

Breckland Local Plan proposals (Regulation 18)

Mattishall Parish Council's objection to the inclusion of Thynne's Lane as a housing site sent to Breckland Council December 2025.

Allocation: **LPRC4SDEV307** North of Thynne's Lane, Mattishall

Mattishall Parish Council raises the following **objections** to this site allocation:

A. Extent of site and density

The Parish Council objects to this allocation on the grounds of insufficient detail, and lack of clarity on the acceptable extent and density of development. The draft allocation states "approximately 100 dwellings" on a site of 5.9 hectares. The Call for Sites submission proposed 150 dwellings on this site, giving the stated area as 6.5 hectares. The Local Plan document does not specify an acceptable density. Clearly, the Parish Council and our residents are concerned around the lack of clarity of housing numbers and specific area to be allocated. The obvious concern is that if this site is put forward without a clearly specified density requirement a higher housing number may be proposed by the developer, thereby further exacerbating the issues associated with development on this site.

This green field site allocation would further exceed the scale of development experienced and envisaged by the community, undermining the democratic mandate of the Neighbourhood Plan, which was supported by 83.6% of voters in the May 2025 referendum

B. Neighbourhood Plan policy: Important views and vistas

The site is covered by Neighbourhood Plan Policy MNP ENV2: Important views and vistas: 1. Proposals for new development should take account of the relationship between Mattishall village and its surrounding hinterland. 2. Development proposals should respond positively to the key features of the views shown on map 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan and described in Appendix 3. In relation to this Thynnes Lane site these are:

Views from the settlement looking towards out into the countryside from public footpath in field bordered by Thynnes Lane and Welgate. The Policy defines the protected view as:

Farm field with public footpath bordered by Thynnes Lane and Welgate. Summer and winter views looking east and south. A locally valued view from

the public footpath (a popular rural walking route) looking across open countryside. Key contributing features to sense of place are:

- Views across fields towards open countryside
- Views of village housing boundary at Cedar Rise
- Landscaping provided by tree belt that reaches taller than the houses and therefore providing visual screening
- Key off-road route from west to east end of the village on public footpath.

This Neighbourhood Plan Policy was adopted following extensive consultation in 2024 and 2025 (including with and Breckland District Council). The Neighbourhood Plan independent examiner noted in his report to Breckland District Council that, “The Plan is a first-class example of a review of a neighbourhood plan”.

“I am satisfied that consultation has been an important element of the Plan’s production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan’s preparation. From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I have concluded that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. BDC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations”.

The Neighbourhood Plan Examiner looked in detail at this Views and Vistas Policy. In his report to Breckland Council (February 2025) he stated:

“The policy aims to ensure that development proposals are designed in a manner that not only respects and responds positively to but also enhances the existing landscape and settlement setting of Mattishall, key features, and views from the edge of the settlement looking out to the countryside and views from the countryside looking into the settlement. In its response to the clarification note, MPC commented about the way in which the new views had been identified as follows: ‘In evaluating the appropriate methodology to review these suggested views and vistas, the Parish Council undertook pre-site assessment work which involved consideration of written material and/or discussions with CPRE Norfolk (Mattishall Parish Council is a member organisation); Norfolk Wildlife Trust; The Open Spaces Society; and our planning consultants. A team comprising members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group supported by residents undertook the survey work. Each potential site was carefully assessed during site visits noting the key landscape features, whether there were public rights of way and the contribution the view made to the sense of place. The Steering Group was also cognisant of the village characteristics and landscape features which highlighted key views and vistas in the Mattishall Design Guidance and Code Report 2022.’

The Examiner rejected an objection to this particular View and Vista made by Bellway Homes. The Examiner concluded that “I looked at the proposed view

carefully during the visit (and from the beginning of the footpath into the agricultural land to the south of Cedar Close). Based on all the available evidence, I am satisfied that the proposed view has been appropriately identified. It highlights the relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside. In addition, it is a view which is appreciated by those who use the footpath network in this part of the parish. In the round, I am satisfied that the policy has been prepared in a positive and professional way. The views reflect the close relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside.”

Mattishall Parish Council contends that the significant weight afforded to this important Neighbourhood Plan Policy ENV2 means that development of the scale proposed on this site would not be sustainably achievable. Residential development of 100 houses would be impossible to achieve without compromising the essential requirements of Policy MNP ENV2.

C. Two well-used public footpaths

The site is dissected by well used public footpaths running from east to west, towards the north and along the entire eastern boundary. These footpaths are regarded as a key community asset within the village. They are valued because of their rural, historic and varied nature. They are unpaved public rights of way that deliver a crucial link between Mattishall’s built form and the open countryside. Mattishall residents value the fact that the footpath surfaces are largely natural, consisting of soil, earth, or grass lined by wildflowers, long grass, and boundary trees with overhanging branches.

