THURLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

"BREATHTING NEW LIFE INTO THURLEIGH"

ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION REPORT

November 2016
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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Neighbourhood Planning - Introduction

1.1 The Government has introduced substantial changes to the planning system in Britain and, as part of these changes, the Localism Act 2011 introduced statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England. It enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and it is intended to give communities more say in the development of their local area (within certain limits and parameters). Neighbourhood Plans will, therefore, help in shaping the future of the places where people live and work.

1.2 Neighbourhood Plans set out planning policies to help determine planning applications for new development and, as statutory planning documents, these will form part of the Bedford Borough Council “Development Plan”. Policies and site allocations identified in Neighbourhood Plans have to be in general conformity with the local authority’s Local Plan and take account of the National Planning Policy Framework. Neighbourhood planning, therefore, allows an area to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area. This means that Neighbourhood Plans must take into account the local Council’s assessment of housing and other development in the area. Section 2 outlines the Local Plan process and its relationship with Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Planning - Strategic Context

1.3 Neighbourhood Plans do not take effect unless there is a majority of support in a referendum of the neighbourhood. They also have to meet a number of conditions before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. These conditions are to ensure plans are legally compliant and take account of wider policy considerations (e.g. national policy). The conditions are:

1. They must have regard to national planning policy;
2. They must be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area (i.e. such as in a core strategy);
3. They must be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

1.4 An independent qualified person will check that the Neighbourhood Plan appropriately meets the conditions before it can be voted on in a local referendum. This is to ensure that referendums only take place when proposals are workable and of a decent quality. Proposed Neighbourhood Plans need to gain the approval of a majority of voters of the neighbourhood to come into force. If proposals pass the referendum, the local planning authority has a legal duty to bring them into force.

Neighbourhood Planning - Local Context

1.5 In January 2013, Thurleigh Parish Council applied for the designation of the whole of the Thurleigh Parish as a Neighbourhood area and, following a period of consultation, Bedford Borough Council endorsed the proposal in a decision statement dated 1 July 2013. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up comprising Parish Councillors and interested local residents to take forward the development of the Plan and the Steering Group has been committed to effective community engagement at all stages of the process.
Consultation events have been organised to promote local awareness about the Neighbourhood Plan and to find out what the community thinks about the local area, what is good, what should be changed, what could be improved etc. This community engagement sought to ensure that a Neighbourhood Plan is developed in tune with local needs and aspirations and the feedback has helped shape the content of the Issues and Options consultation document. The consultation responses are considered in detail in section 4 of the report, and the feedback relevant to specific topic areas is developed in sections 6 to 13 of the report.

This Issues and Options consultation document sets out the key issues identified so far by the Steering Group and possible policy options for addressing them. An Issues and Options summary leaflet is also available for downloading from the Parish Council’s website at www.thurleighndp.com. Before bringing forward detailed polices, proposals and land allocations the Steering Group is now holding a major consultation exercise on the Issues and Options that are set out in this report.

Essentially, this Issues and Options Report is a synthesis of current thinking from the feedback and evidence gathered on what sort of development should take place in Thurleigh over the plan period and what type of development might go where. The Issues and Options stage is not the same as producing a draft Neighbourhood Plan but, rather, it is about sharing current thinking and testing ideas with the wider public and also key partners who may be either statutory consultees, local service providers or landowners/developers with an interest in the future of Thurleigh.

This is a consultation document, and comments and opinions are invited for the period 1 November 2016 to 16 December 2016. Representation Form have been developed to gather feedback and completed forms should be returned to:

Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan
Scald End Farm Shop,
Mill Road,
Thurleigh
MK44 2DP

Copies of the Representation Forms are also available from the website www.thurleighndp.com and at the Village Hall and Scald End Farm Shop. If preferred, comments can be made in writing or via e-mail to thurleighndp@gmail.com.
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LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

Bedford Borough Council - Local Plan Process

2.1 Bedford Borough Council has now commenced the preparation of a Local Plan that will set out how much growth there should be in the borough in coming years (housing, jobs and associated infrastructure) and where it should take place. Current planning policy documents look ahead to 2021 and the new Local Plan will extend the period that development has been planned for to 2035. It will also contain policies that will be used to make decisions on planning applications.

