



Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 - 2036 Pre-Submission Version Draft 6

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA):

Screening Report – August 2018





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1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of This Report

This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 Pre-Submission Version Draft 6 requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Development Plan is deemed to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. A HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites or 'Habitats Sites') as a result of the implementation of a plan/project.

1.2 The Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2036 Pre-Submission Version Draft 6

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out planning policies for Thurston and within the confines of the Thurston Parish boundary. Once formally adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted up by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case Mid Suffolk District Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan states that the Vision for the Plan is:

'Thurston 2036 is a vibrant Suffolk village community surrounded by attractive countryside. The village continues to be a safe, enjoyable place in which to live and bring up a family. It is a thriving village serving a wider rural hinterland.'

A period of rapid expansion in the early part of the Plan period has now seen Thurston transition to a slow growth in population supported by well-planned, high quality housing, business, health, education and recreation provision. Infrastructure has been improved and future growth will be planned to ensure a safe and sustainable community. Whilst the village has grown a lot, it has not embarked on a slow and steady sprawl towards the edge of Bury St Edmunds. New developments have been integrated into the existing fabric of Thurston, rather than feeling like 'bolt-ons' which are not part of the village. They have been sympathetically designed, are of high quality, and are linked to the village by safe roads, cycle routes and footpaths thereby strengthening the appeal of the village and quality of life of its residents. Thurston is a Key Service Centre (Core Village) where people can access facilities to meet their daily needs without having to travel outside the village. Thurston is a place that sustains the vitality, health and wellbeing of the community and permits young people, families, disabled, elderly and infirm residents the opportunity of remaining part of it.

New quality and sympathetic housing development has addressed the needs of the local community and Thurston remains a popular place in which to live. Small-scale



developments, including affordable and self-build housing, have continued over the years. In particular, groups of new starter homes, family homes and bungalows at various sites have been built, enabling young families to find affordable housing locally and older people to down-size. This in turn has freed up larger family properties for local families as their needs grow. Thurston housing now caters for the full range of needs, allowing people to move homes within the village throughout their lives. Sufficient parking and landscaping has been designed-in from the outset.

The growth of Thurston has enabled improvements to education and health provision. The primary school is on a new, larger site. A well-used and greatly appreciated health centre includes GP and dental services, a pharmacy and social care support. Small developments for over 50s, where residents benefit from purpose-built housing, sheltered accommodation, a well-run nursing home, and social and healthcare services have proved a great success. Superfast broadband is available to all users.

The growth of Thurston village has allowed it to retain a good range of shops and services, unlike many other villages. New retail outlets, including eating-places and shops selling everyday items, have located within both existing buildings and a new development in the centre of the village. New small scale commercial units have helped to nurture a thriving small business community. New businesses, many of which provide local services of value to the community, have steadily sprung up. In general, Thurston is seen as a place where small and medium-sized companies can 'do business'. The presence of the railway station and the proximity to Bury St Edmunds has helped to nurture this progress.

The safety issues associated with the railway station have been addressed thus better facilitating public transport access to and from the village. The improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes have meant that parking is no longer a significant issue for the station because most people walk and cycle. Improvements have been made to key road junctions and pinch points around the village and measures have been implemented to deter speeding traffic.

New sports and leisure facilities and a skate park have been provided mainly through financial contributions from development. These provide a wide range of activities that have been particularly popular with children and young people: teenagers no longer say "there's nothing to do in Thurston". Residents have access to community facilities including a central community hub, library, and a variety of local clubs. The health and wellbeing of all residents has been enhanced.

With retention of central open spaces, access to the countryside has been improved and the village has retained a 'green' feel despite the new development. The additional area for burials created near the existing churchyard is a peaceful place and is managed to encourage wildlife. Green spaces and trees have been designed into each development scheme. Thurston feels like a village knitted together with a network of high quality open spaces and connecting cycleways/pathways.

The best of Thurston's historical buildings and spaces of value to the community, along with the surrounding countryside, have been protected and enhanced recognising they are an important part of what makes Thurston a special place in which to live.

To deliver this Vision, the following Objectives have been established for the Plan:



Objectives

Spatial Strategy

S1	To develop and sustain the key service centre status of Thurston by ensuring any future development is sustainable and supports a range of employment, services and housing.
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Housing and Design

H1	To ensure housing is designed that retains Thurston as a place with a village feel rather than that of a town.
H2	To address the specific housing needs of older people.
H3	To address the specific housing needs of younger people
H4	To provide the infrastructure necessary to ensure that growth is sustainable.

Community Infrastructure

I1	To ensure adequate provision of community, retail, education, leisure facilities, telephony, sewage, and services such as doctors, dentist and family services to support the needs of existing and future population.
I2	To encourage the uptake of sports/fitness/leisure/ wellbeing activities in the village by providing facilities that are open for all to use, including those living and working in the wider area.

Movement

M1	To ensure the road and rail infrastructure serving Thurston is safe and meets the needs of the growing population.
M2	To maximise the potential for the use of sustainable modes of transport, including cycling and walking.
M3	To plan for and adequately mitigate the impact of new development on traffic congestion and pedestrian safety.

Environment

E1	To protect green spaces of value in and around the village.
E2	To protect and enhance the village character and its environment, together with its relationship with the surrounding countryside.

