

Appendix A – A summary of the key representations from Thetford Town Council and the Thetford Society

Thetford Town Council

The Town Council Planning Committee held numerous meetings to go through the Draft Final TAAP in detail. There was broad support for TH1, TH5, TH6, TH7, TH8, TH10, TH11, TH12, TH13, TH15, TH16, TH19, TH20, TH24, TH27, TH29, TH34, TH35, TH36, TH37, TH38, TH39, TH40.

The main areas of concern were:

TH9 Bus Design Principles. The Committee urges the introduction of these standards within the existing settlement. *Response: some destinations will have such facilities as a result of being on the route of the new buses. Existing services can also join the proposed scheme.*

TH14 New Local Centre in the Urban Extension. The Committee is against the provision of comparison goods space. *The retail study (2010) identifies a level of non-food retail floorspace of 5,038 sqm by 2010, rising potentially to 11,150 sqm by 2016. The advice is that the town centre is unlikely to accommodate all of the 11,150 sq. m and that some limited non-food retail will be required to meet immediate needs of the population in the Urban Extension. The amount of non-food floorspace for the town centre has been increased slightly at the expense of floorspace in the Urban Extension.*

TH17 Education Provision in the Thetford Urban Extension. The Committee recalls a previous version of the text, suggesting that the first of the three primary schools should be constructed and ready for use by the time the first hundred homes have been built. The Committee wants this reinstated as an explicit requirement. *Response: removal gives NCC more flexibility to utilise any existing under provision within local schools in the first instance.*

TH21 Approach to the Town Centre

The Committee considers the reference in the penultimate paragraph to a Town Centre Masterplan to be a key point, something that is long overdue.

The Committee would prefer the proposals for Riverside Walk - referred to in the second paragraph - to be described as a 'comprehensive redevelopment', with one of the aims to be an uninterrupted walkway in a straight line from King's House to the river, across what is currently the service area behind Riverside shops.

The Committee does not currently see where funding would be sourced for a redevelopment of the Carnegie Room site. As owner and operator of the facility currently occupying the site, Thetford Town Council has recently committed itself to improve and enhance the existing facility.

TH23 Transport – Achieving Modal Shift Greater clarity of expression through the use of simpler words is needed. *The policy language has been refreshed .to address this point.*

TH25 Thetford Bus Interchange. Supported. That said, the Committee emphasises the need for there to be conveniently located dropping-off points in the central area of the town. The routes taken by local services need to be reviewed, so that re-location of the existing facility does not result in passengers being inconvenienced by virtue of

having to walk further to reach the central shopping area. *Response: dropping off points comments passed to the Local Transport Authority. Review included in the Commitments Paper at Appendix XX..*

TH26 Thetford Railway Station. The Committee is wholly against the inclusion of the Mundford Road allotment site (owned by Thetford Town Council) in the Area of Search, being of the firm view that the search for additional parking should be focused on the area on the other side of the unadopted lane linking Mundford Road and the railway line (occupied currently by a car repair business and construction company's yard). *Response: No way forward has been agreed. All possibilities would be investigated. Land swap/compensation/replacement would be provided if any land use lost. It is still considered appropriate in the long term that the allotments be identified in the area of search.*

TH31 Indoor Sports. Charles Burrell Swimming Pool could be retained. *Response: The future of this facility is dependent on the Academy proposal proceeding. Nevertheless, in the likely event that the Academy does consolidate on a single site, the surplus facilities at the current South Campus site will be the responsibility of the Academy. It is unlikely, given the subsidised nature of swimming, that a town the size of Thetford can sustain two swimming pools (Norwich at 259,000 population has 2 public pools (Riverside and UEA)).*

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There was broad support for policies TH2, TH3, TH4, TH5, TH6, TH7, TH9, TH19, TH23, TH24, TH27, TH28, TH29, TH30, TH32, TH34, TH35, TH36, TH37, TH38, TH40.

TH8 Buses: We would support regular bus services. Monies should be ring-fenced to enable this service to continue in the future. *Response: Transport study identifies need to support external bus services as well as internal. As part of CIL or S106 the sustainability of bus services will be covered off. Developers indicate parts of route will be bus only or guided, but this is a matter of more detail beyond the TAAP.*

TH10 New Railway Station: Agree. However, there are questions surrounding this scheme. Who will finance this, where precisely will this be, will there be easy access for the disabled to the platforms and will there be sufficient car and cycle parking? This scheme would take up a fairly large tract of land and we would hope that facilities such as outdoor sports provision, allotments, woodland and open space would **not** be compromised to accommodate the scheme. Building land should be used. Apart from Cambridge and Norwich, Stansted should be added to the destinations. *Response: This policy is proactive and seeks to ensure that the ability to provide a station in this area in future not compromised. Safeguarding an area of land to accommodate this proposal is standard practice. Priority remains improving the existing station as set out in policies elsewhere. A new station would be developer funded. The concept requires greater detail investigation and discussion with network rail and operators.*

TH11 Changes to the A11: The idea to add more traffic lights at the five junctions is short sighted. *Response: By 2026, even without the planned growth, the junctions on the A11 will be adversely affected by background growth in the overall volume of traffic. Traffic lights can help junctions work smoothly and more efficiently and there are many examples of the trunk road network where lights have been introduced to manage the heavy flow of traffic.*

