on the northern part of the village.
- The density of all of the schemes is too high and they reflect urban type development rather than what you would expect in a village.
- The local community would prefer to see schemes of no greater than 50 dwellings being built with more open space around them. They would also like to see more bungalow developments which the developers are not providing. There should also be more one and two bedroom flats/apartments and houses in the schemes.
- Thurston is accessed by a network of A roads and country lanes which are not well maintained by the County Council and are not of a design or standard to accommodate increased growth in Thurston and also that planned in the surrounding villages and in Bury St Edmunds.
- Congestion of the local highway network already exists and these schemes will make the situation worse and will cause more accidents to occur at key sites which already experience accidents in the village.
- There are no plans by network rail to improve the station at Thurston and this will cause capacity, parking and safety issues.
- The number of dwellings proposed cumulatively will cause social impacts for the local community. These have been split in a pros and cons list as below:

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New purpose built school more attuned to 21st Century needs. • Improved facilities and to allow more clubs and organisations to increase will increase their sustainability. • More residents in the locality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new school would potentially trigger more new houses in the future which would change the social dynamics of the village. • New cycle and walking routes to the new school would have to be created as they don't

would help to support a greater variety of leisure facilities in the village.	<p>exist at present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers to the village will put pressure on current organisations in the village will not be able to expand to meet this increased demand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater variety of shops and facilities would be supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More shops and facilities will change the character of the village into a small town and local residents will resent this change and the new developments that have caused this change to happen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More residents will sustain bus and train services in the locality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More residents will increase pressure on the network which cannot be met unless improvements are made to the railway station car park.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More pressure for a medical surgery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nearest practice doesn't have capacity and all that is being asked through this and the other schemes is a contribution towards health care which will make the service unsustainable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional footpaths and cycle ways will offer a variety of routes for walkers and cyclists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new residents using the paths will not be familiar with the way that local residents look after their valued paths and this could result in bad feeling against them. There may also be more dogs off leads which could cause problems.

Specifically in relation to the Pigeon scheme, the Neighbourhood Plans team raise the following points:

- The site is separate from the settlement boundary.
- The site encroaches into the countryside.
- It lies on prime agricultural land.
- Concerns about road safety as the site is close to the Community College.
- Road safety concerns at Pokeridge Corner and accessing the A14.
- No safe crossing points for pedestrians to access the village.
- Impact of the development from two access points from Norton Road.
- The development is inappropriate to the abutting surrounding countryside.
- Impact on health and education in the village.
- The types and densities of the dwellings proposed do not match the local needs for smaller properties and bungalows.
- The affordable homes will be too expensive for local residents as they do not cater for the need for 1 and 2 bedrooms.
- Proximity and impact on the grade II* listed Manor Farm House.

- Size of school being proposed – 2 forms of entry possible rising to 3.

Thurston Parish Council has raised the following additional comments not previously referred to above in relation to this scheme:

- 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. The proposal is contrary to policy GP1, H13 and H16 of the local plan, policies FC1.1 and FC2 of the Core Strategy Focused Review and policy CS5 of the Core Strategy.
- 200 new dwellings would intrude into the currently open countryside and harm its setting and not reflect the local character of Thurston.
- The proposal is contrary to paragraph 58 of the NPPF as permanent pasture land would be lost and the proposal would fail to protect wildlife habitats in the area.
- The scheme does not consider the historic architectural and visual landscape connections between Manor Farm and Nether Hall and as such fails to protect a Grade II* Listed Building and is contrary to policy HB1 of the local plan.
- The density, tenure and mix of properties do not reflect that currently in Thurston.
- 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.
- 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 has been consulted on the applicant's amended layout plan and they comment that whilst they appreciate the alterations that the applicant has made to the scheme, they still strongly object to it. They raise the following comments:

- Regardless of the changes, the site is still in the countryside and outside of the settlement boundary for Thurston and would still result in a development that would be visually, physically and functionally isolated from the facilities and services offered

by Thurston as a Key Service Centre.

- Whilst it is noted that the school site has been reconfigured, the parish still has concerns over pedestrian safety with regards to crossing points. It is noted that the proposed footpath does not link up to the existing footpaths in the area.
- The application still fails to take into account the current road infrastructure and the lack of pedestrian route-ways and cycle ways to connect to the to the secondary school and village facilities. This will still have a negative impact on traffic generation in the area which will affect the living conditions of local residents who live in the locality.
- Appreciates that the applicant has altered the two access points onto Norton Road to try and resolve highway safety concerns. However the Parish still question if the arrangement is safe.
- Whilst the applicant has potentially appeased the concerns of the residents of Meadow Lane by deleting the access points for the proposed dwellings on that part of the site and using the access points on Norton Road for the whole of the scheme, this arrangement will potentially put more pressure on Norton Road which the Parish is concerned about.
- The Parish Council acknowledges that the applicant has increased the percentage of bungalows (including affordable bungalows) on site as well as increasing the number of 1 and 2 bedroom properties on site whilst also doubling the market housing mix. However, the Parish is still concerned that the density of the scheme is still inappropriate for a rural setting on the edge of a village and that little or no account has been made of the increased pressure the smaller units will place on the parking provision within the site.

MSDC - Environmental Health – Public Protection – Does not object to the scheme as there is very little risk from the historical use of the site. The only onsite concern is from the infilled pond in the woodland area which is to be retained, but this risk from this is small. Advises that the impact of the scheme can be controlled by conditions

MSDC Heritage Officer – The site is in close proximity to the Grade II listed Church of St Peter and also to Manor Farm which is Grade 2* listed and also the barn to the north of it which is Grade II listed in its own right. The Historic Buildings Officer advises that the significance of Manor Farm is that it was designed by Philip Webb who was an influential architect and designer. He was also responsible for contemporary alterations at Nether Hall. The spacious rural setting of Manor Farm and its former farm buildings makes a positive contribution to their significance. However, Manor Farmhouse does not seem to succeed an earlier building, but is associated historically with Nether Hall to the north. As a later building, its agricultural surroundings make a less important contribution to its significance than would be the case for a traditional farmhouse. Since conversion of the barn complex, the introduction of residential development and activity in the curtilage of the barn dwellings has eroded the agricultural character of the land between them and the application site. Similarly development associated with the keeping of horses has changed the character of land belonging to Manor Farm.

The change from farmland to residential and school use would represent a degree of harm in the spacious rural setting of the listed buildings, but because of the factors referred to above the level of harm resulting to the significance of the listed buildings is considered to be low.

He advises in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 129, 132 and 134 that the Council in determining this proposal needs to consider whether this harm can be avoided or minimised, and whether it is justified in terms of public benefits.

The Historic Offer also asks whether the layout of the site can be altered to allow for a strong green buffer along the eastern boundary of the site which would serve to sustain a more rural character in the setting of the listed building.

As there are now 5 separate housing proposals in Thurston which together total 872 houses, with the potential for the cumulative impact of two or more of the schemes to have an impact on the heritage assets listed above, the Council's Heritage Officer has been asked for his comments. He considers that in terms of the assets listed above, only the Hopkins site (2797/16 & 5010/16) and this proposal will have a cumulative impact. He has assessed when considered together that 375 houses (up to 175 on the Hopkins site and up to 200 on this site) on a cumulative basis would cause harm to the grade II* Listed farm house of no greater than medium. He has assessed that even adding the harm to the significance of the nearby church; the resulting cumulative level of harm to the affected heritage assets would be greater than low but not greater than medium.

MSDC – Infrastructure Team – Confirms that the scheme as submitted will be subject to the Council's CIL payments.

MSDC - Strategic Housing (Summary) – Advises that no objections are raised to the scheme either in its original form or in the amended plans as 35% affordable housing is proposed in line with the Council's requirements. The strategic Housing Officer advises that the affordable housing provision should be provided on site as follows:

Affordable Rent Tenancy = 52 units as follows:

12 x 1b 2p flats @ 50sqm
2 x 1b 2p bungalows @ 50sqm
4 x 2b 4p bungalows @ 70sqm
22 x 2b 4p houses @ 79sqm
11 x 3b 6p houses @ 102sqm
1 x 4b x 7p house @ 115sqm

Shared Ownership = 18 units as follows:

12 x 2bed 4p houses @ 79sqm
6 x 3bed 6p person houses @ 102sqm

SCC Archaeology – Does not raise any objections to this scheme subject to the imposition of conditions.

SCC Flood and water management – They initially objected to the scheme, but following the submission of additional information from the applicant, they no longer object to the application subject to the imposition of conditions dealing with flood risk matters.

The SCC Flood Management Team has been asked to comment on the cumulative impact of 827 houses being proposed in Thurston and they have commented that they would expect all of the developers to design suitable sustainable drainage systems (which they all have). All of the 5 sites are in a flood zone 1 so they comply with national policy requirements. However, surface water drainage has historically been an issue in Thurston with soil conditions not being viable for water to drain away easily. Most of the surface water from the village is drained into the foul sewer system with the east part of the village having a surface water drainage system. It is understood that Anglian Water are considering options to improve capacity in the locality to help to prevent the flood events that have happened in the centre of the village in recent years.

SCC Highways – The Local Highway Authority has provided two responses on this proposal. One deals with the cumulative impact of this scheme and the four others that have all been submitted in Thurston on the local highway infrastructure. The second response deals with the highway issues that are specific to this proposal.

Cumulative impact - The Transport Assessments provided for the individual proposed developments show varying degrees of impact on the highway infrastructure. To date none have shown the cumulative impact of all five developments but at some locations SCC considers this may be severe, particularly where the network is already close to or exceeding capacity. Paragraph 21 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment, including any lack of infrastructure and identify priority areas for infrastructure provision. Both SCC and MSDC are aware that paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented on transport grounds where residual impacts of development are severe. The same statement allows decisions to be made taking account of whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limits the significant impacts of development.

On this occasion, we consider that by taking a co-operative approach for all five developments there is an opportunity that the planning process can provide improvements to both mitigate against any severe impacts and any lack of transport infrastructure.

Highway Infrastructure (Congestion)

The initial data and modelling provided in Transport Assessments indicates that the road network will experience additional traffic through growth and development and at some locations this will exceed the theoretical junction capacity. Those junctions that are or may exceed capacity are discussed below.

A143 Bury Road / C691 Thurston Road/ C649 Brand Road

Modelling shows that this junction is already close to theoretical capacity in the AM peak with northbound traffic waiting to turn onto the A143 queueing on Barton Road and at capacity in the PM peak with Thurston bound traffic waiting right from the A143 into Barton Road. The additional traffic from the proposed developments in Thurston will exacerbate these problems; in particular, modelling shows the queueing traffic on Barton Road will exceed capacity in the AM peak.

C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road (Fishwick Corner)

Modelling indicates that the southbound approach to the junction is currently close to capacity in the morning peak and that its capacity will be exceeded before all five developments could be delivered. However, in the PM peak the junction has the capacity for the predicted traffic for all developments.

C560 Beyton Road / C592 Thurston Road / U4920 Thedwastre Road

The modelling of this junction shows some inconsistencies with one study indicating it will be close to capacity southbound on Thedwastre Road in the AM peak due to traffic from one specific development but other modelling showing it would have capacity for the traffic generated by the developments.