1.3 The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) & Focused Review (2012)

The adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) & Focused Review (2012) contain current strategic planning policy for the District and thus Thurston. The Core Strategy was originally adopted in 2008 and includes a number of policies related to a strategy for growth in the District, the delivery of growth and the provision of infrastructure. A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the Core Strategy as well as 'Appropriate Assessment' in accordance with the Habitats Directive and Regulations.

The Core Strategy categorised the settlement of Thurston as a 'Key Service Centre'. It establishes that towns should be the main focus for development in the District, and that Key Service Centres are the main focus for development outside of the towns. Policy CS1 Settlement Hierarchy of the Core Strategy



states that,

'The majority of new development (including retail, employment and housing allocations) will be directed to towns and key service centres'.

Policy CS8 of the Core Strategy provides the outline for housing distribution across Mid-Suffolk. Housing numbers for the 2010-2025 period are provided within the policy table. A total of 3,830 homes were proposed for the 15 year period, with 500 of these being located within Key Service Centres.

1.4 The Emerging Mid Suffolk Local Plan

Work has been underway for a new Joint Local Plan with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council. At the time of writing, a Regulation 18 stage consultation had most recently closed on the 10th November 2017. This was accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal.

The Regulation 18 stage Local Plan identifies Thurston as a Core Village. A number of strategic options were explored relevant to Core Villages. These were:

- County Town Focus – 20% district growth in Core Villages
- Market town / rural area balance – 20%-25% district growth in Core Villages
- Transport corridor focus – 30% district growth in Core Villages
- New Settlement focus – 15% district growth in Core Villages

The emerging Local Plan has reviewed Settlement Boundaries. The Plan states that,

'The Councils have taken the approach that Urban Areas, Market Towns and Core Villages will have new growth identified and allocated in the new Local Plan through the allocation of new housing sites... Maps identifying 'committed boundaries' and potential SHELAA sites can be viewed in Appendix 3 and 4'

Within Appendix 4, there is included a map of Thurston. The map shows nine potential development sites, with eight adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of the village.

Since then, a further 17 sites have been submitted for consideration as potential allocations within the emerging Local Plan (through the Regulation 18 consultation) in the Neighbourhood Plan area. A total of 26 sites have therefore been identified for development purposes within the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan area.

Of Neighbourhood Plans, the emerging Local Plan states that,

'Neighbourhood plans can be brought forward at any time and can be developed before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its Local Plan. It is for the local planning authority to work closely with neighbourhood planning groups to minimise any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and the emerging Local Plan.'

There is an opportunity for local communities to bring forward sites for development in neighbourhood plans in parallel with the developing local plan process and in accordance with the emerging level of growth agreed with the local planning authority and share evidence the evidence being prepared by the Local Planning Authority and



vice versa.'

The Local Plan at the current stage of process (at the time of writing) outlines high level options with initial preference for approaches included, however there is currently an absence of draft policy wording at this stage. With this in mind, the emerging Local Plan is unlikely to have any identifiable conflict with any of the content within the emerging Thurston Neighbourhood Plan regarding the principle of development. Indeed, the Neighbourhood Development Plan is being prepared at a comparably advanced stage to that of the Local Plan and its evidence base.

2. Legislative Background

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment states that,

'Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(10) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment(7), and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna(8), are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(11) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.'

The Thurston Neighbourhood Plan may influence frameworks for future development, or become used ancillary to those plans and programmes that do set such a framework, and as such it has been determined that the principle of the Neighbourhood Plan should be screened for the necessary application of the SEA Directive.

The Report from the Commission to The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states, on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC), that

'the following P&P, and modifications to them, are covered when prepared and/or adopted by an authority[2] and required pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions:

- P&P prepared for certain sectors and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.*
- P&P requiring an assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).*
- P&P setting the framework for development consent in respect of projects (not limited to those listed in the EIA Directive; see above) and determined by "screening"*



as being likely to have significant environmental effects.'

This report represents this screening process in regard to the content and influence of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and translated into English law by the Habitats Regulations (*The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of European sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan which is being produced by Thurston Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA.

In line with the recent Court judgement (CJEU *People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17*), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Natura 2000 site.



3. SEA Screening

3.1 When is SEA Required?

Planning Practice Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment requirements for neighbourhood plans (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306) states that,

‘In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment and the requirements are set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those Regulations.

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.

Each consultation body will be able to advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility, and the specific information that it holds.

Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.’

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive set out the circumstances in which an SEA is required. Table 1 sets out the assessment of whether the principle of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan will require a ‘full SEA’, culminating in a SEA Environmental Report.

Table 1: Exploring whether the Principle of the Plan would warrant SEA

Q	Criteria	Response	Outcome	Commentary
1	Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government	Yes	Go to question 2	The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for adoption through legislative procedure.
2	Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or <u>administrative provision</u> Typical characteristics of "administrative provisions" are that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a Plan to be prepared.	Yes	Go to question 3	The Neighbourhood Development Plan would be considered as falling within the category of an 'administrative provision'.
		No	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	
3	Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?	Yes to both criteria	Go to question 5	The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.
		No to either criteria	Go to question 4	
4	Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	Yes	Go to question 5	N/A
		No	Go to question 6	
5	Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a	Yes to either criteria	Go to question 8	The policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan can be considered to

Q	Criteria	Response	Outcome	Commentary
	Plan likely to require assessment under the Habitats Directive?	No to both criteria	Go to question 7	determine the use of small areas at a local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.
6	Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in the Annexes of the EIA Directive)?	Yes	Go to question 8	N/A
		No	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	
7	Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget Plan, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7	Yes to any criteria	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	N/A
		No to all criteria	REQUIRES SEA	
8	Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	Yes	REQUIRES SEA	Likely significant effects are explored in more detail elsewhere in this Screening Report.
		No	DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA	

The following section looks at the criteria for assessing the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and the identified effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the criteria. Crucially, it will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on the environment.



