

Sent: 18 March 2026 15:04
To: Planning
Subject: Formal Objection to Planning Application for 150 Dwellings by Bellway Homes – Mushroom Farm, Thakeham Ref: DC/26/0266

Categories: Comments Received

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to submit my formal objection to the proposed development of 150 homes by Bellway Homes on the Mushroom Farm site in Thakeham. As a resident living in close proximity to the site, I have significant and legitimate concerns regarding public health, environmental harm, and the non-compliance of this proposal with both local and national planning policy.

This objection sets out below the material planning grounds upon which this application must be refused.

1. Non-Compliance with the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan (to 2031) – a Legally Significant Document

The Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan has statutory weight under the Localism Act 2011, and must be used in determining planning applications up to 2031, unless formally superseded. This proposed development:

- Falls outside the areas identified for development;
- Conflicts with the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives to maintain the rural character, protect biodiversity, and restrict large-scale urban expansion.

Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. No such considerations exist here.

Therefore, approving this application would be unlawful and contrary to statutory planning policy.

2. Non-Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024)

The proposal conflicts with multiple key requirements of the NPPF (2024), including:

2.1 Lack of Sustainable Infrastructure Capacity

The NPPF requires that development only proceed where adequate infrastructure exists or can be delivered (NPPF 2024, Sections on Sustainable Communities and Transport). Thakeham currently lacks:

- Sufficient road capacity

- Public transport
- Healthcare services
- School places
- Utility infrastructure

This proposal fails the “infrastructure first” principle.

2.2 Failure to Demonstrate Sustainable Transport Options

The two roads into the village are already inadequate and unsafe, and the proposal will significantly increase the risk to public safety. NPPF transport guidance requires developments to avoid severe residual impacts—this scheme clearly does not.

2.3 Environmental and Biodiversity Harm

The NPPF requires measurable biodiversity net gain, yet no clarity is provided about the extensive remaining land. The area currently supports wildlife; the loss of habitat without a clear long-term plan is unacceptable and contrary to environmental protection policies.

3. Public Health and Safety Concerns – Asbestos Contamination on Site

As a resident living near the site, I am deeply concerned about the documented presence of asbestos at the former Mushroom Farm. Disturbance of asbestos without rigorous management presents significant risks to human health, including my family.

Under:

- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- The Public Health Act 1936

Developers must prove that the site can be made safe. No such assurance has been provided. This alone is a material planning consideration and a valid reason for refusal.

4. Lack of Clarity on the Vast Remaining Land – Potential for 600+ Additional Homes

This application is described as Phase 1, yet no comprehensive masterplan has been submitted for the remainder of the site. Given the land area is capable of supporting 600 or more homes, approving this application would effectively open the door to a massive, unplanned expansion of Thakeham.

The absence of a coherent, legally binding site-wide plan constitutes:

- Failure to demonstrate cumulative impact assessment
- Failure to comply with strategic plan-making requirements

- A risk of piecemeal development, which the NPPF warns against

This is not plan-led development—it is developer-led expansion, which should not be permitted.

5. Thakeham Cannot Sustain Additional Housing – Cumulative Overdevelopment

Beyond the Bellway scheme, multiple other applications totaling 180+ homes have already been approved. The cumulative effects must be assessed under planning law.

Thakeham is a small rural village with:

- Limited road access
- No capacity in local services
- No strategic plan for major expansion

The proposed development would not be sustainable, in clear breach of NPPF Section 2 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development).

6. Severe Highways Impact – A Material Planning Ground for Refusal

The two roads into the village are already:

- Narrow
- Congested
- Unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists
- Used as cut-through routes

The additional traffic from 150 homes (and potentially 600+) presents a significant risk to public safety.

Under the NPPF, planning must be refused where the residual cumulative impact on the road network would be severe. This development clearly meets that threshold.

7. Harm to Rural Character and Landscape – Contrary to Local and National Policy

Thakeham is designated as a rural village, and large-scale suburban expansion is incompatible with:

- The Neighbourhood Plan
- The Local Plan
- NPPF policies on protecting valued landscapes and rural identity

The proposal erodes the village character and sets a dangerous precedent for unchecked urbanisation.

For the reasons above—including legal non-compliance, policy conflict, asbestos-related health risks, infrastructure failure, highways danger, and environmental harm—I strongly urge the Local Planning Authority to refuse this application.

This proposal is not sustainable, not legally compliant, and not in the interests of Thakeham or its residents.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the Thakeham Resident.

Thakeham Resident