Highway Infrastructure (Road Safety)

A143 Bury Road / C691 Thurston Road/ C649 Brand Road

There have been three recorded crashes resulting in slight injuries and one involving serious injury at this junction in the last 5 years for which data is available (2012-2016).

C560 Beyton Road / C592 Thurston Road / U4920 Thedwastre Road

There have been two crashes resulting in slight injuries at this junction in the past 5 years.

C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road (Fishwick Corner)

At this junction there have been 9 crashes resulting in slight injuries and one resulting in a serious injury in the past 5 years.

The frequency of injury related crashes at the C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road (Fishwick Corner) junction would, in the opinion of SCC, necessitates some work to improve road safety. Although the frequency of crashes at the A143 Bury Road / C691 Thurston Road/ C649 Brand Road does not justify significant road safety improvements it is a factor that should be considered in any future mitigation measures.

Suggested Mitigation Measures

A143 Bury Road / C691 Thurston Road/ C649 Brand Road

An assumption has been made that the junction can be signalised and that this will reduce congestion and improve road safety. Although there is a generous width of highway verge in the vicinity of the junction the geography of the site may place constraints on the design and further work is required to confirm that a solution is possible or beneficial. The proposed junction improvements would be delivered through a jointly funded S106 contribution.

C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road (Fishwick Corner)

The issue of congestion on the southbound approach is difficult to mitigate as there is insufficient land within the highway boundary to provide a meaningful solution. It is noted that the road network around Thurston is relatively permeable and an option exists for traffic to avoid this by diverting onto Beyton Road and then turning right to approach this junction from the east.

Several minor traffic management features such as improved signing, marker posts and high friction surfacing have been used at this junction in the past as crash reduction measures. Despite this, crashes causing injury continue to occur. To reduce the severity of these crashes it is proposed to restrict the road to 40mph and undertake local safety improvements such as enhanced road signs and markings. This would be delivered through a jointly funded S106 contribution.

A longer term solution would be to remodel the junction or drastically remodel the road network. It is recommended these matters should be addressed in any future revisions to the Local Plan.

C560 Beyton Road / C592 Thurston Road / U4920 Thedwastre Road

The highway boundary constrains any improvements in this location and thus there does not appear to be any viable mitigation to increase capacity on the southbound Thedwastre Road approach. The relatively low number of crashes suggests that the issue of road safety is not as important as it is for the other two junctions and mitigation measures would only comprise low cost work, such as road signs and markings.

Speed Limits

It is noted that a number of proposed access roads are located close to or beyond the existing 30mph speed limit in Thurston. In some cases, assumptions have been made when determining visibility for these junctions that the 85%ile speed limits are or will be close to 30mph. Developers are advised that the visibility requirements shall be designed for the measured 85%ile speed adjacent to the junction and not the posted or proposed future speed limit. A legal process must be followed to change or extend a speed limit and during

this process objections can be made which can delay or stop creation of the necessary legal order. For this reason, Suffolk County Council cannot accept visibility splays based on changes to speed limits unless there is confidence that no significant objections to the traffic regulation order are likely.

Based on the available details of the five proposed developments the following changes to speed limits are suggested;

- Extend the 30mph speed limit north on Ixworth Road to Thurston Rugby Club
- Extend the 30mph speed limit on Norton Road towards and beyond Church Road
- Extend of 30mph speed limit on Barton Road west of Mill Lane
- Create a new 40mph speed limit between and including the C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road and the C560 Beyton Road / C592 Thurston Road / U4920 Thedwastre Road for road safety reasons.

The necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) could be raised individually or preferably as a single order. The latter is preferred as it reduces cost and administration. This can be delivered through site specific or joint S106 contributions. As stated above implementation of an order cannot be guaranteed and if a TRO is required to justify reduced visibility splay lengths then the order would need to be substantially complete before such a reduction would be accepted. If a process can be agreed between the parties' initial consultation can be undertaken in advance of determination of the planning applications.

Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure

The benefit of considering all five applications together is that a coherent system of footways and pedestrian crossings can be delivered in Thurston. The proposed footways are intended to provide good, direct pedestrian access both to the main village and schools. The proposed improvements, most of which have already been proposed by individual applications, are listed below:

- An uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on Norton Road between Meadow Lane and Station Hill / Ixworth Road.
- A footway on west side of Ixworth Road between Norton Road and the entrance to Persimmon's site
- A footway link on Ixworth Road between the entrance to the Persimmon development and the entrance to the Thurston Rugby Club.
- A controlled pedestrian crossing facility (e.g. a raised table junction with zebra crossing) if practicable at or adjacent to the Norton Road / Station Hill / Ixworth Road junction. Pooled contributions from all 5 developments are required for the County Council to deliver this.
- A footway on the north side of Norton Road from Meadow Lane east towards Church Lane as far as the site boundary allows. This could be within the development and or on the highway verge.
- An uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on Norton Road crossing linking the Hopkins Homes and Pigeon sites
- Meadow Lane resurfaced to improve cycle / pedestrian facilities (and maintain access to properties)
- Provide a metalled footway on Church Road between Footpath 006 and the footpath link to School Lane. This will include provision of street lighting along this short section of footpath.
- Provide two uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on Sandpit Lane to link the Hopkins Homes development to the main village

With the exception of the pedestrian crossing facility at the junction of Ixworth Road, Station Hill and Norton Road, the above are expected to be secured by conditions or S106 obligations as appropriate and delivered by the relevant development with S278 (improvements to existing highway) or S38 agreements (if adoption as highway maintainable at public expense is desired) as appropriate. All the footways are expected to be metalled and where verge space allows provision for cyclists should also be considered.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

It is proposed that a small number of PRoW are improved to provide alternative pedestrian links between the proposed developments and current and future school sites. These are improvements to:

- Thurston Footpath 001 between Ixworth Road and Meadow Lane. It is proposed that this is to an all-weather standard, preferably a bituminous surface.
- Thurston Footpath 018 between Ixworth Road and Mill Lane. This lies within the development site and the works can be secured by condition.
- Thurston Footpath 006 between Norton Road and Church Road. This lies within the development site and the works can be secured by condition. It is proposed that this is to an all-weather standard; preferably a bituminous surface as far as it is a safe pedestrian route to the site north of Norton Road
- New PROW link along southern boundary of the Bovis Homes site to join Barton Road
- New PROW link from the site west of Barton Road to Heath Road, linking with Cycle Route 51.
- Improve PROW 007 North of Meadow Lane (un-metalled).

If diversion of a PRoW is likely it is recommended that discussions are held with the relevant SCC officer at an early state.

Public Transport

Improvements to public transport infrastructure will be limited to any site-specific works necessary as a result of each development through S106. All other public transport improvements are included in the CIL.

The specific highway comments relating to this scheme only are as follows:

Site Access from the public highway – These are the subject of the last lot of amended plans and no objections are raised to them.

Internal Highway layout – The layout of the internal site is indicative only and this is to be agreed at Reserved Matters stage.

Car parking - To be agreed at Reserved Matters stage having regards to the Council's standards.

Footway and cycle connectivity - These are the subject of the last lot of amended plans and no objections are raised to them.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – Acknowledges that no paths go through the site, but Thurston Footpath 001 forms a significant link between the site and Ixworth Road, the Thurston Community College and probable future developments along Ixworth Road, therefore S106 funding for improvements to this path is requested.

Landscaping – This is the subject of the last lot of amended plans and no objections are raised to them.

Road Safety - The data available indicates that the single significant location with a high frequency of crashes is at the junction of C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road and not Thredwastre Road / New Road as stated. It is proposed that mitigation measures are undertaken at the Thurston Road / New Road junction.

Public Transport - The nearest bus stop is approximately 500m from the site. If practical it is proposed that additional bus stops and shelters are placed either side of Norton Road to the east of Rylands Close.

Trip Generation - The Trip rates and modal splits are considered acceptable.

Junction Assessment - It is noted that four junctions were modelled:

- Junction 1: Norton Road / Church Hill / Pakenham Road
- Junction 2: Norton Road / meadow Lane / Sandpit Lane
- Junction 3: Station Hill / Barton Road
- Junction 4: Beyton Road / Thurston Road / Thedwastre Road

The A143 / Barton Road was not included, although 15% of the vehicles are expected to use this route. Modelling from other developments indicates that this junction is operating at or close to capacity in the peak periods and any additional traffic may have a severe impact. This matter is addressed in the letter regarding the cumulative impact of the five developments.

The flow diagrams used for modelling of the AM peak the Norton Road East approach to the Pakenham Road junction seems to not agree with the traffic survey. It is also thought that there may be some confusion over the approaches to the Thurston Road/Thedwastre Road crossroads, when compared to the survey. These should be reviewed. The applicant has provided additional information to the Local Highway Authority and this matter has now been successfully resolved.

The Local Highways Authority advises that the reminder of the issues that are relevant to this proposal can be covered by planning conditions and within the S106 agreement for the scheme. The S106 heads of terms will cover the following issues:

- Improvements to PRoW Thurston 001 between Meadow Lane and Ixworth Road. A contribution of £7111 on commencement of the 100th dwelling.
- Improve PROW 007 (un metalled) north of Meadow Lane. A contribution of £16500 in commencement of the 100th dwelling.
- Contribution towards extension of speed limit on Norton Road. A contribution of £4267 on commencement of any construction work on site.
- Contribution towards provision of pedestrian crossing facilities at Norton Road / Station Hill / Ixworth Road junction. A contribution of £21838 on occupation of the first dwelling.
- Contribution towards improvements at the A143 Bury Road / C691 Thurston Road/ C649 Brand Road, junction at Great Barton. A contribution of £69,528 on commencement of any construction works on site.
- Contribution towards safety improvements at the C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road. A contribution of £12624 on commencement of the first dwelling.

- Travel Plan Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution - £1,000 per annum for a minimum of five years or one year after occupation of the final dwelling, whichever is longest. This is to cover Suffolk County Council officer time working with the Travel Plan Coordinator and agreeing new targets and objectives throughout the full duration of the travel plan
- Travel Plan Implementation Bond – To be confirmed when a detailed application/Travel Plan is submitted. This will be used to cover the cost of implementing the travel plan on behalf of the developer if they fail to deliver it themselves
- Full Implementation of the Travel Plan and its monitoring
- Provision of an approved welcome pack to each dwelling after first occupation
- Securing remedial travel plan measures if the agreed travel plan targets are not achieved

Except for the A143 Bury Road / C691 Thurston Road/ C649 Brand Road, junction at Great Barton the reasons for requesting these contributions are described above. The A143 improvements are mitigation to improve capacity at this junction reflecting the small individual but, in terms of cumulative impact, significant effect that the five developments will have at this junction. The Local Highways Authority has indicated that the cost of this will be £131,868 for the works required under S106 of the act and £69,788 for works under section 278 of the Highways Act.

SCC - Obligations Manager: Comments that 200 new houses proposed in the scheme will have an impact on local infrastructure particularly in terms of education.

Primary Provision

The residents of the scheme will generate the need for 43 new primary school places and it has been advised that there is no capacity in the local Primary School which is the Thurston Church of England Primary Academy to accommodate this development and as such a contribution is requested towards a new primary school. As new schools cannot be provided through the Council's CIL scheme (the 123 list only allows for extensions to schools and not new schools) a request is made for a contribution towards a new school under S106 of the planning act.