3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment, referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below.

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - * special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - * exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - * intensive land-use,
 - * the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.



3.3 Likely Significant Effects on the Environment resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan

The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft (at the time of writing) to have significant effects on the environment.

Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area once adopted. Policy 1: Thurston Spatial Strategy identifies broad locations within which development shall be focused and specifies under which locational circumstances any forthcoming proposals would be supported. There are no policies that respond to housing allocations within the Plan area, with housing needs identified as being met through a number of proposals that have planning permission.</p> <p>The principle of the eventual development that is identified as coming forward within the Neighbourhood Plan period is already established and beyond the influence of the Neighbourhood Plan and its evidence base. Additionally, any significant effects on the environment resulting from these proposals would have already been identified at the planning application stage and mitigated as part their determination in compliance with LPA and national policy requirements. For this reason it has been determined that the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects alone would not warrant the full application of the SEA Directive in the form of a SEA Environmental Report.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan do influence the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan in so far as there is an intention for it to be 'made' prior to the adoption of the Local Plan, which is currently at the Regulation 18 stage.</p> <p>The Plan is however in general conformity to policies CS1, CS5 and CS9 of the Mid Suffolk adopted Core Strategy.</p> <p>The emerging Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Local Plan recognises that many of the settlements (within Babergh Mid Suffolk) have already expanded beyond defined settlement boundaries and that these have been / are being reviewed through the plan-making process. Further, the Councils have taken the approach that Core Villages will have new growth identified and allocated in the new Local Plan through the allocation of new housing sites. The stance of the Neighbourhood Plan in including a Spatial Strategy for development purposes within</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>the Neighbourhood Plan can be seen as contributing to that process.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Neighbourhood Plan is compatible and does not conflict with adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy policies CS5 and CS9 which have been subject to a thorough process of plan preparation and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.</p> <p>The following policies exist within the Neighbourhood Plan relevant to environmental protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 9: Landscaping and Environmental Features. • Policy 11: Provision for Wildlife in New Development. • Policy 12: Minimising Light Pollution. <p>In addition, Policy 4: Retaining and Enhancing Thurston Character through Residential Design is consistent with aspirations in regard to the protection of character, historic buildings, trees and hedgerows. The policies contained within the Plan are considered to be sufficient to ensure that effects on the environment are minimised.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan reflects a small area.</p> <p>The policy content of the adopted MSDC Core Strategy will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal And Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening within the context of the Core Strategy. The potential environmental problems relevant to the Neighbourhood development Plan area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are currently 23 listed buildings in Thurston, including the Grade II* listed Manor Farmhouse to the north east of the settlement boundary. • A National Cycle Route (51) runs through the village, and there are numerous PRowS in, around and permeating the existing settlement boundary. • The Plan area is within a number of SSSI Impact Risk Zones that may render some types of development unsuitable, pending consultation with Natural England as required. • The plan area contains a large number of scattered priority habitats. These include Deciduous Woodland Priority Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat and (young tree) woodland. • The Neighbourhood Plan Area is within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone – Total Catchment (Zone 3). • Areas of Flood Risk Zone 3 and 2 exist north-south to the



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)		Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	<p>east of the settlement boundary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the Plan area is within Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate), with some small parts within Grade 2 (very good) which is defined as “best and most versatile agricultural land” within the wider District. The southern part of the Plan area up to and including elements of the development boundary are within areas identified as experiencing noise from the A14 at 55-59.9dB (based on a 24 hour annual average noise level in decibels with weightings applied for the evening and night periods). 	
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.</p>	
<p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects on the following factors:</p>	<p>The following impacts have been identified within this Screening Assessment:</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Sustainability Theme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity <p>There are no wildlife designations within the Plan area. The Plan area contains a number of scattered priority habitats. The Plan area is within the Impact Risk Zones of numerous SSSIs; however there are no identified incompatibilities with any development relevant to Neighbourhood Planning in and around the settlement of Thurston identified by Natural England. Significant effects that would warrant the application of the SEA Directive can be ruled out. The HRA Screening element of this Report determines that no European Sites lie within 13km of Thurston parish, which is the largest Zone of Influence for any N2k site in Suffolk and the distance recently confirmed by Natural England as the zone of influence to identify potential recreational impacts on coastal statutory sites in Suffolk.</p> - Population <p>The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for residential development. There is therefore expected to be no impact on the current population resulting from the Plan.</p> - Human health <p>The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that could have any implications regarding human health. The Plan seeks to safeguard all local green spaces within the Plan area in Policy 10: Local Green Spaces in order to ensure that this space is preserved for the purposes of health and well-being.</p> <p>It can be considered that no significant effects will occur upon Human health in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Any potential impacts</p> 	



