

East Tuddenham Parish Council Position in Response to the Proposed Strategic Development Area

Continued Active Engagement by Parish Council

The Parish Council appreciates and welcomes the chance to comment on the proposed call for sites strategic growth areas. East Tuddenham has an active and engaged community that deeply cares about future large-scale strategic development in the Parish.

We have and will continue to link up with Hockering Parish Council to ensure that we provide joint statements, a consistent local voice and a clear message from residents. We would like to be consulted on and provide feedback at every point possible.

There is concern over the lack of transparency around how these Call for Sites strategic locations will be judged moving forwards. In light of no information being published or available yet, the Parish Council has these concerns relating to **social mobility, infrastructure, the impact on existing businesses, transport accessibility, carbon neutrality and wildlife/ecosystem concerns** as well as concerns over the shift in policy away from previous **organic growth of small villages with no boundaries** to large scale new towns in open countryside.

Social Mobility

It is clear that for a site of this magnitude to go forward, a considerable amount would need to be put towards social housing to support low-income families. Sites of this nature historically have failed to meet the requirements needed to support those who have social mobility needs, and Norfolk currently has a disproportion of areas which are not serviced by local public transport and more importantly transport which links to work areas. The nearest work conurbation would be at least 5 miles in either direction which would mean to support a proposed site of this size, would require considerable public subsidy to maintain a viable mobility solution. Due to the proposed location of this site, it is outside a catchment area where either unskilled or semi-skilled work can be found, which means that the inhabitants would have to travel further which in itself would be a further barrier economically to those to move into sustainable work and to be more socially mobile to progress. The site also is not suitable to attract a high employment area as the demands of modern day employment is to be based in areas where there is easy access to different transport links – for example – rail, bus and coach which work through a hub and spoke model, which quality employers now look for to attract their talent.

Due to the lack of potential work, it would therefore create a high unemployment area, and the support services would not be able to cope and support, particularly with the focus now from the Government on centralisation. This is why the isolation of population who require support would not be best located in a development which is removed from key services.

Infrastructure

Recent developments which have now completed in East Tuddenham were originally promised Fast Broadband, to gain support for the development. This was not delivered to the village as this service was only provided to the new development. This was extremely disappointing for our Parish as promises made by the developers were not upheld.

The current infrastructure in the village, including mains sewage, water and power is not fit to support any further development but more importantly needs to be upgraded to maintain the servicing of the current inhabitants.

We object to the proposed large housing development on the grounds that there is insufficient existing water infrastructure to service it. The current water supply is already under pressure, and accommodating the increased demand would likely require the construction of a new reservoir. This raises serious environmental, financial, and logistical concerns which would need to be adequately addressed.

We experience issues such as low power and water pressure as well as drainage failures and flooding which is an issue as many properties are still **not** on mains drainage. Due to the topography of the area, without serious investment into the current location, prior to any development, it will cause an infrastructure power breakdown as well as meaning that the current proposed site would take priority over the supply chain which would in turn mean that the village would be forgotten and therefore damage the inhabitant's quality of life. Where developments have been completed in East Tuddenham, unfortunately the highways have not been maintained or considered with the increase in traffic and risk to the population. The parish have requested numerous times to have traffic calming measures due to the increase in volume of traffic through the village – which has been due to increased local housing developments - all of which have been ignored. We would see the new site taking priority over our existing village, which would de-prioritise our needs even further.

Existing Rural Business's in East Tuddenham

Our village supports businesses which by their nature would not be fit to sit alongside a high residential area. This is because of the HGV traffic and also the unsociable activities and noise these businesses generate. If this site was to progress it would put these businesses at risk. There is a total of 9 businesses located immediately adjacent to the proposed site area (Pip's Skip, Norman Webb, Ozz Cars, First Choice Installations, Smith's of Honningham, Frans Green Farm, Norfolk Salvage, Thompsons Scrap Metal merchants. These businesses employ approximately 150 people; it is estimated that at least 10% of those employed live directly in the East Tuddenham parish. Owners have notified the Parish Council and highlighted these concerns. Business owners would be forced to re-locate as their businesses would attract complaints, which means they would either re-locate or disappear from the area, losing valuable employment, rather than increasing employment. The loss of these businesses would disrupt the local economy of the Parish and damage the community economic development of rural enterprise within the parish.

The Frans Green Industrial Estate is a working industrial site, with large volumes of truck movements, significant noise from business activities, a large area of significant light pollution with odorous activities is at one end of the proposed site. In the middle of the site is Frans Green Farm – a traditional livestock farm with large amounts of HGV movements at unsociable hours, animals and high odour activities. At the southern edge of the site is Thompsons Scrap metal, again, with high decibel sound activity (already been restricted by the Environment Agency to limit impact on residents much further away than the proposed site), numerous HGV movements throughout the day and a very dangerous environment to be around a residential area. This geographic spread of businesses right across the proposed site illustrates that this would not be an isolated issue for one section of the site which can be overcome through planning. This is an issue right across the site. To be clear, businesses of this nature are located in a rural area away from residential areas for a reason, and therefore the new proposed site would not be suitable to locate here.