The Parish Council objects to the principle of residential development on this site which would inevitably result in the “urbanisation” of these historic routes.

D. Removal of natural environment

The Parish Council objects to the allocation of this site as this would result in an unacceptable loss of the natural environment and an unsustainable impact on biodiversity, ecological networks and habitat connectivity. This site lies within SSSI/SAC Impact Zones. Development of the site would be contrary to Mattishall Neighbourhood Plan Policy ENV7. The proposed Local Plan policy requirement to “Demonstrate provision of the required level of Biodiversity Net Gain through onsite and offsite provision” is not considered an adequate level of protection. This site was subject to a detailed ecological assessment as part of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation. This assessment evidenced the following:

<p>Does the space feel local in character and scale?</p>	<p>Yes, the space is local in character and scale. It is immediately adjacent to</p>
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	Mattishall village centre and accessed by public footpaths.
<p>The space is demonstrably special to the local community and holds particularly local significance</p> <p>What evidence is there to demonstrate that the space has a particular local significance with respect to at least one of the following aspects</p>	<p>The site was recently subject to a public consultation exercise with 84% of respondents regarded the site as a highly important Local Green Space for the village.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its beauty 	<p>The site forms part of the transition from the domestic and suburban form of development along Cedar Rise and Thynnes Lane into the agricultural landscape beyond. The site makes a positive contribution to the rural character of the area.</p> <p>This site has been identified by the residents of the village as being an important view and vista. It is designated as such in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan POLICY ENV2. It is vital that this site is protected as a designated open space as it provides an open rural gateway to the village.</p> <p>77% of village respondents regarded this site as having importance for its “Beauty”.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic significance 	<p>The footpaths are historical, site close to significant archaeological find.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational value 	<p>Footpath running approx. west/north west to East/South East across the site. Much used by local walkers, bird watchers and dog walkers. Footbridge across large drainage ditch used for recreation and an alternative “off road” access route to village centre. 90% of village respondents regarded this site</p>

	as having importance for its “Recreational Value”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tranquillity 	<p>Pleasant open views to S and E across open farm land and to N and W to village houses, mainly screened by rich wildlife hedges. Objective 1 of the Mattishall Neighbourhood Plan is <i>“to protect and enhance the rural look and feel of the village and wider parish”</i>. During the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process 92% of residents stated that maintaining rural views and vistas as wildlife corridors was important. 77% of village respondents regarded this site as having importance for its “Tranquillity”.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richness of its wildlife 	<p>The site is an important wildlife corridor. It is a nesting and roosting site for birds; also water vole inhabit the water banks. 64% of village respondents regarded this site as having importance for its “Richness of Wildlife”.</p> <p>The site is bordered by some extremely old hawthorn hedge according to the Woodland Trust.</p> <p>Wildlife survey observations: 19.7.23 06.30</p> <p>Wood pigeon, Dove, Great tit, Carrion crow, Rook, Wren, Robin, Long tailed tit, Chaffinch, Blackbird,</p>

	<p>Sparrow, Skylarks, Rabbits. 26.7.23 18.00 Wood pigeon, Rook, Crow, Dove, Yellowhammer, Blackbird, Red kite, Squirrels.</p> <p>7.8.23 Buzzards, Red kites.</p> <p>Skylarks nested in this area earlier in the year.</p> <p>Barn owls and Tawny owls seen early in the morning and late in the evenings.</p> <p>Bats seen in the evening.</p> <p>Evidence of foxes.</p>
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E. Potential flood risk

During our November 2025 consultation process residents regularly expressed general concerns around flood risk in Mattishall. The Parish Council is of the view that further development of open greenfield countryside would unacceptably add to the potential for increased flood risk both to this site, adjoining residential properties and the highway network.

Indeed Page 73 of the Reg 18 document states that the Lead Local Flood Authority has (LLFA) has identified Mattishall “as having particular concerns around flooding.”

Residents have confirmed that flooding regularly occurs in this area and that in November 2025 Thynnes Lane itself has experienced severe surface water flooding.

The latest Flood Map for Planning identifies that part of the site is at risk of surface water flooding across all periods of likelihood- 1:30, 1:100, 1:1000.

F. Major highway concerns

The Parish Council and our residents object to this site allocation on highway safety grounds. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that development here would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The current proposal would result in traffic entering and exiting the site via Thynnes lane. To the east this is a 60mph single track former tractor route with no defined passing places and no pedestrian footway. It is frequently used by pedestrians, dog walkers and equestrians. Any increase in traffic would lead to an unacceptable increase in the risk of accidents. To the west- Thynnes Lane and Welgate have limited footways, numerous residential accesses with poor visibility onto the highway, a Church with severely limited on-site parking.