TH12 Improvements to the local road network: We would urge that any modifications are part of a co-ordinated whole and are not allowed to develop piecemeal. *The TAAP identifies at a strategic level those local road networks which are required to enable the development to take place. The precise timing and implementation of these improvements will be considered as part of the Masterplan accompanying the application for the Urban Extension.*

TH13 New Employment Land: Agree, but there is a need to provide a range of employment opportunities. It is essential that employment areas should be accessed via trunk and main roads and not through residential zones. *Response: The evidence to support the TAAP employment policies is provided in the Employment Land Review (2006) and Thetford Growth and Infrastructure Study (2007). Further to this evidence the TAAP has been informed by the Council's REV Programme and the latest REV-Active initiative to support particular economic activities along the A11 corridor in Breckland including Thetford. A total of 40ha of new employment land has been identified in the TAAP to provide for a variety of uses. In addition, jobs will be provided in the service sectors necessary to support the new population including education, health and retail and personal services. The Council's vision for a regenerated town centre will also result in job creation. The Council acknowledges that the evidence behind the employment strategy needs to be more clearly articulated and consequentially an Employment Topic Paper has been produced by the Council to inform the submission TAAP.*

TH14 New Local Centres: We have to question the viability of having local centres offering comparison goods. *See response to Thetford Town Council above.*

TH18 Health Provision: We would hope that the provision of a pharmacy, dentists and a facility for minor operations could be provided here in Thetford. Why is the use of the current Healthy Living Centre to be reviewed? As there is empty accommodation units in the building, one would suspect that the rental rates are set too high. It appears crazy to have such a facility only partly utilized. *Response: Healthy Living Centre Review would look into how the facility can be used better to meet the health needs of the town, including such ideas mentioned.*

TH21 Town Centre: Thetford's shopping environment is **not** vibrant – perhaps 'maintaining' should be changed to 'creating'. Many other detailed comments. Plus other comments on specific town centre issues. *Response: The TAAP sets out broad guidance for the town centre and is positive towards the investment needed. The detailed comments would be fed into the town centre masterplan which the TAAP advocates.*

TH25 New Bus Interchange: The identified site for the proposed new bus station has a number of weaknesses. The renovation of the Cosy Carpets building under this heading is nothing but a red herring. We have always hoped that assuming the MTF Board ignores residents' views and forges ahead with the scheme regardless, then this building would make an iconic bus station with related facilities. The plans for a budget hotel which would also serve as a cafe, information centre and provide attended toilets for the bus station is more appealing. The present (Anchor) site could be upgraded at a fraction of the cost of moving the interchange to St Nicholas St/Minstergate. *Response: The proposals being developed for the new Bus Interchange on land off Minstergate and St Nicholas Street will provide a high quality and accessible facility within the Town Centre and within easy walking distance of the rail station. The wish for the existing bus facilities that exist within the Bridge Street car park to be improved is noted. However the existing site is constrained, by adjacent buildings (one of which is listed), flood zones (along the river frontage) and*

by the existence of a scheduled ancient monument. Without significant demolition of buildings the existing facilities can not be improved to provide a high quality interchange of sufficient capacity to cater for the planned growth and regeneration of the town. If building demolitions occurred to achieve a suitable site assembly for a new bus interchange the regeneration potential of this important town centre site and the opportunity it provides to significantly enhance the river frontage and wider revival of the town centre would be comprised.

TH26 Thetford Railway Station: Agree, but question how points one and three can be achieved without taking allotment land, commercial land or carrying out a major restructuring of the surrounding roads. The obvious car parking area, which was redundant commercial land, is now being built on and Station Road, the main artery into the Town Centre from the Station, has its own traffic flow problems. *Response: BDC wants to see an increased use of the station and whilst other forms of transport will be encouraged, cars could still be used to bring rail users to the station. It is recognised that the only available areas for parking are commercial land or allotments, but BDC would ensure compensatory provision for allotments or helping existing businesses relocate to an employment area.*

TH31 Indoor Sports Facilities: Agree, but there is a need for sports' provision being made for the south of the town. We feel that the retention of the swimming pool at the Academy's south site (formerly Charles Burrell High) along with changing facilities would be applauded. The sports facilities of the Academy (north site) could be administered on a joint use basis. One glaring omission is the provision of a synthetic Athletics track. Whatever the facilities it is essential that they are maintained to a high standard for future generations and a financial commitment to this effect is required. *Response: If the Academy proposal for one site and to the north of the town goes ahead, the future use of the Charles Burrell School and its surrounds will need investigating. The comments on potential retention of some of its assets is noted and this discussion will rest with the Academy. Policy TH19 on community buildings seeks usage by the public of school facilities. The TAAP does not set details on particular open space uses to ensure there is flexibility to respond to changing sport and recreation needs.*

TH39 Redevelopment on Existing Residential Estates: Infilling is a contentious issue. We would encourage more and varied play equipment but question maintenance responsibilities in years to come. *Response: There is a scale of interventions from minor aesthetics to schemes involving 10's of dwellings. The capacity for further development within the built up area of Thetford is relatively limited however the Council needs to be mindful that small to medium scale sites do come forward from time to time. Additionally, Flagship Housing have embarked on a programme of investment in the existing estates and this has resulted in a number of schemes ranging from sites of 3 houses on former garage sites through to more comprehensive redevelopments of 60+ homes. The Policy does not seek to give specific detail of schemes, rather guide such schemes in recognition that further development is likely. Core Strategy DC1 on Amenity and DC16 on design would be of relevance to future plans.*