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>- Fauna</p> <p>- Flora</p> <p>- Soil</p>	<p>regarding contamination of any future proposals are best addressed at the ‘project level’, through the development management process and in adherence to relevant policies at the LPA level.</p> <p>The impacts of the Neighbourhood Development Plan on fauna are not considered significant. It is possible that developments that could be forthcoming within the Plan area could have negative impacts on protected species; however these cannot be identified as strategically significant to warrant Strategic Environmental Assessment at the Plan level. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case application basis at the development management stage in consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan policies and relevant policies contained within Mid Suffolk’s adopted Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan (commensurate to the level of weight those policies would have at the time of application).</p> <p>Although Priority Habitats exist in close proximity to the Thurston development boundary, particularly to the south of the rail station, Policy 4: Retaining and Enhancing Thurston Character through Residential Design ensures that distinctive trees and mixed hedging will be retained; Policy 9: Landscaping and Environmental Features ensures retention of important features and suitable enhancements; and Policy 11: Provision for Wildlife in New Development ensures that development proposals incorporate design features that encourage wildlife to thrive. No such areas are likely to be lost as a result of development or any other element of the Plan. There will be no likely effects on Flora that can be significant to warrant the application of the SEA Directive.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area is predominantly within Grade 3 Agricultural Land (‘good to moderate’) with some small areas of Grade 2 (‘very good’). Grade 2 Agricultural Land represents the best and most versatile agricultural land within the wider District. The Plan does not allocate land for development purposes and the wider Spatial Strategy (Policy 1 - seeking proposals only within or adjacent to the settlement boundary) ensures that there should not be any losses of Grade 2 soils. Although the Plan does not directly seek the protection of Grade 2 soils, no significant effects on soil can be expected as a result of the Plan content.</p>
<p>- Water</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan Area is within a Phosphate Issues Priority (area) for Countryside Stewardship, with a high priority. Designating such areas could help improve water quality with incentives offered to farmers to adopt agricultural practices which will safeguard areas and meet Water Framework Directive targets.</p> <p>The broad southern half of the Plan area is also within a Groundwater (Source) Protection Zone – Total Catchment (Zone 3).</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Air - Climatic factors - Material assets 	<p>Source Protection Zones (SPZs) respond to sources such as wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for residential development purposes. Residential land uses are not considered to give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates).</p> <p>The HRA Screening element of this report determines that Thurston is outside the Zone of Influence of any N2k sites regarding impacts on water quantity and quality.</p> <p>No AQMAs or other identified air quality issues exist within or in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area. As such, no significant effects on air quality have been deemed likely.</p> <p>The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within Flood Zone 1 and this is true of all land in and around the settlement boundary area. Areas of land identified within Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3 exist within the Plan area and are associated with a tributary of the Little Ouse River. These zones are distanced from the settlement boundary to the east, however are not likely to be subject to development pressure in line with Policy 1: Spatial Strategy which seeks any development to be focused in or adjacent to the settlement boundary. As such, no significant effects have been identified.</p> <p>The site is within a Minerals Consultation Area, indicating that potential mineral deposits are present. Despite this, the content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have any significant impacts on material assets due to the extent / size of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and no development is identified through site allocations. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within Mid Suffolk’s adopted Core Strategy and adopted Minerals & Waste Local Plan policies at the County level.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural heritage 	<p>A total of 23 of Listed Buildings exist within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Plan does not allocate any sites for development purposes and a level of protection is identified within Policy 4: Retaining and Enhancing Thurston Character through Residential Design.</p> <p>The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts (March, 2018) states that the majority of the settlement of Thurston is modern in construction and is therefore of low value. This has also harmed the setting of several heritage</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>- Landscape</p>	<p>assets, most notably the railway station, which has reduced their further susceptibility. There is however a manor and church complex to the east of the settlement, which is both of high value and of high susceptibility. There are also several historic houses, set within associated grounds to the south of the settlement, which would be susceptible to the further encroachment of development.</p> <p>Irrespective of the adequacy of the Plan’s policies in regard to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, further policy can be found in relevant policies at the LPA level. Detail on any individual impacts of schemes would be a development management matter, on a case-by-case basis, and not strategic in scope to warrant the application of SEA at the plan-level. There is considered to be no likely significant effect on cultural heritage / the historic environment that would specifically warrant the application of the SEA Directive and a commitment to undertake a SEA Environmental Report.</p> <p>The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment includes the parish of Thurston within the Ancient Rolling Farmlands landscape type. This character type includes the following key characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species-rich hedgerows (mainly oak, ash and field maple, with suckering elm) and associated ditches have a strong visual impact as they are frequently high and wide. • A dense network of winding roads and wide verges <p>Objectives related to this Landscape Character Area, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain and enhance the landscape and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained. • To reinforce hedgerows of locally native species and retain the existing field boundaries. • To safeguard the ancient hedgerow and woodland areas • To safeguard the green open space areas <p>These objectives are largely reiterated within relevant policies of the Plan.</p> <p>The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts (March, 2018) identifies key views towards, through, across and away from the settlement. These are the view from the church looking out over and across the open landscape to its north and east, which highlight its settlement edge location and allow an understanding of its historic setting; and the view from the Manor Farm to the Church, which shows the inter-visibility of the historic assets on the eastern side of the settlement. Policy 9: Landscaping and Environmental Features ensures that development must be designed to ensure that its impact on the landscape and the high quality rural environment of Thurston is minimised. Policy 1:</p>



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
<p>The cumulative nature of the effects.</p> <p>The trans boundary nature of the effects.</p> <p>The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).</p> <p>The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>Thurston Spatial Strategy ensures that development should be focused within and adjacent to the settlement boundary. To this extent, the Plan ensures that potential landscape implications of proposals are suitably considered and significant effects minimised.</p> <p>The Plan does not allocate land for development purposes and therefore there are not any direct impacts that would warrant any subsequent cumulative impacts.</p> <p>The findings of the HRA Screening element of this Report do not indicate any trans boundary effects.</p> <p>There is limited risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Plan is primarily focused on ensuring appropriate residential development through any forthcoming non plan-led schemes that may come forward within the Plan period, whilst retaining the character of Thurston. This land use is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.</p> <p>There is no spatial extent of development resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan as sites or an overall quantum is not identified. The magnitude of effects can be considered small in both the local and wider District context.</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage - exceeded environmental quality standards - intensive land use 	<p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed as not having any potential significant effects on environmental quality standards as a result of intensive land use that would warrant further assessment through SEA.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed as not having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>



4. HRA Screening

4.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

This section forms a plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) as required by Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and translated into English law by the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of European sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by Thurston Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA.