A contribution for £821,450 as broken down below is require to meet education needs which will arise from this development:

School level	Minimum pupil yield:	Required:	Cost per place £ (2016/17):
Primary school age range, 5-11*:	50	50	16,429

Land for new school

A contribution for a further £64,700 is also requested to contribute towards the cost of the land to provide the school. This is worked out on a maximum cost of £100,000 per acre (£247,100 per hectare, which will be £543,620 for a 2.2 hectare site and equates to £1,294 per pupil place. For the proposed development, this equates to a proportionate land contribution of 50 places x £1,294 per place = **£64,700**

Temporary classroom

The Obligations Manager has also advised that there will be a need for temporary classroom arrangements to accommodate the needs of the children that arise from this development. The existing primary school is on a very constrained site and an extension to the facility is not possible under Department for Education guidelines. However, it is advised that where extra pupils either through a spike in local population or from housing development cause a 'bulge' in the admission numbers, this can be accommodated by providing temporary classrooms.

A double temporary mobile classroom providing 60 places could be located within the hard surfaced play and car park areas within the school for a period of no longer than 3 years to meet the admissions 'bulge' which would be caused by this and other large housing developments in Thurston. As the primary school is an academy whereby the County Council has limited control over its operation, agreement to the provision of the temporary building has had to be sought from the Academy board that runs the school and it is understood from the Obligations Manager, that agreement has now been given by them for this to go ahead.

The temporary classroom will be facilitated via a CIL bid as it is classified as being an extension to an existing school in the Council's 123 list.

Secondary School and 6th form provision

The Obligations Manager has commented that secondary and 6th form provision in the area is currently sufficient to accommodate the additional pupils which will be generated from this proposal as shown in the table below.

Total primary education contributions: £886, 150

Restriction on occupation

The Obligations Manager has also commented that as there is another application in Thurston that is proposing a primary school site (application 4963/16 – Land West of Ixworth Road for Persimmon Homes) but neither this or that application is approved yet, that the district council should consider imposing a planning condition restricting occupation of any dwellings once the capacity of the existing primary school with additional temporary classroom are full. This condition could then be discharged once the construction of the new primary school on whichever site has been chosen has commenced.

Pre-school

The Obligations Manager has also noted that there are currently 4 pre-school establishments in the locality (2 childminders, Thurston pre-school and Tinkerbells Day Nursery) and that spare capacity between them is only 10 spaces. Based on the scale of development currently being assessed in Thurston, the proposed legislative changes and the intention to establish a new primary school (with nursery provision), the most practical approach is to establish a new early education setting on the site of the new primary school which would be a 30 place setting, providing sufficient capacity for 60 children in total. Our latest estimates are that a 30 place early education setting costs £500,000 to construct on a site of approximately 630m² (note: this includes outdoor play and parking).

The Mid Suffolk Regulation 123 List indicates that new early years settings are not identified for funding through CIL. A proportionate contribution for this scheme would be based on 8 children of the total 60 who would be accommodated within the new setting, could be calculated as follows (revised costs from a similar scheme in Suffolk):

- £500,000 construction cost (including land as collocated with the new primary school) for a new 60 place setting
- £500,000/60 early years pupils = £8,333 per place From 175 dwellings there is the need for 8 additional places

Therefore 20 pupils x £8,333 per place = **£166,660 (2016/17 costs)**

Total contribution for all education provision - £1 052, 810

Other infrastructure contributions

Requests a contribution of £43,200 towards library provision. This is requested under the Council's CIL 123 list.

SCC Public Rights of Way – Notes that public footpath number 7 runs through the site, but does not raise any objections to the scheme.

Anglian Water – They do not object to this proposal as it does not interfere with any of their assets. They confirm that foul drainage capacity is available at the Thurston Water Recycling Centre and there is capacity in the sewerage system to carry the sewage from the proposed dwellings.

Ecology Officer, Essex Place Services – Has not raised any objections to the scheme in terms of loss of hedgerows or impact on any protected species. The officer has advised that the applicant needs to mitigate against the loss of Skylark habitats as they are a UK and Suffolk Priority Species. The applicant has agreed to provide two Skylark plots at an offsite location away in the Thurston area and this can be secured via a S106 agreement.

Environment Agency – Does not object to this scheme on flood risk or on foul water grounds. They advise that the site is subject of a historic waste landfill and that the Council's Contaminated Land Officer needs to assess and make comments on the applicant's submission (see elsewhere in this report for this).

They have also considered the cumulative impact of all 5 schemes together and they advise that none of the sites are in an area at risk of fluvial flooding. They also confirm that from their records there will be sufficient capacity in the Thurston Water Recycling Centre to accommodate all 827 dwellings. They have advised that Thurston lies in an area of 'water supply stress' by Anglian Water which has a duty under their own legislation to provide a water supply to new houses when they are built.

Fire Service - County Fire Officer – Does not object to the proposal, but advises that details of the location of sufficient fire hydrants to make the development safe must be submitted. This can be covered by a planning condition.

Historic England – They do not object to the scheme but raise the following comments: Historic England considers that the application is on a large parcel of land adjacent to the Grade II* Listed Manor Farm House complex and could affect its setting. Thurston as a village has over the years grown out towards the Manor Farm complex and eroded its agricultural landscape. Whilst they note that there will be a buffer zone of landscaping and open space separating the new houses and the grade II* listed building they are still concerned that the housing could erode the rural character of its surroundings and harm its historic significance. As a consequence of the above it is the role of the Council to assess the impact and weigh it against the public benefit that the scheme will bring in line with the requirements of paragraph 132 of the NPPF in making a decision on this proposal.

Landscape Officer – Essex Place Services: Comments that the proposal will significantly change the visual character of the site which will change from agriculture to residential.

He advises that the Landscape Statement provides a clear methodology for the landscape strategy which includes plant species, landscape character, public open space provision and public realm, surface materials. The Landscape Statement proposes a clearly considered green infrastructure which adequately mitigates the impact of the development. The indicative layout includes a good range of public realm and public open spaces with high amenity value.

Views to the development identified on the LVIA have been adequately mitigated through planting along edge boundaries and within the residential development helping to screen and filter those critical views.

Having regards to the above, he does not object to this proposal.

Network Rail – They have been consulted on the cumulative impact of building 827 new dwellings in Thurston on the railway station and the local railway network as requested by the local community. They state that the main issue is the Barrow Level Crossing at Thurston station which has historically seen a number of safety issues associated with it and the level of usage which would arise from the erection of the number of dwellings proposed would have a severe impact on safety unless mitigation measures are introduced. They indicate that their preferred option is to close the level crossing and replace it with a new pedestrian ramp from platform 1 (upside) down the embankment leading onto Beyton Road. This design will also need to include a drop off point/layby for vehicles along Beyton Road. They have advised that the cost of the works amount to £1million and should be shared proportionally amongst the developers. They are seeking this through a S106 agreement.

When questioned, Network Rail has made it clear that the works that they propose to the crossing point at Thurston Station are directly related to the impact of the 5 planning applications and the 827 houses that would be built. They have advised that the other works that they propose to close crossing points elsewhere on the same line are minor in nature and cannot be compared to this site as the other crossing points are not facing unprecedented levels of pedestrian use which would be generated from the proposed housing in Thurston.

NHS/Primary Care Trust – The proposal will have an impact on the Mount Farm Doctors Surgery which is based in Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds and there will be a need to either extend or reconfigure the building to meet the additional capacity requirements that will be generated if this proposal is approved. The PCT have not specified an amount that they require, but they have confirmed that they will be making a bid under the Council's CIL scheme for the funding that they require to carry out the works they deem necessary to ensure that the facilities can meet the need that arises from this development.

Ramblers Association – Have concerns that this proposal will swamp footpath 7 so it will no longer be the pleasant walk that it is now.

Suffolk Preservation Society: Object to this scheme on the following grounds:

- It is a Greenfield site and is poorly related to the village.
- It is harmful to the setting of Manor Farm which is a Grade II* Listed Building and a group of barns that adjoin it which are Grade II Listed in their own right due to the loss of their associated agricultural land and subsequent development with housing.
- It is acknowledged that the harm generated will be less than substantial and the society urges the Council to consider the impact significant when balancing the harm to the listed building with the benefits that the scheme brings.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust – Comment that they are unclear as to how many of the hedgerows within the site are to be removed as these offer habitat for birds and foraging grounds for bats. Consent should not be supported for schemes that would result in the loss of hedgerows which are a UK and Suffolk Priority Habitat. The application site is likely to provide suitable nesting habitat for Skylarks which are also UK and Suffolk Priority Habitat and as such suitable compensation for this loss would need to be provided with this application to make it acceptable. There were no badgers on site when the Trust visited, but badgers can colonise sites quickly and a walkover survey is suggested before any works are carried out on site if planning permission is granted for this scheme. Query how the greenspace and drainage areas within the site will be managed in the future to maximise its benefits for biodiversity enhancement. Advise that if this proposal is supported that the development should be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the ecology report.

Representations

9. 34 letters in total have been received objecting to this proposal on the following grounds:

Highway safety

- The local roads are inadequate and dangerous to cope with so many new dwellings and they are always in a poor state of repair which will be made worse by this proposal.
- There are a number of dangerous junctions and pinch points in the area which will become more dangerous with the number of vehicles which will be generated by this development.
- Additional vehicles on the road network will cause congestion and chaos at peak times.
- The railway station has poor parking. Additional residents from this site using the railway station to access places such as Bury St Edmunds will increase the parking issues experienced.
- The 9 self-build plots are accessed from Meadow Lane which is a single track road with a dead end and no turning area. To use this road would be unacceptable and unsafe on highway safety grounds.
- Saw a traffic survey being carried out earlier this year in Thurston. This proposal must be considered having regards to its findings. Any future traffic surveys should be done at peak times during the day to be accurate.
- The new school will generate unacceptable traffic on Meadow Lane which is unacceptable.
- This scheme proposes to change the speed limit of the road to 30mph. This might not be possible as that is a different legal process to this planning application.

Infrastructure

- This development will create excessive pressure on the local GP surgery as well as other NHS infrastructure in this part of Suffolk.
- The PCT is asking for contributions towards improvements at the Park Farm Surgery and at the one at Woolpit, but this ignores the fact that most of the residents use the one at Ixworth. This proposal will therefore put more pressure on the Ixworth Surgery.
- It will also put additional pressure on all of the emergency services in the area.
- This development will place an excessive demand on the infrastructure of the area which will need to be resolved before any of the houses could be built.

- The local primary school cannot accommodate the children from this development.
- The scheme does not mention its impact on the secondary provision in the locality either.
- The local railway network will also not cope with the usage needs from the new residents of this proposal.
- Who will maintain the drainage system for the site and the open space areas? This raises concerns as there have been surface water floods in the surrounding area in the past.
- The local bus service is poor and inadequate to cope with the needs of the new residents of this site.
- We can see the need for a new primary school, but this site is unsuitable as it is on the edge of the village and not very accessible.
- There is no mention of employment opportunities in the application.

Impact on the character and amenity of the area

- Too many houses are proposed in this proposal.
- People use this amenity to walk with their families. This will be lost to future generations.
- The erection of 2.5 to 3 storey houses will be out of keeping with the local environment as there are none in the locality. There needs to be a height limit imposed on the dwellings if this scheme is approved to ensure that they are no higher than the existing surrounding properties
- The self-build houses will be out of keeping with the simple ones already on Meadow Lane.
- The additional dwellings and their infrastructure will cause increased light pollution in the locality and affect the open countryside.
- The erection of additional dwellings will generate more noise than the existing tranquil environment of the site and its surroundings.