Transport Accessibility

Transport is only viable to support an area of this nature if it has frequent connected service of no more than 15-20 minutes. With the current franchise schemes in place and with further roll outs, the likelihood is that it makes it extremely unattractive for a private provider to provide this service as the volume of users is not sufficient due to the high usage of car when an area is a distance from a major conurbation. Thus, the only alternative would be to fully subsidise this transport service, and due to the pressure on central government we propose that this would not be a viable site for public transport to be supported.

It should be considered that with no plans for the proposed Western Link to link up with the NDR there is substantial limitations on transport links to the North and East of Norwich. The addition of 1000 new homes would further exacerbate a strained overloaded road network going in these directions, causing further traffic issues in neighbouring parishes. East Tuddenham already experiences an unreliable bus service, which regularly receives complaints from our residents.

Carbon Neutrality, wildlife and ecosystem concerns

A strategic growth area that relies on the use of cars is clearly not aligned with the wider government objectives of becoming net carbon neutral. A strategic development site should be on transport links with much less negative carbon impact such as railway lines or within a sensible bicycle ride from a nearby conurbation. This site is in open countryside away from any nearby towns/cities for work and is resultantly against carbon neutrality aims of both the district and wider country.

Furthermore, village residents have highlighted the numerous pockets of woodland in the proposed area and the impact on local wildlife in an area already disrupted by the construction of the new A47 dual carriageway. The proposed development site is home to protected species, including great crested newts (which has inhabited a property with a pond up Sandy Lane) and the barbastelle bat. Their presence presents a significant ecological constraint, as both are safeguarded under UK and European wildlife legislation. Any disturbance to their habitats would require extensive surveys, mitigation measures, and licensing, posing a major challenge to the viability of the development.

A fragile pond ecosystem sits down hill of the site (owned by the East Tuddenham Charitable Trust) alongside the River Tudd. The site would fall in the catchment of the River Tudd – a rare chalk stream with significant ecological importance. A large residential development uphill of our fragile pond ecosystem could have serious negative impacts, including an increased surface and runoff. This would be as a result of the new roads, roofs and other impermeable surfaces which may carry pollutants such as oil, sediment and other chemicals. This would degrade the water quality and the aquatic ecosystems that current exists. The changes in the drainage patterns and groundwater recharge caused by the extensive development may also impact on the natural flow of the water into the pond which could disrupt the area which may leading to drying out or flooding. There is already much activity near to this pond and we would be extremely concerned about the soil erosion, sending sediment downhill into the pond and river, and because of the wildlife and species that inhabit this area would mean a loss of biodiversity. Chalk streams are exceptionally rare, so even minor changes in water chemistry, temperature or flow from nearby development can cause harm. The cumulative pressure from urban runoff and potential infrastructure failures would cause long term irreversible harm.

Organic growth aligned with Breckland Council's previous Local Plan

Neither the East Tuddenham site or the Hockering site have previously been put forward as one of the three 'preferred options' for strategic development in the June 2024 report and consultation (Dereham, Larling, Robertson's Barracks). This past non-selection indicates that these sites were previously not deemed appropriate on previous selection criteria, an increased housing target does not require further strategic site allocations of such scale when other smaller more appropriate areas of the district are available. The proposed site does not align with national policy on building in Greenbelt land. Parish residents have significant concerns over urban sprawl in the area and feel it will lead to the destruction of village life and substantial harm to the social fabric of this small village.

The proposed development would be physically separated from the existing village, creating a disconnect between the two communities. If new amenities are intended to serve both the new site and the existing village, access would be severely limited due to this separation. To ensure proper integration and accessibility between the two areas, the construction of an underpass or overpass would be essential. This would represent a significant additional cost, but one that is necessary to effectively connect the two parishes and avoid isolating the development.

Summary

In summary, East Tuddenham Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed development site due to a combination of social, environmental, and practical concerns. These include the lack of adequate infrastructure, water supply, and transport connectivity; the threat to local rural businesses and employment; the unsuitability of the site for supporting social mobility; and the significant ecological impact on protected species and sensitive habitats. The site contradicts the principles of sustainable development and carbon neutrality, and deviates from the previously supported model of organic village growth. Furthermore, the physical separation from the existing village would require major investment in connectivity infrastructure to avoid isolating communities.

In light of these fundamental issues, we would urge Breckland Council to reconsider the suitability of this proposed Strategic Development Area in the parish of East Tuddenham.

Kathryn Horton
Chair
on behalf of East Tuddenham Parish Council
14th July 2025