This section of this Report aims to:

- Identify the European sites within 20km of Thurston.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan for its potential to impact upon a European (or Natura 2000) site (N2k).
- Assess the potential for in combination effects from other projects and plans in the area.
- Identify if there are any outstanding issues that need further investigation.



4.2 Natura 2000 Sites

Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature and biodiversity policy. It is an EU wide network of nature protection areas. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

The sites are designated under the European Union (EU) Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) and the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora).

The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the Natura 2000 network. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites make up the Natura 200 network in England.

4.2.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries. Example: The Deben Estuary is internationally important for wintering waterfowl. Legislation: EU Birds Directive.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example: Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens for calcareous fens, *Molinia* meadows and Desmoulin's whorl snail. Legislation: EU Habitats Directive.

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

Ramsar Sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl habitats. For example, Redgrave and South Lopham Fens is an extensive example of lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation which supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius*. Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy determines that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed. Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance.

4.2.2 European Sites to be considered

There are three European sites which lie within 20 km of Thurston parish.

Table 3: European Sites within 20km of the development

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Breckland	Waveney & Lt Ouse Valley Fens	Redgrave & South Lopham Fens

The locations and boundaries of the above sites are shown on the map in Appendix 1.

No European Sites lie within 5km of Thurston parish, which is the Impact Risk Zone for all three N2k sites listed above.

There are therefore no European sites to be considered to be within scope for this assessment.

4.3 Method and Approach

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA screening report; this is necessary to ensure the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

There are only two stages for Neighbourhood Plans as the CJEU ruling means that mitigation measures cannot be considered at HRA screening. The outcomes of the two stages are described in more detail in the following table. This document relates only to Stage 1 of the HRA process.

Table 4: Stages of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process for Neighbourhood Plans

Stage	Tasks	Outcome
Stage 1 HRA Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the policies or projects • Identification of potential effects on a European site • Assessing the effects on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects 	<p>Where effects are unlikely, prepare a 'finding of no significant effect' report.</p> <p>Where effects judged likely, or lack of information to prove otherwise, go to Stage 2.</p>
Stage 2 Revision of the plan to remove likely significant effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If impacts considered to affect qualifying features, those policies 	<p>Approve the plan.</p> <p>If effects remain after alternative</p>

Stage	Tasks	Outcome
	(and projects) that are likely to result in significant effects on any European site should be removed from the plan.	solutions been considered, the plan cannot be made. <i>People over Wind CJEU ruling (April 2018) means that it is not possible to consider mitigation measures when screening for impacts.</i>

4.3.1 Stage 1: HRA Screening

The screening stage identifies if alternatives are needed because any policies or projects will have an impact on a European Site, amendments need to be made in Neighbourhood Development Plans. Table 6 identifies the different categories assigned to each policy in the plan: Category A identifies those policies or projects that may not result in a Likely Significant Effect and are considered to have No Negative Effect. Category B identifies those policies or projects that will have No Likely Significant Effect. Category C identifies those policies or projects that might have Likely Significant Effect and thus upon a European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Section 4 considers each policy or projects and the results of the screening exercise recorded.

Table 5: Screening categorisation

Category A : No negative effect

Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European site.

Category B : No Likely Significant Effect

Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a *significant* negative effect on a European site alone or in combination. This conclusion could only be reached if the effects, even in combination and taking the precautionary principle into account, are considered trivial.

Category C : Likely Significant Effect

Policies or projects which are predicted to have a likely significant effect on their own or in combination with other plans and projects.

4.3.2 Potential impacts of Thurston Neighbourhood Plan on Natura 2000 sites

There are a wide range of impacts and these can be summarised as -

- Land take by developments;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the European site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.
- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing



development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;

- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

In line with the HRA for Mid Suffolk District Council Core Strategy, each policy will be assessed against the criteria in the table below.

Table 6: Assessment of potential impacts

Nature of potential impact	How the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and project) could affect a Natura 2000 site?	Why these effects are not considered significant?
Land take by development	Thurston is outside the boundaries of any N2k sites	N/A
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	Thurston is outside the Zone of Influence of any N2k sites	N/A
Recreational pressure and disturbance	Thurston is outside the Zone of Influence of any N2k sites	N/A
Water quantity and quality	Thurston is outside the Zone of Influence of any N2k sites	N/A
Changes in pollution levels	Thurston is outside the Zone of Influence of any N2k sites	N/A



4.4 Results from HRA Screening of Draft Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The Screening exercise explores whether there will be any Likely Significant Effect resulting from the Plan's policies. These Policies are:

- Policy 1: Thurston Spatial Strategy
- Policy 2: Meeting Thurston's Housing Needs
- Policy 3: Meeting Specialist Care Needs
- Policy 4: Retaining and Enhancing Thurston Character through Residential Design
- Policy 5: Community Facilities
- Policy 6: Key Movement Routes
- Policy 7: Highway Capacity at Key Road Junctions
- Policy 8: Parking provision
- Policy 9: Landscaping and Environmental Features
- Policy 10: Local Green Spaces
- Policy 11: Provision for Wildlife in New Development
- Policy 12: Minimising Light Pollution

Each of the policies in the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to identify whether they would have any impact on a European Site. This assessment can be found in the following table.