Impact on residential amenity

- The proposal will cause light pollution into existing properties.
- The erection of new houses in close proximity to existing properties will cause noise pollution which will impact on the living conditions of the occupiers.

Impact on designated heritage assets

- The proposal will have a negative impact on the setting of the grade II* Listed Manor Farm House.

Impact on wildlife in the locality

- The scheme will result in the loss of trees and hedging which will have a negative impact on wildlife in the locality, particularly birds.

Other issues

- This proposal is not sustainable.
- This proposal should not go ahead until the Council works collaboratively with the local community and prepares its new local plan for the district and the new Neighbourhood plan is issued.
- When will Mid Suffolk tell us the maximum number of new houses Thurston should take in the new Local Plan for the district?

- The developer has ignored the local need for more bungalows in his proposal.
- The field which is the subject of this proposal has been used to grow crops over the years. Once developed on, this ability will be lost forever.
- Development should be on Brownfield land and not on Greenfield land.
- This site is on the edge of the village and result in the loss of valuable open countryside.
- Wi-Fi and broadband connections are poor in the village and this scheme will make matters worse.
- Why has Lady Greene's plantation been included as part of this proposal and who is going to maintain it?
- This plot is too big and on the wrong side of the village.
- We are a village and not a town!
- Why has the Council allowed the developer to submit this application?
- No consideration has been given to the needs of the elderly in the village. No sheltered accommodation or care home has been suggested in any of these schemes.

Non material planning comments

- We will lose our view over the beautiful surrounding open countryside.
- This proposal will affect the value of our property.

Cumulative Impacts

- The 5 sites in Thurston should be considered cumulatively and not singularly due to their linked impacts and they should also be considered having regards to the Granary site which already has permission.
- 827 houses are proposed and have concerns that there will be insufficient water supply and sewage capacity in the system to cope with them all
- There are too many houses proposed particularly when you take into account all of those in Bury St Edmunds which is only a short distance away from Thurston

Amended plans

- A further letter has been received in relation to the applicant's amended plans stating that the Pigeon development seems to have now addressed a number of the concerns that the village had with the scheme. The following additional comments are also made:
- The suggested new layout of the bungalows along Meadow Lane has reduced the density in that position.
- There is also an increase of bungalows to 26% and they have also increased the number of 1 & 2 bedroom properties.
- They have also put a landscaped buffer along the length of the eastern boundary.

The Site and Surroundings

10. The application site lies in the village of Thurston which has a population of approximately 3200 people (2011 census) with the site extending to an area of 18.1 hectares of grade 3b agricultural land. The land is generally flat but falls away gently towards its most northern point. To the west of the site is Meadow Lane which is a single car width dead end road which leads down to a row of cottages. To the south of the site lies Norton Road. In the north eastern corner of the site lies the Lady Green's Plantation wooded area. Other than the wooded area, the whole field is in

use for agricultural purposes.

11. The site abuts the settlement boundary for Thurston and remains as countryside for planning purposes.

The Proposal

12. Please note details of the proposed development including plans and application documents can be found online.
13. Proposed is an outline planning application for the erection of up to 200 dwellings, including 9 self-build plots, the provision of 3ha of land for a new primary school together with landscaping and infrastructure. All matters are reserved except for access which is to be considered as part of this application.
14. The applicant has submitted plans showing a suggested layout utilising a single spine road through the site with various secondary streets leading through to the dwellings. The dwellings are shown on the western part of the site running south to north with the school and the landscaping belt running south to north on the eastern part of the site. The layout shows that the new access road will loop through the site and two access points will be provided from Norton Road. This is to ensure that conflict between the residents of the site and school users is minimised at peak times.
15. The layout shows the Lady Greene Plantation being incorporated into the scheme and strengthened at its northern point to ensure that the urban edge of the scheme is softened where it meets the open countryside. The combined woodland area (existing and proposed) is approximately 3.1 Ha. The applicant has also in his recent amended plan strengthened the boundary treatment along the eastern part of the site in line with the comments made by Historic England and by the Council's Heritage Officer (this will be discussed in greater detail later on in this report). The amended illustrative masterplan also repositioned the location of the 9 self-build plots which are now shown as being accessed from within the site rather than from Meadow Lane. The parameters plan shows the self-build plots located to the north of the site adjacent to a 1.9 Ha parcel of public open space. The amended illustrative masterplan has also increased the ratio of bungalows and smaller 1 and 2 bedroom properties. The illustrative masterplan and bungalows plan show 51 bungalows (26%) and 95 (48%) 1 and 2 bedroom properties. This plan gives the scheme an approximate density of 20 dwellings per hectare.
16. However, it is important to note that the layout plans (be they the originally submitted ones or the amended ones) are indicative only and are not for consideration at this stage in the planning process, but have helpfully been included by the developer to show how the site could successfully be developed and to show the Council's consultees that the matters that they raise can be addressed should this scheme be approved and the detailed layout is submitted for consideration at a later date.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

17. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. Planning law continues to require that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration and should be taken into account for decision-making purposes.

18. The following parts of the NPPF are considered to be applicable to this scheme:

Para 6: Achieving sustainable development
Para 7: Three dimensions to sustainable development
Paras 11 – 15: The presumption in favour of sustainable development
Para 17: Core planning principles
Paras 32 and 34: Transport movements
Para 47: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (including the need to have a 5 year deliverable supply of housing)
Para 49: All housing proposals should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
Paragraph 55: To promote sustainable development in rural areas.
Paras 56 & 60: Requiring good design
Para 64: Development of poor design must not be supported.
Para 69: Promoting healthy communities
Para 70: Delivery of social, recreational and cultural facilities that the community needs.
Para 72: Provision of school places.
Para 73: Access to high quality open space.
Para 75: Protection and enhancement of public rights of way.
Para 100: Development and flood risk
Para 103: Development and increasing flood risk elsewhere
Para 109: Planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
Paras 112 & 117–119: Development affecting protected wildlife
Para 123: Planning and noise.
Para 125: Planning and darker skies.
Paras 128 & 129: Describing the significance of a designated heritage asset.
Para 131: Determining planning applications that affect heritage assets.
Para 132: Significance of heritage assets.
Para 134: Development and less than substantial harm
Para 186: Approaching decision taking in a positive way.
Para 187: Local Planning Authorities should find solutions rather than problems in decision taking.
Para 196: Plan led planning system.
Para 197: Assessing and determining application applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
Paras 203 -206 – Planning conditions and obligations.
Paras 211 - 212: Using development plans and the NPPF in decision making.
Paras 214 – 215: The weight attached to development plan policies having regards to their consistency with the NPPF.
Para 216 – Weight given to policies in emerging plans

CORE STRATEGY

19. Core Strategy Focused Review

FC1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
FC1.1 – Mid Suffolk's approach to delivering sustainable development
FC2 – Provision and distribution of housing.

20. Core Strategy

CS1 – Settlement hierarchy

- CS2 – Development in the countryside & countryside villages
- CS4 – Adapting to climate change.
- CS5 – Mid Suffolk's environment
- CS6 – Services and infrastructure
- CS9 – Density and mix

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN / SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS /AREA ACTION PLAN

21. In 2013 Thurston received a neighbourhood plan designation and the settlement is currently working on its new neighbourhood plan. The plan is however at an early stage and as yet does not have any policies which could be used in the assessment and consideration of this proposal

SAVED POLICIES IN THE LOCAL PLAN

22. GP1 – Design and layout of new developments
 HB1 – Protection of historic buildings
 HB13 – Protecting ancient monuments
 HB14 – Ensuring that Archaeological remains are not destroyed
 H3 – Housing developments in villages
 H13 – Design and layout of development
 H15 – Development to reflect local characteristics.
 H16 – Protecting existing residential amenity
 H17 – Keeping new development away from pollution
 CL8 – Protecting wildlife
 CL11 – Retaining high quality agricultural land
 T9 – Parking standards
 T10 – Highway consideration in developments
 RT4 – Amenity open space and play areas within residential development
 RT12 – Footpaths and bridleways
 SB3 – Retaining visually important landscapes

Main Considerations

23. From an assessment of relevant planning policy and guidance, representations received, the planning designations and other material issues the main planning considerations considered relevant to this case are set out including the reason/s for the decision, any alternative options considered and rejected. Where a decision is taken under a specific express authorisation, the names of any Member of the Council or local government body who has declared a conflict of interest are recorded.
24. The following are identified as the main considerations in assessing this application:

The Principle Of Development

25. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Councils to identify and update, on an annual basis, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide for five years' worth of housing provision against identified requirements (paragraph 47). For sites to be considered deliverable they have to be available, suitable, achievable and viable.
26. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the

local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (as stated in paragraph 49 of the NPPF). Where policies cannot be considered up-to-date, the NPPF (paragraph 14) cites the presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that planning permission should be granted unless i) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or ii) specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. The presumption in paragraph 14 also applies where a proposal is in accordance with the development plan, where it should be granted without delay (unless material considerations indicate otherwise).

27. The precise meaning of 'relevant policies for the supply of housing' has been the subject of much case law, with inconsistent results. However last month, the Supreme Court gave judgment in a case involving Suffolk Coastal District Council which has clarified the position. The Supreme Court overruled earlier decisions of the High Court and the Court of appeal in this and other cases, ruling that a "narrow" interpretation of this expression is correct; i.e. it means policies identifying the numbers and location of housing, rather than the "wider" definition which adds policies which have the indirect effect of inhibiting the supply of housing, for example, countryside protection policies. However, the Supreme Court made it clear that the argument over the meaning of this expression is not the real issue. The absence of a five year housing land supply triggers the application of paragraph 14 of the NPPF. In applying the 'tilted balance' required by this paragraph, the Council must decide what weight to attach to all of the relevant development plan policies, whether they are policies for the supply of housing or restrictive 'counterpart' policies such as countryside protection policies.
28. In accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance paragraph 030 (Reference ID: 3-030-20140306) the starting point for calculating the 5 year land supply should be the housing requirement figures in up-to-date adopted Local Plans. It goes on to state that *'...considerable weight should be given to the housing requirement figures in adopted Local Plans, which have successfully passed through the examination process, unless significant new evidence comes to light....Where evidence in Local Plans has become outdated and policies in emerging plans are not yet capable of carrying sufficient weight, information provided in the latest full assessment of housing needs should be considered. But the weight given to these assessments should take account of the fact they have not been tested or moderated against relevant constraints...'*
29. The Council published the Ipswich and Waveney Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in May 2017 which is significant new evidence for the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan. Therefore, the 5 year land supply has been calculated for both the adopted Core Strategy based figures and the new SHMA based figures. For determining relevant planning applications, it will be for the decision taker to consider appropriate weight to be given to these assessments and the relevant policies of the development plan.
30. A summary of the MSDC 5 year land supply position is:
 - Core Strategy based supply for 2017 to 2022 = 3.9 years
 - SHMA based supply for 2017 to 2022 = 3.9 years
31. The NPPF requires that development be sustainable, and paragraph 6 of the NPPF sets out guidance on what this means in practice by drawing attention to all of the policies from paragraph 18 to 219 of the NPPF. In some circumstances there is also

a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is to be applied as set out in paragraph 14 of the NPPF. This has been discussed above.

32. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out three dimensions for sustainable development, economic, social and environmental:

"an economic role - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure:

a social role - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

an environmental role - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy."

33. In light of all of the above, this report will consider the proposal against the policies of the development plan to determine if the development is in accordance with the development plan as a whole. If it is not, and there are policy conflicts, they will need to be weighed against other material considerations to see whether a decision which does not accord with the development plan is warranted, in the light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and in the context of the authority not being able to demonstrate a 5 year land supply.

Sustainability of the Proposal (including assessment against the development plan and the NPPF)

34. The NPPF also provides (para 187) that *"Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area."*
35. The Parish Council and some of the objectors have commented that this scheme should be refused as it is outside the development limits for Thurston in line with the policies as contained in the adopted Core Strategy and Local Plan and that housing numbers should be limited in Thurston. However, it is clear on reviewing the guidance in the NPPF as outlined above that this cannot be done as housing delivery policies CS1 and CS2 of the core strategy should not be considered to be up-to-date along with policies such as H7 of the Local Plan as the Council does not have a 5 year supply of housing as required by the NPPF. Other comments have been received stating that the Council should not consider this application and the others in the Thurston area until the Council determine in a new style local plan and its stance on the location of new housing in the district. Comments have also been made that the Council should not determine this application until the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan has received its referendum vote. However, national policy as contained in the NPPF does not give the Council either of these options and requires all applications to be determined promptly. Furthermore, as the Council has a deficit of housing completions with the result that it is significantly short of reaching its 5

year supply target, a limit on new housing in any part of the district cannot be given until the deficit in completions is made up to the 5 year level.

36. The contents of paragraph 55 of the NPPF are also considered to be material in the making of a decision on this case. Objections have been received stating that this proposal should not be allowed as it is outside the settlement limit for Thurston and that the site should be considered as countryside. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF makes it clear that Councils can no longer consider sites that are adjacent or near to a settlement limit to be unacceptable simply because they are the wrong side of the line. It now makes it clear that 'new isolated homes in the countryside will not be supported and that Councils are encouraged to promote sustainable development in rural areas by considering housing development in locations where they could enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It gives an example in paragraph 55 that new housing could provide increased facilities in one settlement which would be of benefit to it and the other surrounding settlements.
37. Having regards to the above, it is considered that the application site is not in an isolated location as it is adjacent to the built up part of the village, and the scheme will bring with it a new primary school, land to expand the secondary school as well as other contributions which will be of benefit to the residents of Thurston and the surrounding villages. Therefore, in terms of paragraph 55 of the NPPF, this proposal could be considered to promote sustainable development in a rural area. However, having regards to the fact that the Council does not have a 5 year supply of housing and has to balance the negatives of the scheme against the positives that it brings in line with the requirements of the NPPF, consideration of whether the scheme will be supported as sustainable development or not will be given in the conclusion to this report.
38. In reaching a decision, paragraph 47 of the NPPF is a material consideration and requires Local Planning Authorities to boost significantly the supply of housing, by identifying and updating annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. As stated above, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing and as such paragraph 49 of the NPPF applies and states that in this situation, the relevant policies for the supply of housing in the Council's adopted plan should not be considered to be up to date and that the scheme remains to be considered under the requirements of paragraphs 7 and 14 of the NPPF which defines what sustainable development is and how decisions should be made.
39. Since the submission of this application, four other developers have also submitted application for residential development in Thurston. Bovis Homes have applied for 138 dwellings on land on the west side of Barton Road (4386/16); Persimmon have applied for 250 dwellings plus a new school on land west of Ixworth Road (4963/16); Laurence Homes have applied for 64 dwellings on land at Meadow Lane (4942/16) and Hopkins Homes have applied for 175 dwellings (2797/16 and an identical proposal under reference number 5010/16 which they have appealed for non-determination). Including this application, 827 new homes are currently proposed in Thurston. There are also a further 92 dwellings which have planning permission at the Granary where works are commencing on site at present.
40. Following receipt of these applications an approach of joint working to explore cumulative infrastructure issues has been agreed between the respective applicants and the District and County Council. This has enabled the constructive exploration of significant infrastructure issues on a collaborative but without prejudice basis to a

consensual timetable. Therefore, as there are unprecedented numbers of new dwellings proposed it is considered that all schemes must be considered both on their own merits and in combination with each other to assess if they meet the tests for sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF. The assessment of whether this proposal is considered to constitute sustainable development is given in the conclusion.

41. Policy FC1 of the Mid Suffolk District Core Strategy Focused Review states that it takes a positive approach to sustainable development and like in the NPPF, the Council will work proactively with developers to resolve issues that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Related policy FC1.1 makes it clear that for development to be considered sustainable it must be demonstrated against the principles of sustainable development. The policy goes on to say that proposals for development must conserve and enhance the local character of the different parts of the district and how it addresses the key issues of the district.
42. The settlement of Thurston is one of the two largest villages in the district of Mid Suffolk (with the other being nearby Elmswell) where a wide range of local services and local infrastructure is provided. Thurston has both a primary and a secondary school, and a number of other local facilities which act as a service to the inhabitants of the village as well as providing employment opportunities. Whilst Thurston does not have a doctor's surgery, there is one in Woolpit and another in Moreton Hall which is a reasonably short journey away either by car or via public transport.
43. Thurston is also unusual in that it has a railway station which provides access for the residents to be able to commute to Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and further afield without having to use their cars. Thurston is also on the Mendlesham to Bury St Edmunds bus route with a number of designated stops within the village.
44. In relation to paragraph 7 of the NPPF, the proposals would contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy through the creation of construction and related jobs and the on-going contribution to the local economy from the creation of up to 200 additional households in the area. The proposals would also contribute towards providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by having the potential to create a high quality built environment, as well as contributions towards affordable housing, the highway network and other social infrastructure (public open space, education, health care) through a CIL contribution, or where appropriate, a section 106 agreement.
45. It must also be remembered that paragraph 49 of the NPPF makes it clear that housing applications should be considered in the context of sustainable development. The applicant is proposing up to 200 dwellings in this instance and they have confirmed that it is their intention if they get planning permission to commence with work on site as soon as possible following the granting of their reserved matters application. To speed this up, they have agreed to have a shorter period than is usual to submit their reserved matters application (2 rather than 3 years) which helps to justify that as a developer, they are serious about delivering the houses. They have also signed an agreement with Mid Suffolk and Suffolk County Council to work as a group with the other 4 other developers in Thurston to contribute to and work together to achieve the necessary infrastructure within the area to make this and the other 4 schemes sustainable.

46. Consideration of whether this proposal is considered to constitute sustainable development, having regard to the contents of policies FC1 and FC1.2 of the Adopted Core Strategy Focused Review and the contents of the NPPF will be reached in the conclusion to this report.

Site Access, Parking And Highway Safety Considerations

47. Policy T10 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan provides criteria on highway considerations when assessing planning applications. This policy requires access points into and out of the site to be safe and an assessment made as to whether the existing local roads can suitably accommodate the impact of the proposal, whether adequate parking and turning spaces exist within the site and that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists have been met. This policy is considered to carry significant weight in the determination of this application as it is in compliance with paragraph 32 of the NPPF which requires all schemes to provide safe access for all.
48. A number of objections have been received to the scheme on the grounds that the two access points into the site from Norton Road would be detrimental to highway safety and that the local road network is unsuitable and badly maintained for a development of a further 200 dwellings. Mention has specifically been made that some local junctions are unsafe at present (see Parish Council objection for details as well as the Local Highway Authority consultation response), particularly those adjacent to the railway bridge to the south of the village and that this scheme will exacerbate this problem as more vehicles will be using these junctions to access local roads, particularly the A14 to reach other destinations such as Bury St Edmunds and further afield. Comments have also been received that this scheme cumulatively with the other 4 schemes that have been submitted in Thurston for residential development will cause a significant and severe impact on the road network in the locality both in terms of congestion and safety.
49. The site is located to the north east of the village with Meadow Lane bordering the site to the west and Norton Road to the south. Proposed is two access points from the loop road within the site off Norton Road which would help to split traffic accessing the dwellings from traffic accessing the new school at peak times. The Local Highway Authority did not object to the access points as originally shown by the applicant or the newly amended layout which has resulted in the access point being moved to accommodate the suggested changed to the position of the new school as suggested by the County Education Authority as well as the need to increase tree and landscaping cover on the eastern border of the site as requested by Historic England and the Council's Heritage Officer. The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the access points as shown are unsafe as referred to by the objectors to the scheme and meets the requirements of paragraph 32 of the NPPF in that safe access can be provided for all. Following discussions with the Local Highway Authority and on reviewing the comments of the local community, the 9 self-build properties are now proposed to be accessed from within the site and not off Meadow Lane which has overcome the potential issue of safety which would have occurred as that road is a narrow dead end single track country lane. Regardless of the above, it must be remembered that the internal layout of the site is currently indicative only, and it can be suitably designed and altered again at reserved matters stage to the necessary highways standards to meet the requirements of the Highway Authority.
50. The Local Highway Authority has considered the cumulative impact of this proposal and the other 4 schemes currently before the Council proposal both in terms of safety and congestion on the highway network in Thurston and they have come to the

conclusion that the impact of the 5 scheme if they all come forwards will be severe. However, the Local Highway Authority has made it clear that the NPPF requires all public bodies to try and resolve problems and they are confident that if all 5 developers work together those suitable and cost effective alterations can be made to the highway network to ensure that the impact does not become severe. The Local Highway Authority has assessed the road network and has suggested alterations and improvements to key areas of it (see the Local Highway Authority consultation response earlier in this report for more information) which all 5 developers have been asked to contribute towards through either a section 106 agreement or through the Highways Act. All 5 developers which include Pigeon have agreed to contribute towards the works as requested by the Highway Authority. For the Pigeon proposal, the Highway Authority is requesting £131,868 via a S106 agreement (excluding travel plan contributions which are in addition), and a further £69,788 under section 278 of the Highway Act. As such, the Local Highway Authority no longer considers that this proposal fails the requirements of paragraph 32 of the NPPF when considered cumulatively with the other 4 residential schemes as the impact with the alterations carried out to the highway network will no longer be severe in terms of safety. For the avoidance of doubt, the Local Highway Authority has not raised any objections to this scheme on congestion grounds and does not consider that that additional traffic and queuing as a consequence of this scheme can be considered to be severe to sustain a refusal of planning permission.