2.2 The original timetable envisaged the preparation of the Local Plan to 2032 and this was set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was approved in October 2013 and this assumed consultation on the submission version of the plan in October/November 2014 and submission to the Secretary of State in September 2015. A number of external factors have affected the process which now means that the timetable set out in the LDS will not be met.

2.3 This includes (i) a delay in the release of key information derived from the 2011 Census, (ii) the need to establish mechanisms to satisfy the duty to cooperate beyond immediate neighbours (in particular, Luton Borough has indicated that it is unable to meet its housing requirements within its own boundaries and will be asking authorities adjacent and close to Luton - including Bedford Borough - to meet some of this need and also (iii) the Greater London Authority (GLA) has indicated that there are uncertainties over London’s ability to accommodate its own growth within its boundaries. As a consequence Bedford Borough Council and other relevant local authorities close to London are encouraged to take account of this and plan strategically for what may well be growing populations. None of these factors was anticipated when the current Local Plan timetable was agreed and, as a result, that timetable needs to change to accommodate them.

2.4 The Borough Council published an Issues and Options consultation paper which ran from 13 January 2014 to 24 February 2014 and sought responses to the main issues facing the Borough in the coming years. For example, how much growth should be planned for and, in general terms, where it should be located. This consultation also invited details of possible development sites, known as a ‘call for sites’. Not all the land that is submitted via this process will be allocated for development and there will, therefore, need to be a technical assessment undertaken of each site. Comments on the matters raised in the Issues and Options consultation paper were received from over 660 respondents and the Council has been considering how the issues raised should inform the draft plan.

2.5 There is, therefore, a considerable amount of work that needs to be done to progress the Local Plan and this process has commenced. It includes:

- The consideration of all the comments received on the Issues and Options consultation paper;
- The technical assessment of over 350 sites that had originally been put forward through the ‘call for sites’ process including their deliverability;
Completion of the evidence base to support the plan, including a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Economy and Employment Land Study, Strategy Flood Risk Assessment, Retail, Hotel and Commercial Leisure needs assessments and highway impact work;

Further engagement with local councils to obtain information on sites that have been proposed through the ‘call for sites’ and to seek views on those proposals, particularly how they fit with any emerging neighbourhood plans;

An audit of local facilities - this has been carried out to update current records and inform the development of the local plan's spatial strategy; and

The review of current Development Plan policies to ensure they are up to date and consistent with national guidance.

These tasks are now underway, with some tasks now completed. The LDS was updated in July 2015 to include a revised timetable that envisaged adoption of the Local Plan in 2018.

2.6 In addition, the Borough Council published a further report in early September 2015 providing the basis for a second consultation in order to obtain further stakeholder engagement before the Plan is drafted. A six week period of consultation took place during October, November and December 2015 and there was a further opportunity to submit development sites "during the 2015 consultation period". This prompted a further 9 submissions in respect of Thurleigh, including a proposed sustainable new settlement of up to 5,250 homes on the Thurleigh Airfield Business Park. The report identifies the need for new land allocations for "about 4,500 new homes". The Development Strategy looks first for development opportunities in and on the edge of Bedford and Kempston, then apportions growth to rural settlements depending on their size and infrastructure capacity. Villages are placed in one of 4 groups and the report gives an indication of the scale of growth for each village or group. The consultation envisages villages, like Thurleigh, would have "limited development" and the number of dwellings is identified as between 10 and 20 (averaging 15).