Table 7: Assessment of potential impacts

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
Policy 1: Thurston Spatial Strategy	<p>A. New development in Thurston parish shall be focused within or adjacent to the settlement boundary of Thurston village and on sites with planning permission as defined on the Policies Maps (pages 69-70).</p> <p>B. Development proposals within the settlement boundaries will be supported subject to compliance with the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>C. All development proposals within or adjacent to the settlement boundary will be</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>expected to address the following key matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where residential development is proposed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Ensure it addresses evidence-based needs; and II. Demonstrate that there is sufficient primary education provision serving Thurston. b) Contribute as necessary towards the provision of other key infrastructure which could include health, transport and movement, community facilities, utilities and public realm improvements, through direct provision and/or developer contributions (including Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106). c) Design high quality buildings and deliver them in layouts with high quality natural landscaping in order to retain the rural character and physical structure of Thurston. <p>D. Development proposals on sites that are clearly separate from the settlement boundary will not be permitted unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They represent appropriate uses in the countryside, such as agriculture, forestry, horticulture, fishing and equestrian activities, and energy generation; b) They relate to the retention of existing and appropriate provision of new commercial businesses; c) They relate to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available. <p>E. Where development uses best and most</p>		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
	versatile agricultural land, the economic benefits of farming the remaining parts of any fields on an ongoing commercial basis must be clearly demonstrated.		
Policy 2: Meeting Thurston's Housing Needs	<p>Proposals for new residential development must contribute towards Thurston's role as a Key Service Centre/Core Village. This means addressing both the needs of the wider Housing Market Area and the needs of Thurston as a rural community.</p> <p>A. Within the context of Thurston's needs, all housing proposals of five or more units must deliver at least 40% of these units as one- or two-bed properties. Where this policy results in a need to deliver at least 5 one- and two-bed properties, a minimum of 30% of these units should be one-bed properties.</p> <p>B. An alternative dwelling mix will only be permitted where evidence is brought forward with an application that clearly demonstrates the need for a different mix.</p> <p>C. In order to address the needs of younger people in Thurston, development that provides housing specifically designed to address their needs is encouraged.</p> <p>D. In order to address the needs of older people in Thurston, development that provides housing specifically designed to address their needs is encouraged. This includes the provision of sheltered housing.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy 3: Meeting Specialist Care Needs	In order to address the care needs of older people in Thurston, the provision of specialist care facilities (Class C2) is encouraged. This includes the provision of a residential care home.	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy 4: Retaining and Enhancing Thurston Character through Residential Design	<p>A. Development proposals must demonstrate how they contribute to the features which positively define Thurston's character. All development shall protect the amenity of neighbours, and reflect the scale, mass, height and form of neighbouring properties.</p> <p>B. In particular, development proposals are encouraged to:</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>a) Provide short, winding streets/closes that promote an intimacy to development with a variety of styles and designs; and</p> <p>b) Retain historic buildings that contribute to the distinctive character and historic and architectural interest of the village; and</p> <p>c) Ensure that they do not lead to over-development of a site and avoid the appearance of cramming; and</p> <p>d) Ensure provision is made to store refuse and recycling bins out of sight; and</p> <p>e) Provide appropriate parking and access arrangements, both for the new development and existing properties where they would be affected; and</p> <p>f) Use boundary treatments which, where possible, provide a soft feel to the boundary; and</p> <p>g) Retain distinctive trees such as Scots pines and oaks and mixed hedging, and provide similar as part of new development.</p> <p>C. As part of new residential development, the provision of features which contribute to addressing climate change are encouraged. This includes the provision of solar PV panels and electric charging points for vehicles.</p>		
Policy 5: Community Facilities	<p>A. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing community facilities will not be supported unless appropriate re-provision is made. Such re-provision will be required to demonstrate that the replacement facility is:</p> <p>a) At least of an equivalent scale to the existing facility; and</p> <p>b) In a generally accessible location</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>to the community of Thurston within the neighbourhood plan area; and</p> <p>c) Made available before the closure of the existing facility; and</p> <p>d) Of a quality fit for modern use.</p> <p>B. Proposals for new and/or improved community facilities will be supported subject to the following criteria:</p> <p>e) The proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and other activities; and</p> <p>f) The proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the surrounding local environment; and</p> <p>g) The proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network; and</p> <p>h) The proposal would provide appropriate car parking facilities; and</p> <p>i) The proposal is located within or immediately adjacent to the settlement boundaries as defined in Policy 1.</p> <p>C. The provision of the following community facilities will be strongly supported:</p> <p>j) A neighbourhood equipped area for play (neap)</p> <p>k) A multi-use games area (muga)</p> <p>l) Allotments or community growing spaces</p> <p>m) An adventurous type play area designed for use by older, 14+ children/young adults and a skate park.</p>		
Policy 6: Key Movement	To ensure that residents can walk and cycle safely to the schools, railway station, shops,	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
Routes	<p>bus stops and other important facilities serving the community of Thurston, Key Movement Routes have been shown on the Policies Maps on pages 69-70.</p> <p>A. All new developments must ensure safe pedestrian and cycle access to link up with existing pavements and cycle infrastructure that directly connect with the Key Movement Routes. Such routes should also ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured.</p> <p>B. Proposals to enhance the identified Key Movement Routes will be supported. Development that is immediately adjacent to the Key Movement Routes will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure the retention and where possible the enhancement of the Key Movement Route; and b) Not have a detrimental impact on the Key Movement Route and assess and address the impact of the additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrians and cyclists. 		
Policy 7: Highway Capacity at Key Road Junctions	<p>A. All Transport Assessments (for larger sites) or Transport Statements (for smaller sites) - as required by paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework – should address to the satisfaction of the highway authority the cumulative transport impact on road junctions, in particular including the following, identified on the Policies Map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Fishwick Corner; b) Pokeriage Corner; c) Junction of Beyton Road and New Road; d) The railway bridge / junction of Barton Road and Station Hill. <p>B. The provision of junction improvements at these points which are intended to reduce vehicle accidents and increase safety of</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
	cyclists and pedestrians is critical. Their provision is essential.		
Policy 8: Parking provision	<p>A. Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking must provide adequate and suitable off-street parking in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>B. In the case of residential development, the requirements of Suffolk County Council Parking Guidance¹ (or any successor document) must be met unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative provision would be appropriate on a specific site. Parking spaces must be permanently available for parking use.</p> <p>C. Proposals that would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision (both public and private) will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall provision is adequate. This is particularly the case in respect of public car parking serving community facilities.</p> <p>D. The provision of a new primary school in Thurston must be designed to support appropriate levels of off-road parking and drop-off facilities for cars, buses and coaches.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
Policy 9: Landscaping and Environmental Features	<p>A. Development must be designed to ensure that its impact on the landscape and the high quality rural environment of Thurston is minimised.</p> <p>B. Development which abuts open countryside must not create a hard edge. Proposals must demonstrate how the visual impact of buildings on the site has been minimised through their layout, heights and landscaping. In particular, the retention and planting of trees, hedges and vegetation is encouraged to soften the impact of development, retain and improve the street scene and keep the rural village feel of Thurston. A landscape buffer of at least five metres is required where a development abuts open countryside.</p> <p>C. Development must ensure that valued features of the local landscape, including</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>hedgerows, are protected where possible. New development must preserve these features and they should only be lost where it is fundamentally necessary for the delivery of the development, e.g. to provide access to the site.</p>		
<p>Policy 10: Local Green Spaces</p>	<p>A. The following areas shown on the Proposals Map are designated as a Local Green Spaces:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The New Green Open Space Area 2. The Recreation Field, Church Road 3. Genesta Drive Open Space 4. Heather Close Open Space 5. Furze Close Open Space 6. Hambros Open Space 7. Maltings Garth Open Space 8. Barton Road Chalk Pit 9. School Road Old Gravel Pit Open Space. <p>B. Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces must be consistent with policy for Green Belts and will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of that Local Green Space.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy 11: Provision for Wildlife in New Development</p>	<p>A. Development proposals that incorporate into their design features which encourage wildlife to thrive will be strongly supported.</p> <p>B. In particular, new residential development proposals should incorporate provision for local wildlife to thrive. Specific examples of such provision include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Bird and bat boxes and hedgehog runs; b) Measures to support character species of fauna and flora; c) Planting schemes including native species of trees and shrubs and nectar-rich plants for bees and other 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the European Sites?	Recommendations
	<p>pollinators;</p> <p>d) Veteran tree retention;</p> <p>e) A sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) approach to natural water management and flood resilience, including soft, green landscaping and wetland habitat close to where people live;</p> <p>f) Sensitive use of lighting to minimise impact on certain species, e.g. bats and glow worms.</p>		
Policy 12: Minimising Light Pollution	<p>A. New development will be required to demonstrate how it has minimised light pollution created through its proposed use.</p> <p>B. Where lighting of public places is proposed, the use of down lighters will be required.</p> <p>C. Guidance from the Institute of Lighting Engineers ('Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution 2000' or any successor document) shall be followed in respect of sites in rural locations.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

