

Development Control Committee

13 May 2020

Late Papers

Item 5 – DC/19/1519/OUT: Land adjacent to Fishwick Corner, Thurston Road, Rougham

1. The comments below are those made by Thurston Parish Council on 29 November 2019 in respect of this cross-boundary application:

“Thurston Parish Council would like to raise its concerns and objections to this application currently before West Suffolk Council.

Thurston Parish Council has objected to Mid Suffolk District Councils application DC/19/03486 for up to 210 new homes on land South West of Beyton Road, Thurston. The full response was submitted on 4th September 2019.

The objection covers all means of access and associated infrastructure, including junction improvements for all development within Mid Suffolk District, except for proposed improvements to Fishwick Corner being within West Suffolk. The parish is particularly concerned over the proposed access to the site, both proposed entrance/exits leading onto the already busy routes of Beyton Road and Mount Road, both of which have poor accident safety records.

Thurston Parish Council felt that the proposal failed to take full regard of the policies contained within the Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) which has subsequently been voted for at the referendum on 12th September 2019 by over 95% of voters and adopted by Mid Suffolk Council on 24th October 2019.

This application on land to the south west of Beyton Road is outside of the amended built-up area boundary and as such is contrary to not only policies within the Mid Suffolk Local Plan but also the Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy 1: Thurston Spatial Strategy which states that all new development in Thurston parish shall be focused within the settlement boundary of Thurston village as defined within the Policies Maps of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan.

As the proposed development is outside of the current defined settlement boundary allocated by Mid Suffolk District Council for Thurston, it is also contrary to the spatial strategy in Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy. Being in conflict with Policy CS1 would also bring it into conflict with Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the Core Strategy Focused Review (Adopted December 2012). The conflict with the

development plan would therefore be an adverse impact of the proposed development.

The granting of planning permission on 5 significant sites in late 2017 has meant that there are over 1,000 dwellings, at least 30% of which will be affordable, in the planning pipeline for Thurston, all of which are yet to be built, although 3 of the sites have now commenced. Given the size of the planning pipeline the Parish Council contends that Thurston should not be expected to accommodate any additional growth outside of the settlement boundary as revised and it is felt that this proposal will neither enhance nor protect the village facilities given its location outside of the settlement boundary.

The Parish Council is concerned that additional growth such as the proposal under discussion, is unsustainable, unsafe and will have a severe impact on the Highway Network in and around Thurston.

The impact on transport infrastructure of any further significant developments in Thurston, in addition to those already approved will be significant. In 2017, following approval of 5 significant developments in Thurston, Suffolk County Council Highways raised concerns that, following mitigation measures being implemented (for those planning applications approved at the meeting of 1st November 2017), the roads in and around Thurston would be operating at capacity if all the developments went ahead.

SCC Highways comments concluded that the C692 / C693 Thurston Road (Fishwick Corner) cannot be improved further in terms of either road safety or capacity due to the highway boundary constraints.

Thurston Parish Council acknowledges that the applicant has provided details of proposed infrastructure to be secured through planning obligations as part of the proposed development, including the highway junction improvements utilising land outside of highways land to provide a staggered junction at Fishwick Corner.

However the Parish Council is concerned that this staggered junction will result in any vehicles leaving the village to access the A14 for BSE/Cambridge at the slip road by Rougham Hall Nurseries having to turn left and then wait in the middle of Mount Road to turn right. On-coming traffic on Mount Road will therefore be approaching from the village around a blind bend where accidents regularly occur (statistics are available). With the addition of the proposed southern access to the Bloor site onto Mount Road, the Parish Council is concerned at the overall impact this will have on highway safety at one of the most dangerous junctions in the village.

The Parish Council is also concerned that this junction is only required because of the proposed development, SCC Highways having already offered an apparently acceptable S106 funded highway realignment proposal for Fishwick Corner in 2017 to mitigate the impact of the previous five significant developments already approved in Thurston.

The main planning application incorporates other proposed transport improvements including the widening of the footway under the railway bridge and realignment of the carriageway; together with alteration to the Station Road / Barton Road roundabout to account for this realignment. The Parish Council remains concerned however that these proposals have not been fully tested against potential traffic growth numbers and impacts such as the growth in private car use due to the new SCC Post 16 School Transport Policy which restricts the numbers of pupils able to travel by bus to and from Thurston Community College. In addition further expansion is planned at the college within the next couple of years which will again raise traffic levels. Traffic flow studies from 2017 pre-date these policy changes and are no longer fit for purpose.

The developer has made an assumption that the majority of traffic flowing from the development will travel to the south of the village, ruling out northbound journeys under the railway bridge and on to the Bunbury Arms A143/Thurston Road junction which has mitigation measures planned but only to a standard required to accommodate the previously approved developments in Thurston, not any additional sites.

The majority of transport improvements proposed at main junctions, particularly those under the railway bridge are likely to compromise the safety of cyclists, there being insufficient capacity in the highway to accommodate all road users.

As with all the other major developments already approved in Thurston the proposal fails to consider or offer a solution to the impact on passenger safety on the Thurston Level Crossing at the railway station. The proposal is likely to increase the numbers using the railway station which will negatively impact the risk to users of the railway. Network Rail have stated that the proposal for 210 new dwellings is likely to increase the amount of level crossing users increasing the risk to the operational railway. The Parish Council contends that no proposals have been provided that will allow those to the south of the railway line to access the railway station in a manner that is deemed to be safe for all users.

There is a further concern that the proposal being offered will effectively release the adjacent field to the West of New Road/Barton Road for further development.

Thurston Parish Council contends that this application should not be supported as it has not been clearly determined as any safer than the current crossing arrangement and it is being offered in lieu of an apparently acceptable realignment proposal funded by S106 contributions. Although the recommendation is to approve subject to Mid Suffolk approving the wider application, the Parish Council is concerned that approval of this project will lead to approval of the main project by association - a development which clearly

contravenes the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan and places more pressure on the infrastructure in Thurston and also Bury St Edmunds, since clearly the majority of new residents in Thurston will be travelling to Bury for work or leisure on a daily basis.”