2.7 More recently, Bedford Borough Council has confirmed a revised timescale for the preparation of the Local Plan 2032, now renamed Local Plan 2035. The revised timescale provides for the adoption of the Local Plan in June 2019 (compared to June 2018 as part of the LDS published in July 2015). The need to review the timescale arises from (i) a further 250 potential development sites submitted as a result of the 2035 Local Plan consultation (bringing the total number to around 640) and (ii) within the 250 new sites are a "small number of new settlement proposals" that require consideration (i.e. Land at Twinwoods - 6,000 new dwellings. Wyboston Garden Village - 4,000 new dwellings, Thurleigh Airfield - 5,250 new dwellings (as above) and Lee Farm Sharnbrook (Unilever) - 4,500 new dwellings). No such sites were submitted during the first call for sites in 2014 so the draft development strategy, published for comment in late 2015, was based on a dispersed approach, with the urban area of Bedford and Kempston being the first area of search and then remaining growth distributed in accordance with a rural settlement hierarchy.

2.8 The submission of new settlement proposals presents the option of pursuing a different development strategy, focusing the majority of growth in a much smaller number of locations including one or more new settlements. Such a strategy will need to show that new settlement proposals are suitable, available and deliverable and, even if new settlements are proposed, it will be a number of years after the adoption of the Local Plan before sites of this scale will start to deliver housing completions. As a result, smaller sites that can be developed earlier on in the plan period will also be required in order to maintain a five year supply of housing completions in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
2.9 Bedford's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was last published in March 2010, and updated in 2011. This technical study assesses potential housing sites in order to provide evidence on housing supply. The primary role of the SHLAA is to identify those sites with potential for housing, to undertake an assessment of that potential and to consider whether the sites are likely to be developable. It is not the purpose of the SHLAA to allocate land for residential development; this takes place through the Local Development Plan process. The identification of a specific site in the assessment does not necessarily mean, therefore, that the site will be allocated for housing development or that planning permission will be granted. It is the intention that the SHLAA will be updated as part of the Local Plan 2035 evidence base.

Delivering Critical Physical and Community Infrastructure

2.10 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been introduced to help ensure that necessary additions or improvements to physical and community infrastructure that arise from new development can be funded. Bedford Borough Council introduced CIL effective from 1 April 2014, including an associated charging regime for new development. Local Planning authorities operating the CIL will pass on 25% of the money raised from development within a Neighbourhood Plan area to the community itself so that where a Neighbourhood Plan has been through referendum and brought into force the local community (through its elected members) can decide how to spend the proceeds of CIL. Parish and town councils will receive the money directly. This compares to a 15% contribution if no Neighbourhood Plan exists.

2.11 The Localism Act 2012 sets out what neighbourhood CIL can be spent on: the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure – or anything else that is concerned with addressing demands that development places on an area.

Relationship with Neighbourhood Planning

2.12 It is relevant to consider the relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan. As previously stated, a Neighbourhood Plan should support the strategic development needs set out in the Local Plan and it should plan positively to support local development (as outlined in paragraph 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework). A Neighbourhood Plan must address the development and use of land. This is because, if successful at examination and referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan once it has been made (brought into legal force) by the Local Planning Authority.

2.13 Neighbourhood planning can inspire local people and businesses to consider other ways to improve their neighbourhood than through the development and use of land; they may identify specific action or policies to deliver these improvements. Wider community aspirations, in addition to those relating to development and use of land, can be included in a Neighbourhood Plan, but actions dealing with non land use matters should be clearly identifiable, such as in a separate appendix.