4.4.3 Recommendations

There are no recommendations for the site allocation policies in this draft Neighbourhood Plan as they have all been assigned to Category A. There will therefore be no need for any development subsequently coming forward to be subject to a project level HRA and secure sufficient mitigation measures, to avoid a Likely Significant Effect on any N2k sites. As such there is no requirement to progress to Appropriate Assessment.

The in-combination effects from other plans and projects are considered in the following section.

4.5 Other Plans and Projects – In-combination Effects

There are no relevant Plan level HRAs that have been carried out by Babergh & Mid Suffolk DCs or other organisations and none have been found to have a likely significant effect on the European sites being assessed.

In the context of this HRA, the relevant other plans to be considered are listed below in combination



with Thurston Neighbourhood Plan HRA.

Table 8: Other plans or projects considered for in combination effects

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
Mid Suffolk District Council	Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) October 2007)	The HRA found no likely significant effects from the Plan on the Breckland SAC/SPA and Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	Core Strategy HRA screening (2010)	The HRA found no potential for in combination effects as no other current plans or projects that are likely to lead to significant effects on the Breckland SAC/SPA or the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC have been identified, or where impacts have been identified they have been adequately mitigated.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
Babergh District Council	Habitat Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy 2011	The Core Strategy aims to minimise impacts on the Orwell and Stour estuaries, a European-designated site which supports species that are susceptible to disturbance. The principal potential impact on the European sites as a result of development proposed under the Core Strategy relates to increased recreational pressure. The Strategy therefore sets out a series of measures to ensure that the policies will not have a significant effect on the European sites.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.



Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
Suffolk Coastal District Council	Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document HRA (2011)	N/A	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.

Due to the Parish of Thurston lying outside the Impact Risk Zone for any N2k sites, this HRA screening concludes that it is possible to rule out likely significant effects. There is therefore no need for an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

References

- Atkins (2011) Habitats Regulations Assessment for Babergh District Council Core Strategy
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) for Mid Suffolk District Council Core Strategy(2007)
- Atkins (2010) St. Edmundsbury Borough Council Core Strategy HRA screening
- Babergh District Council (2014) Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies
- Thurston Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 Pre-Submission Version Draft 6 (May 2018)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website
- The Landscape Partnership (2011) Suffolk Coastal District Council Habitats Regulations Assessment for Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document



5. Conclusions

5.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Planning Practice Guidance on SEA of Neighbourhood Plans indicates that a strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development; the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan; or the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

The Plan does not allocate sites for development and therefore has no specific content that could give rise to an identified effect of the magnitude or 'significance' that would warrant the application of the SEA Directive, in the form of a SEA Environmental Report. Further analysis of the environmental characteristics of the Plan area and the Plan's policies within this Screening Report has further indicated that there would be no significant effect on the environment.

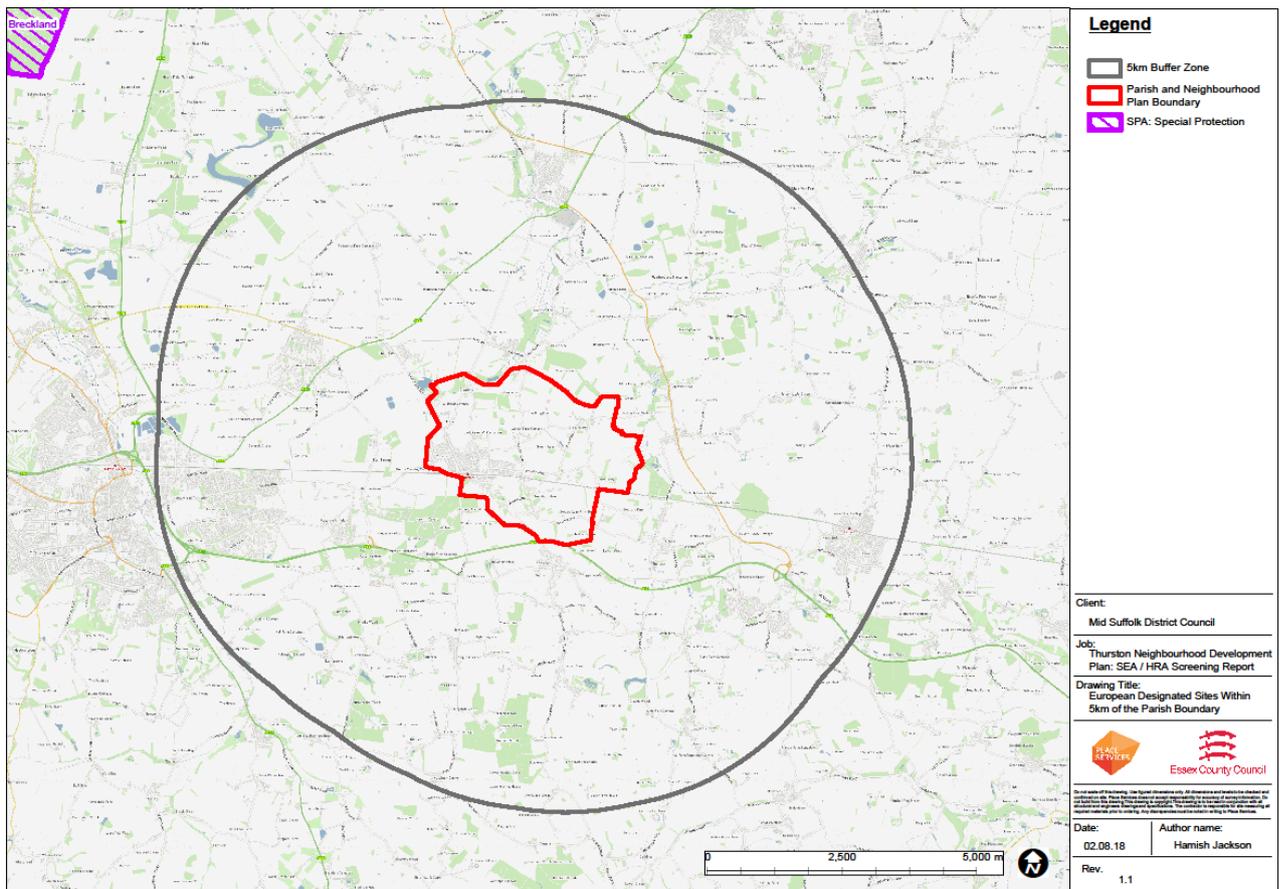
As such, the content of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been **screened out** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA screening report indicates that the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have any likely significant effects on an N2k site. The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2017 is therefore **screened out**.

Appendix 1

Thurston Parish and Locations of the European (Natura 2000) sites within 5km



Source: Place Services, 2018



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