51. The Local Highway Authority identify that the scheme will offer sustainable travel options to local residents as additional pavements and bus shelters are proposed and these will link up to both existing facilities and those proposed on neighbouring sites by the other developers seeking at the moment to build houses in Thurston. This will help to improve accessibility on foot and via public transport and will ensure that the site is accessible to the local railway station. The Local Highway Authority is also recommending that the applicant is obligated via a S106 agreement to provide a travel plan to ensure that there are sustainable transport options available to the new residents of the scheme rather than just having to rely on their private cars to access local facilities.
52. Having regards to the specific and cumulative highway impacts of the scheme when considered in line with the requirements of paragraphs 21 and 32 of the NPPF the Local Highway Authority has had regards to the fact that in some locations, the impact of the granting of 827 dwellings will be severe on the highway network, but these impacts can successfully be mitigated by the works to the network as suggested. Having regards to the above, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy T10 of the local plan and paragraph 32 of the NPPF, in that safe and suitable access for all people can be achieved and that cost effective improvements can be undertaken to the transport network to ensure that non-motorised modes of transport can be used to access local facilities.
53. Concerns by the objectors in terms of the impact of construction traffic on the surrounding highways network, can be controlled by the imposition of a suitable condition should this scheme be granted planning permission. As the application is in an outline form, the indicative layout shows that a suitable internal layout, which would be up to the County Council's highway standards, could be provided at reserved matters stage.
54. An objector has commented that the applicant is suggesting in his documentation that the speed limit adjacent to the site should be reduced from its current limit to 30mph and that this is a separate legal process that is outside this planning application. The Local Highway Authority has been questioned on this and they have

confirmed that this scheme and the 4 others have been designed and considered at the existing speed limit and that his comments are given on that basis. They advise that it would be in the public interest to alter the speed limit as suggested by the applicant and they are to take on this alteration under the relevant highway legislation to action it.

55. Having regards to the above, it is considered that this proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety and complies with the requirements of paragraph 32 of the NPPF and paragraph T10 of the local plan as safe access can be provided for all.

Design And Layout [Impact On Street Scene]

56. Section 7 of the NPPF refers to design. Specifically, paragraph 56 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; it should contribute positively to making places better for people. Decisions should aim to ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place, create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses and support local facilities and transport networks. Furthermore it provides that development should respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. The NPPF goes on to state it is "proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness" (para 60) and permission should be "refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions" (para 64). In addition policy CS5 provides that *"All development will maintain and enhance the environment, including the historic environment, and retain the local distinctiveness of the area"* and echoes the provision of the NPPF. Policy GP1 provides design criteria that proposals should seek to achieve, to include; use of traditional materials that respect local architectural styles; use of open spaces to maintain or enhance the character of the site; protection of natural landscape features; suitable landscaping; sufficient parking, garaging and appropriate access arrangements; and opportunities to use the layout to minimise criminal activity. Policies H13 and CS9 also summarise separate criteria as to the design, layout, density and mix of housing developments.
57. Objections have been received stating that the site is currently an open field and that dwellings of the scale and density of the proposal, particularly in reference to any 2.5 to 3 storey dwellings potentially being built on site is considered to be inappropriate and not in keeping with the locality. The proposal will extend the built up footprint of the village into the surrounding open countryside which is unacceptable to the objectors and the parish council.
58. The application is in outline form and the plans as submitted provide an indicative layout of how the scheme could potentially look should this outline planning application be approved which relates to the principle of the development of the site. This indicative layout provides a development with a density of approximately 20 dwellings per hectare which is not high and is in keeping with existing patterns of development that adjoin the site. This site does extend the built footprint of the village into the surrounding open countryside as the fields that surround it are currently undeveloped with residential development limited to only the small amount of dwellings on Meadow Lane. However, the applicant has taken account of this and is using the Lady Greene Plantation and providing additional woodland screening and cover to its west and along the eastern corner of the site to help the proposal integrate into the Countryside. It is also noted in the consultation response from the Landscape Officer that the existing landscape envelope within and around the site

(combined with the proposed landscape mitigations proposed as part of the application) provide an adequate strategy to suitably reduce the visual impact of the development.

59. Objections have been received to this scheme on the basis that the needs of the elderly local community have not been considered and that the proposal is lacking in bungalows and smaller house types. It must be emphasised that the proposal is in outline form and full details of the housing specification will only be given at reserved matters stage. It must also be noted that the applicant has in his amended indicative layout plan shown additional bungalows and smaller properties which shows that they could meet the expectations of the community at reserved matters stage when the detailed layout of the site will be in for consideration. The applicant is not proposing a care home as part of this scheme as requested by one of the objectors to the scheme has requested and it is not considered to be appropriate to request that the detailed plans for the site should accommodate that type of use.
60. Having regards to the above, it is considered that the scheme in terms of its suggested layout constitutes good design in line with the requirements of the NPPF and local policy CS5 as it proposes a form of development that would reflect the character, density and appearance of the surrounding settlement. It is agreed that the site does project into the surrounding countryside; however this matter needs to be balanced in coming to a decision about the proposal having regards to all of the positive matters that the scheme brings. As stated in previous topics above, that will be done in concluding this report.

Parish Plan / Neighbourhood Plan

61. A Neighbourhood Plan designation was confirmed in 2013 and covers the Parish of Thurston. At the time of the consideration of this proposal the parish have set up a neighbourhood Plan Committee to prepare the policies for the new Neighbourhood Plan. Both the Parish Council and their Neighbourhood Plan Committee have objected to this scheme with the latter raising objections based on some of the early work that they have carried out for the evidence base for the new plan.
62. The Planning Practice Guidance identifies that *“Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the weight that may be given to relevant policies in emerging plans in decision taking. Factors to consider include the stage of preparation of the plan and the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies. Whilst a referendum ensures that the community has the final say on whether the neighbourhood plan comes into force, decision makers should respect evidence of local support prior to the referendum when seeking to apply weight to an emerging neighbourhood plan. The consultation statement submitted with the draft neighbourhood plan should reveal the quality and effectiveness of the consultation that has informed the plan proposals. And all representations on the proposals should have been submitted to the local planning authority by the close of the local planning authority’s publicity period. It is for the decision maker in each case to determine what is a material consideration and what weight to give to it”*.
63. As such, whilst it is ultimately for Members to determine the weight that should be given to the plan, whilst it is at an early stage in its development, it is the view of Officers that little material weight can be given at this time.

Landscape Impact

64. Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that proposals should provide appropriate landscaping to ensure that they integrate well into the surrounding locality. This requirement is repeated in one of the requirements of policy H13 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan. The Lady Greene Plantation forms part of the site and is to be retained and additional landscaping is proposed along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site boundaries of the site. This is to ensure that an attractive landscaped buffer is provided between the scheme and the surrounding open countryside to minimise its impact.
65. Objections have been received to this proposal on the grounds that the site lies in an exposed location and that the approval of this scheme will erode the intrinsic beauty and the character of the surrounding open countryside. The Council's Landscape Consultant has been consulted on this scheme and he has commented that it will significantly change the visual character of the site which will change from agricultural to residential. However, they also advise that the Landscape Statement proposes a clearly considered green infrastructure which adequately mitigates the impact of the development. They also state that views to the development identified on the LVIA have been adequately mitigated through planting along edge boundaries and within the residential development helping to screen and filter those critical views. Whilst it is acknowledged that the scheme will have a significant impact on the surrounding open countryside, he does not object to it as its effects can suitably be mitigated to ensure that no unacceptable harm is caused in landscape terms.
66. Objections have been received to this scheme on the basis that the new dwellings will have an impact on the surrounding countryside in terms of light pollution. Paragraph 125 of the NPPF states that decisions should limit light pollution from artificial lights to limit the impact on local amenity, particularly on intrinsically dark landscapes.
67. It is agreed that the erection of up to 200 dwellings and a new school will cause increased lighting levels over what is now a dark field. However, it is suggested that a condition be imposed on the application to allow the council to consider and limit the impact of artificial lights on the surrounding open countryside to minimise the impact as far as is practicable. Having regards to the requirements of policy H13 of the MSDC Local Plan and paragraph 58 of the NPPF, it is considered that the scheme provides substantial landscaping both within and on the boundaries of the site to ensure that it assimilates well into the rural edge of Thurston and provides an attractive environment both for the new residents of the site and those living in the surrounding locality and artificial lighting can be regulated to minimise its effect on the surrounding open countryside.

Residential Amenity

68. Policies within the adopted development plan require, inter alia, that development does not materially or detrimentally affect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. This requirement is emphasised in the NPPF Core Values in paragraph 17 where it states that all schemes should seek a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
69. This proposal is in outline form where there are no specific details of the exact location, orientation and types of houses proposed. There have been no objections to this scheme based on loss of daylight/sunlight or impact of overlooking and it is considered that if this outline consent is approved, these can suitably be considered and the scheme designed to mitigate the impacts at the reserved matters stage.

70. An objection has been received to this scheme on the basis that the erection of 200 new dwellings and a school will increase pollution levels in the village. It is agreed that emissions from the dwellings and the vehicles owned by the residents will increase, but as the site is in a village location in close proximity to the surrounding open countryside, this will cause less impact than if it was in an enclosed urban/city type area.
71. Further objections have been received to this scheme on the basis that the new dwellings will have an impact on neighbouring properties in terms of noise pollution. Paragraph 123 of the NPPF makes it clear that planning decisions should aim to avoid new developments giving rise to significant noise levels which would impact on the health and quality of life of existing residents. However, it should be noted that paragraph 123 does go on to say that it must be recognised that development will often create noise and as such some element of noise and disturbance is allowed. The closest properties to this site are on Meadow Lane and the applicant has now amended his suggested layout plan to remove the access points to them from Meadow Lane. The plans show the properties being set back and with suitable boundary landscaping which will help to offset the impact of the dwelling on the occupiers of the properties on Meadow Lane. Whilst the erection of 200 dwellings and a new school will increase noise levels in the locality, it is not considered that this will be significant enough to warrant a refusal of this scheme on loss of amenity grounds.
72. It is considered that this proposal does not give rise to any significant concerns of loss of neighbour amenity by reason of noise, form, design, the distance between the dwellings and the substantial landscaping that is proposed along the periphery of the site and as such the proposal meets the relevant NPPF core value in paragraph 17 and the requirements of paragraph 123. The environmental health officer has raised no objection subject to the imposition of standard conditions. Therefore, for the above reasons, it is not considered that there shall be any unacceptable impact in terms of residential amenity or safety (nor loss of important recreational space) and therefore the proposals comply with policy H16 and H17.

Environmental Impacts – Ecology, management of land, loss of agricultural land, contaminated land

73. The application site is a grade 3b agricultural parcel of land which is adjacent to the built up part of Thurston. As the site is in an agricultural use, there is limited tree cover within the site with the majority of the trees and hedging being along the field boundaries and in the Lady Greene Plantation to the north of the site.
74. Objections have been received to this scheme from local residents and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust on the basis that the loss of the field and the hedgerows on the boundary of the field to create residential development will have a negative impact on animal species, particularly protected and priority species in the locality.
75. Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Implemented 1st April 2010) provides that all "competent authorities" (public bodies) to "have regard to the Habitats Directive in the exercise of its functions." In order for a Local Planning Authority to comply with regulation 9(5) it must "engage" with the provisions of the Habitats Directive.