2.14 If the policies and proposals are to be implemented as the community intended, a Neighbourhood Plan needs to be deliverable. The National Planning Policy Framework requires that the sites and the scale of development identified in a plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened.
Neighbourhood Plans can be developed before or at the same time as the Local Planning Authority is producing its Local Plan. A draft Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in force if it is to satisfy the basic conditions (see 1.3 above). A draft Neighbourhood Plan is not tested against the policies in an emerging Local Plan although the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a Neighbourhood Plan is tested. Where a Neighbourhood Plan is brought forward before an up-to-date Local Plan is in place the Parish Council and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, the emerging Local Plan and the adopted development plan, with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance. The Local Planning Authority should take a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with a Parish Council particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues to ensure the draft Neighbourhood Plan has the greatest chance of success at the independent examination.
PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Neighbourhood planning comes with certain rules. Two of the key requirements of a Neighbourhood Plan are for it to have regard to national policy and guidance and for it to be in general conformity the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The latter does not require absolute conformity but it should adhere to the direction of the policies of the Local Plan and to support their implementation.

3.2 The key policies, at this stage, that will likely frame the development of the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Plan are set out below:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - March 2012

3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies and priorities. It is the overarching policy document that guides plan making. As a statutory part of the development plan (i.e. a set of policies that will be used to determine planning applications) neighbourhood plans need to accord with the policies within the framework.

3.4 As an overview, Paragraphs 183 to 185 of the NPPF set the context for Neighbourhood Plans:

183. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes and neighbourhood forums can use neighbourhood planning to:

- set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications; and
- grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.

184. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

185. Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-Strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation.
3.5 When developing policies, the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Plan must take the following paragraphs of the NPPF into account in particular. Wherever possible, the plan should:

**Paragraph 14:** Support the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that they should plan positively to help meet the development needs of their area. The presumption means that development proposals that accord with the development plan, that will include any adopted neighbourhood plans, should be approved without delay.

**Paragraph 16:** Support strategic development needs set out in the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (part of the collective current 'Development Plan' for the Borough) and plan positively to support local development.

**Paragraph 16:** Where relevant, identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable developments that are consistent with the neighbourhood plan to proceed.

**Paragraph 17:** Make every effort to objectively identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of the area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.

**Section 1:** Help build a strong, competitive economy through supporting the provision of jobs and existing employment whilst delivering the infrastructure needed to allow the area to prosper.

**Section 3:** Support a prosperous rural economy by taking a positive approach to sustainable development including the expansion of existing businesses, opportunities for rural diversification, the promotion of rural tourism where appropriate and the retention and development of local service and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

**Paragraph 37:** Promote sustainable transport by helping to minimise journey lengths.

**Section 6:** Boost the supply of housing and help deliver a wide choice of high quality homes. This will primarily involve ensuring that the plan supports the housing objectives set out in the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan and helps facilitate the minimum level of development required within the Parish with regards to housing delivery, whilst also seeking to identify and meet locally specific needs within this overall figure.

**Paragraph 58:** Develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected in the area. Such policies should reference the character of the local area as well as any constraints that exist in relation to the development of specific sites.

**Paragraph 70:** Promote healthy communities by planning positively for the provision and use of shared space and community facilities and guard against the loss of valued community facilities and services.

**Paragraphs 73-75:** Seek to both manage and protect existing important open space and rights of way.
Consider the protection of locally important areas of open space as Local Green Space.

Section 10: Meet the challenge of climate change and flooding through the provision of policies that don’t exacerbate existing environmental issues, take account of environmental constraints (such as flood plains) and promote environmentally friendly development.

Section 11: Help contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity, ecological designations, the character of valued landscapes and seeking net gains in biodiversity.

Section 12: Help conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Paragraph 173: Support the delivery of the Local Plan by ensuring that any new policies continue to ensure that development is not only sustainable but also viable and deliverable. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.

The plan must demonstrate that it has taken account of the policies set out above. Other policies within the NPPF may become applicable as and when the objectives of the plan are finalised.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

On 6 March 2014 the Government launched their online planning resource known as the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). This replaced a number of older guidance notes and complements the NPPF.

The new NPPG is not intended to provide further policy, but instead is meant to help clarify issues relevant to the planning regime. It does comprise guidance that should be referred to when translating the intentions of the NPPF. The NPPG provides guidance around plan making, decision taking and the consideration of planning for sustainable development amongst other matters.