The volume and speed of traffic on Dereham Road at peak periods is currently excessive (evidenced by Parish Council SAM2 data, publicly available via the Mattishall PC website), with various “pinch points” such as at Mattishall News, the Primary School and Pharmacy/GPs. Proposed residential development elsewhere in Mattishall and at Dereham (eg Dumpling Green), Yaxham and East Tuddenham would put further pressure on the fragile road network in Mattishall.

Residents have also expressed concerns that Cedar Rise would be an unsuitable vehicular access route. Since the recent development at Walnut Tree Road, traffic levels have already increased significantly throughout Cedar Rise. This includes not only the day-to-day traffic from residents but also a notable rise in delivery vehicles, bin collection lorries, and other service vehicles. Cedar Rise is already under considerable pressure, and the road infrastructure is clearly not designed to accommodate any additional traffic which would be generated from this site.

Without a detailed transport assessment provided by the Highways Authority, the Parish Council believe that this site should not be allocated for residential development. It is considered that the combined, long-term impact on the road network would be too severe and unacceptable and contrary to Neighbourhood Plan (2025) Policy MNP TRA1 “Residential, commercial and community development **should not** unduly increase traffic volumes within or through the village; and not create additional safety risks.”

G. Loss of important agricultural land.

The Parish Council objects to this allocation on the grounds that the Local Plan should prioritise brownfield sites over this site. NPPF 2024 requires the LPA to give substantial weight to brownfield land for development. This Local Plan should protect this valuable agricultural site from inappropriate development to safeguard food security and natural capital. The Parish Council urge Breckland District Council to focus on a brownfield land first approach.

H. Light pollution: Increased light pollution from the development.

The community consultation exercises, as part of the Mattishall Neighbourhood Plan (2025), evidenced that residents value the quiet, peaceful nature of the Parish and its dark skies. MNP ENV6: Tranquillity and Dark Skies states that “Development proposals should not disturb the tranquillity or insensitive lighting or excessive noise intrusion either by the operation of the development concerned or by associated transport impacts”. The Parish Council consider that a development of the magnitude proposed on this site would be contrary to this important Policy, and therefore the site should not be allocated for development.

I. Infrastructure issues

Drainage/Utilities: Mattishall suffers from inadequate provision for foul and surface water drainage. The village has a history of surface water flooding, regular incidents of foul water discharges into residential properties and sewage odours. Over the past four and a half years Mattishall has had 154 days of road closures as a result of Anglian Water interventions (Source: EIR enquiry 2025). Any additional development would further increase the pressure on a clearly inadequate infrastructure provision. No mitigation has been proposed.

Primary School: It is understood that Mattishall Primary School is currently at capacity within certain school years.

Mattishall Surgery and Pharmacy: It is understood that the GP surgery is at capacity and would have difficulty in accommodating the additional patients that would arise if this site were to be developed.

Highways: The resultant unacceptable pressure on the highway network is stated elsewhere.

J. Protected minerals policy

The site is protected by the Norfolk County Council Minerals and Waste Plan Policy MP11 Minerals Safeguarding Area. The main purpose of this adopted Policy is to prevent development, such as housing or new roads, from permanently blocking access to important mineral deposits that may be needed later.

K. Nutrient neutrality

This site is affected by nutrient neutrality as it falls within the catchments of the River Wensum. The Parish Council is concerned that development consideration is being given to this site without any evidence that appropriate mitigation measures can be provided to offset any increased nutrient loading from subsequent development. It has not been evidenced that any development will not have a significant effect on protected habitats. The Local Plan site assessment process should be of such detail to demonstrate that the site is capable of sustainable development. Breckland District Council should be in possession of sufficient evidence from the site proponent to be able to conduct its own Appropriate Assessment to determine if development would have a significant effect on this protected site.

L. Amenity and Design Guide requirements

The Local Plan site requirements are inadequate as no reference is given for future development to comply with the Policies of the Mattishall Neighbourhood Plan. This is particularly relevant in relation to design matters. The Mattishall Design Guide and Code is a Supplementary Planning Document and therefore is a material consideration- this should be clearly stated within the Local Plan document. The proposed allocation would have a negative effect on residents' living conditions, such as through overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, and excessive noise.

This proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the character and amenity of the village and be in conflict with the Character Assessment within the Mattishall Design Guide and Code.

M. Archaeological concerns

The Parish Council opposes this development due to its proximity to archaeologically significant sites. This is evidenced by an important Roman coin hoard at Cedar Rise and other significant finds at the Kingfisher development to the west of this site.