76. The content of paragraph 118 of the NPPF is also applicable to the consideration of this proposal as it states that when determining planning applications, consideration must be given to 6 principles. The two following principles are applicable to this scheme:
- If significant harm is caused which cannot be avoided or mitigated by conditions then planning permission should be refused.
 - Opportunities to integrate biodiversity in and around developments should be supported.
77. The Council's Consultant Ecologist has been consulted on this application and she has not objected to it in terms of its impacts on protected species and has not raised any concerns about loss of hedgerow within the site. The Ecologist has however raised concerns that the proposal will result in the loss of Skylark habitat which is a UK and Suffolk Priority species and she has asked the applicant to provide mitigation in the form of two Skylark nest plots at another location away from the application site. The applicant has land in the area and he has agreed to this request. The mitigation strategy can be delivered via a S106 agreement.
78. The Suffolk Wildlife Trust has raised concerns over the management of the open space areas, particularly the sustainable drainage system within the site and what impact this will have on the ecology that establishes in there. The Council is not intending to adopt the landscaped areas within the site, but through a S106 agreement is requesting that the developer sets up a management company who will look after the open spaces and landscaped areas within the site, for the benefit of the new residents of the site and to ensure that its ecological value is retained and enhanced in future years.
79. Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that local authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land when making planning decisions. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality land. Agricultural land is split into categories with land defined as 3a up to 1 being best and most versatile land and grades 3b down to 5 not being defined as best and most versatile land. The application site is a Grade 3b and as such it is not defined as best and most versatile agricultural land and as such the requirements of paragraph 112 of the NPPF do not apply to this scheme. In any case, having looked at the agricultural land classifications for Mid Suffolk, most of the land within the district is classified as 2, 3a and 3b with very little land in the lower categories. As the district is predominantly rural in character it is not considered that the loss of this parcel of land either on its own or considered cumulatively with the 4 other sites that have been put forwards for development in Thurston will have a significantly negative impact on food production or the local economy.
80. The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has been consulted on this scheme and he has reviewed the documentation submitted by the applicant (Phase 1 risk assessment). Paragraph 121 of the NPPF makes it clear that planning decisions should make sure that the site is suitable for its new use taking account the hazards of any previous use. The Contaminated Land Officer has not raised any issues in relation to the agricultural field which the residential part of the scheme is to be sited on and only mentioned in his consultation response the small water feature in the wooded area (Lady Greene's Plantation) which has been filled in. However, he has advised that the risk from this is very small and that he does not object to it if

conditions are imposed requesting that the works on site be carried in line with the applicant's contamination report.

81. As the site is currently a field, subject to agricultural practices which could have included the spraying of crops with chemicals in the past, and part of the site appears to have been subject to historical landfill waste, a contaminated land report has been submitted to the council for consideration. The Council's Contaminated Land Officer in the Environmental Health team has reviewed the report and has advised that subject to the imposition of conditions, he does not object to the scheme. Therefore, it is considered that it is in compliance with paragraph 121 of the NPPF.
82. Having regards to the above it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of paragraph 112 of the NPPF in terms of agricultural land, its effects on Priority Species can be mitigated and the landscaped areas within the site can be adequately maintained in the future to protect their biodiversity value.

Heritage Issues (The Setting Of Neighbouring Listed Buildings)

83. Both the NPPF and Core Strategy place significant emphasis on safeguarding heritage as an important component of sustainable development.
84. With reference to the treatment of the submitted application, the Council embraces its statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to listed buildings, notably the general duties under sections 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires the local planning authority to have "*special regard to the desirability of preserving [a] building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*".
85. Recent case law on the application of the statutory duty acknowledges that the consideration of the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset is a matter for its own planning judgement, but that the Local Planning Authority is required to give any such harm considerable importance and weight. However, where special regard to the desirability of preserving heritage assets has been paid and no harm is considered to be posed, the 'balancing' of harm (which should be given considerable weight as above) against public benefits as required by the NPPF, is not engaged.
86. Policy HB1 (Protection of Historic Buildings) places a high priority on the protection of the character and appearance of historic buildings, particularly the setting of Listed Buildings.
87. In paragraph 17 of the NPPF it makes it clear that development should "*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations*". Para 131 goes on to state that "*In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of; the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*" Furthermore Para 132 states "*When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As*

heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.”

88. Objections have been received to this scheme by members of the local community and by the Suffolk Preservation Society on the basis that the proposal is harmful to the setting of Manor Farm Barn which is grade II* listed and the converted barns to the north of this building which are also grade II listed. Manor Farm lies to the east of this site and is separated from the site by another field which has a hedgerow along its boundary running north south from Norton Road. The Preservation Society acknowledge that the impact on the listed building is considered to be less than substantial harm, but they would like to see the Council consider the impact to be significant when assessing this proposal.
89. Historic England and the Council's Heritage Officer have been consulted on the application. Historic England has raised concerns about the effect of the proposal on the significance of Manor Farm House as the loss of the agricultural land would result in the diminution of its context and setting as a farm house in an agricultural environment. However, they have not objected to the scheme and pass on the decision of what level of harm to apportion to this scheme to the council.
90. The Council's Heritage Officer has considered this proposal and he has not objected to the scheme. He makes the point that Manor Farm does not succeed an earlier building on site and that it is not as old as you would expect and as such its agricultural surroundings make a less important contribution to its significance than would be the case for a traditional farm house. He further adds that the barn complex which is also listed has been converted to residential and development relating to the keeping of horses has also occurred on site which further erodes the agricultural character of the land between the buildings and this site.
91. The Heritage Officer goes on to explain that in his opinion, the change from farmland to residential and school use would represent a degree of harm in the spacious rural setting of the listed buildings, but because of the factors referred to above the level of harm resulting to the significance of the listed buildings is considered to be low. In accordance with NPPF paragraphs 129, 132 and 134 in determining this proposal the Council needs to consider whether this harm can be avoided or minimised, and whether it is justified in terms of public benefits. The Historic Offer also asks whether the layout of the site can be altered to allow for a strong green buffer along the eastern boundary of the site which would serve to sustain a more rural character in the setting of the listed building.
92. The applicant has had to amend his layout to take account of the need to alter the position of the new school and he has taken the opportunity to strengthen the landscaped boundary on the eastern side of the site in line with the comments of the Heritage Officer to help to minimise the impact of the scheme on the adjacent listed buildings.
93. Having regards to the above, it has been identified that the proposal will cause less than substantial harm to the adjacent listed buildings, including the Church of St Peter, with the Council's Heritage Officer assessing the level of harm with the mitigation proposed to be low. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF requires the Council to weigh the harm (regardless of what level it is assessed at) against the public benefits of the scheme. It is considered that as the Council does not have a 5 year supply of housing as required by paragraph 47 of the NPPF that the proposal will help to contribute towards this deficit by providing up to 200 new dwellings which will provide public benefit. The scheme will also deliver 35% of the dwellings as affordable houses to help to meet the need in the locality and further contributions which cover

matters such as a new primary school and pre-school facility, the provision of land for the primary school as well as the provision of CIL money to facilitate a bid for improvements to the doctor's surgery, local library and safety works at the Thurston Railway station. The scheme will also contribute towards improvements to the highway network in and around Thurston to ensure that the road network remains safe for its users. The scheme will bring with it public benefits also in the form of construction related jobs and also additional residents to help sustain and grow local services and businesses.

94. As such, it is considered that the public benefits of this scheme are such that outweigh the less than substantial harm that has been identified to the setting of the listed buildings and, therefore, the scheme can be supported on heritage grounds.
95. As there are 5 different applications for major housing development in the northern part of Thurston, the Council's Heritage Officer has been asked to consider the cumulative impact of this scheme in relation to the others. Of the 5 applications, the application by Hopkins Homes for 175 homes on land adjacent to this site (application 2798/16 and appeal 5010/16) lies to the north of the Hopkins site and in combination with each other both schemes will have a cumulative impact on the setting of the listed buildings. It is considered that the other 3 sites are too far removed from the listed buildings to cause impact and as such, the Heritage Officer has been asked to consider the cumulative impact of the Hopkins and Pigeon scheme together on the listed building previously referred to. He has stated that in his opinion the cumulative harm to the Grade II* Listed farm house would not be greater than medium and the harm to St Peter's Church would be somewhere between low and medium and as such it is up to officers in line with the NPPF to assess if the harm to the listed buildings is outweighed by the public benefits that the scheme brings as outlined in paragraph 134 of the NPPF.
96. The public benefit of this proposal when considered on its own is highlighted above, but when the above is considered cumulatively with the adjacent Hopkins site, which will also deliver additional houses, contributions towards a new school, including pre-school, highway infrastructure contributions and also provides CIL money to facilitate bids for library, doctor's surgery and railway station improvements, it is considered that the cumulative benefits of both schemes outweigh the low to medium harm that the proposals will have on the heritage assets identified in this report.

Environment And Flood Risk

97. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF makes it clear that inappropriate development in areas of flood risk should be avoided by directing development away from areas of highest risk. The contents of policy CS4 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy is in line with the requirements of the NPPF in terms of flood risk and carries significant weight in the determination of this application. In terms of flooding from rivers, the site complies with local and national policy as it lies in a flood zone 1 area which is land at least risk of flooding. To deal with surface water, the applicant is proposing a pond filled with reed within the north east corner of the site with the surface water flow from the site channelled into it.
98. Objections have been received raising concerns that the development of the site may cause localised floods in the area. Anglian Water and the County Flood and Water team have been consulted on this proposal and both organisations have advised that they do not object to the scheme subject to the imposition of a condition requiring additional technical details relating to the submitted drainage strategy.

99. Due to unprecedented level of growth currently suggested for Thurston, the Environment Agency, County Flood and Water team and Anglian Water have been specifically asked to consider the cumulative impact of this proposal on drainage, flood risk and water supply grounds. They have advised that an increase of 827 dwellings with the mitigation measures proposed by the applicants will not increase flood risk in the locality to an unacceptable level. Confirmation has also been received that there is capacity in the local pumping station to serve 827 new dwellings in terms of sewage needs. Thurston lies in an area where water supply can be an issue, however Anglian Water has a duty by law to supply new houses with a water supply and this is a matter for them to resolve under their legislation.
100. Having regards to the above, it is considered in terms of flood risk, drainage, water supply and drainage that the scheme when either considered singularly or cumulatively can be made acceptable subject to the imposition of a suitably worded condition to meet the requirements of paragraph 100 of the NPPF and policy CS4 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy.

Infrastructure - Planning Obligations / CIL contributions

101. Objections have been received to this scheme on the grounds that the local infrastructure, which includes the local schools and health care, is insufficient to meet the need of the residents of this proposal. Comment has been made that if the scheme is approved without suitable provision, then it will cause significant impact on the existing community of Thurston.
102. The Council has now implemented CIL which accordingly takes on board requirements such as open space contribution, NHS and education contributions.
103. As part of this proposal contributions can be sought under the Council's CIL Scheme for improvements to the following:
- For the future expansion of the doctor's surgery in Moreton Hall which the residents of this scheme would use.
 - For improvements to the local library provision.
 - Safety improvements to the Thurston Railway station.
104. Objections have been received to this scheme on the grounds that a new doctor's surgery will not be provided and that the scheme will only provide 'contributions' rather than actual facilities. It should be noted that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) has made it clear that due to the existing situation with doctors, their salaries and contracts and the government's policy in terms of the NHS that a new doctor's surgery will not happen in Thurston as part of any of the 5 schemes. The PCT will be requesting contributions through CIL in relation to all 5 schemes and the monies will be used to improve the service offered and/or improve the facilities at the Woolpit Surgery and at the Park Farm Surgery in Moreton Hall to meet the expected needs of the additional residents of the new dwellings in Thurston. The PCT has not referred to the Ixworth Surgery in their consultation responses as suggested that they should by an objector, but are satisfied that the demand from Thurston can be accommodated at the Park Farm and Woolpit surgeries.
105. An objection has also been received on the basis that the scheme will put more pressure on the emergency services in the area. However, it must be remembered when additional dwellings are built, these become the subject of Council tax. The

emergency services levy precepts as part of the Council Tax and these will be used towards providing a level of service that is needed to cater for the needs of the residents of the new housing developments.

106. It has been identified following discussion with the County Infrastructure Officer that as suggested by the objectors and the Parish Council, there is no capacity in the local primary school to expand and as such a contribution of £82,450 is required towards the building of a new 420 place two form primary school either on this site or the persimmon site elsewhere in the village. It has also been suggested that a further £166,660 is required for the provision of new pre-school, which will be accommodated at the new school to help meet the demand generated by this development. As the CIL 123 list does not include the provision of new pre-school or primary school facilities (it only covers extensions to existing establishments) these contributions will have to be sought under S106 of the Planning Act and the applicant has agreed to the above payments. This application is one of two in Thurston at present which is proposing to include land for a new school as part of its proposal for residential development and the County Council is working with both developers to secure both sites. The County Council will decide which of the two sites it prefers in terms of accessibility and the County has confirmed that it will return the site that it doesn't want to the developer for them to consider in discussion with the Council what may be appropriate to go on this land. The Pigeon application proposes a 3 Ha site for primary and pre-school purposes thereby providing the required 2.2 hectares required for a 2 form entry primary school with pre-school and an additional 0.8 hectares to cater for any future expansion.
107. Whilst the new school is being built, it has been suggested that the existing school will be provided with two temporary classrooms funded via CIL to cope on a 2 to 3 year period with the increase in pupils generated from the first phase of new housebuilding in Thurston (from any of the 5 sites currently under consideration) until the new school is built. Once that happens, the existing school will be closed and the existing pupils moved over to the new school and the new school will be extended as appropriate up to a capacity of 420 pupils to accommodate the primary school age children arising from any of the proposed housing sites in Thurston. It is understood that the Diocese who own the primary school have committed to investing the capital receipt that they receive for the development of the existing school site into the new school which is also to be funded by a joint contribution by all 5 of the developers proposing major housing schemes currently in Thurston.
108. Following further dialogue with the County Obligations Manager it is understood that progress is being made to secure options on the potential school sites proposed in other applications. The delivery of a new primary school is a necessary pre-requisite to mitigate the potential pressure on education infrastructure from the development and it has been agreed that a restrictive phasing condition is not necessary given the progress that has been made on options. Nevertheless the securing of a primary school site is a material consideration upon which the delivery of this development is predicated.
109. The County Council has confirmed that there is capacity at all of the catchment secondary schools in the locality and as such a contribution is not warranted in that instance.
110. As is the case for new education buildings, affordable Housing is not part of CIL and members should note that policy to seek up to a 35% provision remains in effect. The applicant has confirmed that he is agreeable to provide a policy compliant scheme for affordable housing and that this will be achieved via a Section 106 contribution.

111. Network Rail has been consulted on this scheme and has asked for a contribution of £1million through a S106 agreement between all five developers to close the existing level crossing and to provide safer and improved facilities at Thurston Railway Station having regards to the increased use of the facilities that will occur from the residents of the proposed 827 dwellings. The Council's CIL 123 list includes provision for improvements to transport infrastructure. As such it is considered that it would be appropriate for Network Rail to bid for the specified amount to make the improvements they have requested to improve pedestrian safety at the station under the CIL scheme.
112. The Local Highway Authority has, as stated earlier in the report, asked for £131,868 under section 106 of the Planning act (with Travel Plan contributions in addition to this) to pay for Pigeon's part of the contribution for works to the highway infrastructure to ensure that the impact of approving all 5 housing schemes totalling 827 houses in Thurston is not severe on the highway network as referred to in paragraph 32 of the NPPF.
113. It is noted that within the application site there are large expanses of open space and landscaped areas and concerns have been received from local residents over how these will be maintained. This will be done via a S106 agreement whereby the developer has to employ a management company to look after this land. None of it is to be transferred to the Council or the Parish Council as part of this or any of the other 4 schemes.
114. Having regards to the above, in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 2010, the obligations recommended to be secured above by way of a planning obligation deed are (a) necessary to make the Development acceptable in planning terms (b) directly related to the Development and (c) fairly and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the Development.

Other Issues

115. Objections have been made to this scheme on the grounds that some of the residents of the existing dwellings will lose their views of the surrounding open countryside and all of the new housing schemes together will drive down local house prices. The law courts have determined that these objections are not material planning considerations and they cannot be used in making a decision on this scheme.

Details Of Financial Benefits / Implications (S155 Housing and Planning Act 2016)

116. Council Tax payments from the dwellings when built
Planning Delivery Grant from Central Government for delivering the dwellings
S106 Agreement:
- £821,450 is required towards the building of a new primary school in Thurston.
 - £64,700 towards the cost of the land to provide the new primary school.
 - £166,660 is required for the provision of new pre-school facility in Thurston
 - £131,868 is required for highway infrastructure works
 - Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution - £1,000 per annum for a minimum of five years or one year after occupation of the final dwelling, whichever is longest.
 - Travel Plan Implementation Bond.

- CIL payments per dwelling built on site.

PART FOUR – CONCLUSION

Planning Balance

117. The proposal for residential development on land at Meadow Lane/Norton Road in Thurston is considered to be contrary to the adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy as the application site lies within the countryside outside the built framework of the settlement of Thurston on what is open agricultural land.
118. However, as the housing policies in the Core Strategy are out of date due to the Council not having a deliverable five year supply of housing, this scheme falls to be considered in relation to paragraph 14 and 49 of the NPPF which relate to residential development and sustainable development.
119. Paragraph 14 states that where the development plan for the area is out of date permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole or specific policies in the NPPF which indicate that the development should be restricted. Whilst it has been identified that the proposal either when considered on its own or in combination with the four other residential schemes that are with the Council for consideration will have an adverse impact on the quality of the landscape character of the area, and that it will result in the irreplaceable loss of countryside and has a low impact on the setting of listed buildings in the locality and have a potentially severe impact on parts of the highway network, it is considered that the benefits that the scheme brings such as the provision of 200 new housing of which 35% of them will be affordable, contributions towards local infrastructure such as the highways improvements, provision of open space and the new school that the appellant has agreed to contribute towards outweighs the negative issues.
120. Significant weight must also be given to the fact that there are no objections from the Council's consultees to the scheme. In relation to highway safety, the applicant has agreed to contribute towards mitigating the severe impact of the scheme. There are no objections in terms of design; crime prevention; amenity; pollution; contamination; ecology; landscape; flood risk and drainage. The proposal will also help to deliver construction jobs and will also provide more residents who will help to sustain and potentially grow the local economy.
121. In relation to highways impacts there are road safety impacts which can be addressed through mitigation at Fishwick Corner and other highways infrastructure improvements which weigh in favour of the scheme by providing enhanced sustainable links.
122. There remains a road safety and capacity issue at the A143 Thurston Road junction (adjacent to The Bunbury Arms). A number of solutions have been investigated and the current preferred solution is traffic signals. The highway authority consider that the effects of the development can be mitigated but further detailed work needs to be

undertaken to obtain the most practicable and viable solution to address the risks. For this reason Committee is asked to reach a “minded to” resolution which reserves the local planning authorities position pending the outcome of that detailed further investigation and junction design. Once the outcome of this investigation is known the application can be reported with a substantive recommendation to Committee.

123. Therefore, it is considered having regards to paragraph 14 of the NPPF that the benefit the proposal brings outweighs the negatives. Furthermore, when assessing the proposal against the NPPF it is not contrary to its requirements as a whole and there are no specific policies within it that would restrict this development and as such it is considered that it constitutes sustainable development which should be approved planning permission without delay in line with the requirements of paragraph 14.

Statement Required By Article 35 Of The Town And Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.

124. When determining planning applications The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 requires Local Planning Authorities to explain how, in dealing with the application they have worked with the applicant to resolve any problems or issues arising.
125. In this case the planning authority has worked with the applicant to overcome highway objections to the scheme and to clarify issues relating to drainage and impact on listed buildings.

Identification of any Legal Implications of the decision

126. There are no known legal implications derived from the determination of this application.
127. The application has been considered in respect of the current development plan policies and relevant planning legalisation. Other legislation including the following have been considered in respect of the proposed development.
- Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Equalities Act 2012
 - Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (any rural site)
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
 - Localism Act
 - Consideration has been given to the provisions of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, in the assessment of this application but the proposal does not raise any significant issues.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee express a “minded to” resolution, subject to the further investigation and reporting back of highway matters in relation to the A143 Thurston Road junction, on the following basis:

That the authority would be minded to delegate to the Corporate Manager - Growth & Sustainable Planning to grant full planning permission subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 or Undertaking on terms to his satisfaction to secure the following heads of terms:

- £821,450 is required towards the building of a new primary school in Thurston.
- £64,700 towards the cost of the land to provide the new primary school.
- £166,660 is required for the provision of new pre-school facility in Thurston
- 35% Affordable Housing to be transferred over to a Registered Provider
- To secure the provision of public open space to be managed by a dedicated management company
- £131,868 to secure off site highway improvement works as listed below:
 - Improvements to PRoW Thurston 001 between Meadow Lane and Ixworth Road. A contribution of £7111 on commencement of the 100th dwelling.
 - Improve PROW 007 (un metalled) north of Meadow Lane. A contribution of £16500 in commencement of the 100th dwelling.
 - Contribution towards extension of speed limit on Norton Road. A contribution of £4267 on commencement of any construction work on site.
 - Contribution towards provision of pedestrian crossing facilities at Norton Road / Station Hill / Ixworth Road junction. A contribution of £21838 on occupation of the first dwelling.
 - Contribution towards improvements at the A143 Bury Road / C691 Thurston Road/ C649 Brand Road, junction at Great Barton. A contribution of £69,528 on commencement of any construction works on site.
 - Contribution towards safety improvements at the C693 Thurston Road / C692 Thurston Road / C693 New Road. A contribution of £12624 on commencement of the first dwelling.
- To secure a travel plan in connection with the scheme detailed as follows:
 - Travel Plan Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution - £1,000 per annum for a minimum of five years or one year after occupation of the final dwelling, whichever is longest. This is to cover Suffolk County Council officer time working with the Travel Plan Coordinator and agreeing new targets and objectives throughout the full duration of the travel plan
 - Travel Plan Implementation Bond – To be confirmed when a detailed application/Travel Plan is submitted. This will be used to cover the cost of implementing the travel plan on behalf of the developer if they fail to deliver it themselves
 - Full Implementation of the Travel Plan and its monitoring.
 - Provision of an approved welcome pack to each dwelling after first occupation.
 - Securing remedial travel plan measures if the agreed travel plan targets are not achieved
- Provision of Skylark Mitigation

- Setting up of a management company to look after the open space and Sustainable Drainage parts of the scheme.

and that such permission be subject to the conditions as set out below:

- 1) Two year time limit for submission of reserved matters (as opposed to the usual 3 years)
- 2) Reserved matters (outline)
- 3) Existing tree protection
- 4) Construction management agreement
- 5) External lighting
- 6) Commencement period for landscaping
- 7) Protection of birds during construction period
- 8) Works to be carried out in line with the ecological report.
- 9) Archaeology
- 10) Highway Conditions (covering site access and public highway, internal highway layout, footpath and cycle connectivity)
- 11) Surface water drainage
- 12) Implementation in line with recommendations of the ecological report.
- 13) Fire Hydrant requirements