The key provisions of the NPPG, with regard to the scope of Neighbourhood Plans, are as follows:

Paragraph 040: Neighbourhood Plans must be developed with the support of proportionate but robust evidence that directly explains the policies of the plan and their intention. Where available, Plans can call upon existing published evidence held by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

Paragraph 041: Neighbourhood Plan policies should be clear and unambiguous. They should lead to certainty and consistency in decision making.

Paragraph 042: Neighbourhood Plans have the power to allocate sites for development. The NPPG recommends that, in advance of this, qualifying bodies should undertake an appraisal of options and sites against clearly identified criteria.
Paragraphs 043 and 044: In the event that both a qualifying body and LPA are seeking to allocate sites in their respective plans, it is important that both parties work closely together to identify a strategy that achieves the best mutual outcome. Neighbourhood Plans can allocate different sites to those already identified in the development plan although this process must be accompanied by very robust evidence that these decisions are justified and will not impact on the strategic objectives of the area.

Paragraph 045: A Neighbourhood Plan may want to consider the provision of infrastructure if there is a specific requirement to do so in support of locally planned development.

3.10 The NPPG includes additional guidance setting out the relationship of Neighbourhood Plans with sustainability appraisal and the processes that they must adhere to. It also provides a wider suite of guidance explaining the plan making process and their required conformity with the basic conditions tests. Other paragraphs of the NPPG may also be of relevance (such as around environmental protection, employment land supply, retail etc) depending on the scope of the plan.

The Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (CSRIP) - April 2008

3.11 In addition, neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted local plan. At the present moment in time they are contained within the CSRIP, adopted in April 2008.

3.12 Currently, considering the likely aspirations of the village and its role in the settlement hierarchy of the Borough, it is considered that the key up-to-date strategic policies applicable to the plan are as follows:

3.13 Policy CP7 accords with the guidance of the NPPF in that it seeks to ensure development meets the needs of all sectors of the community. In the event that new housing is planned for in Thurleigh, an appropriate mix will be expected.
Policy CP8 clearly sets out an expectation that any sites to be allocated in Thurleigh of 3 dwellings or more would have to provide for 30% affordable housing on site. It had been envisaged that this figure would provide a starting point for discussions – the plan may seek to recommend a different outcome if greater or lesser levels of affordable housing are required locally.

The Government has, however, sought to make changes to National Planning Policy Guidance following consultation in 2014 on a range of proposals aimed at reducing the burden of developer contributions on small-scale developers, custom and self-builders with the aim of increasing housing supply. This included changes to affordable housing contributions in rural areas. The Government subsequently set out its response to the consultation and sought to amend National Planning Policy Guidance effective from 1 December 2014.

The changes envisaged in relation to affordable housing included:

- A national policy threshold beneath which affordable housing contributions should not be sought of ten-units or less (and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1,000 square metres). This is also to be applied to residential extensions and annexes.

- For designated rural areas under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985, which includes national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty, authorities may choose to implement a lower threshold of 5-units or less, beneath which affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought. Payment of affordable housing and tariff style contributions on developments of between six to ten units should also be sought as a cash payment only and be commuted until after completion of units within the development. This will not apply in Bedford Borough as there is no such designated status.

- Rural exception sites would be exempted from the affordable housing threshold introduced which, subject to the local area demonstrating sufficient need, remain available to support the delivery of affordable homes for local people.

In relation to the impact on existing Bedford Borough Council policy, the 10 dwelling threshold could over-ride Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan if eventually adopted but, in response to a challenge, the High Court has concluded that the approach is incompatible with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Council currently seeks 30% affordable housing on proposals of 3 or more dwellings in villages with a population of less than 3,000. On these small sites affordable housing policy is normally met by making a contribution rather than provision of dwellings as Affordable Housing Providers are reluctant to manage isolated properties.

If the Government proceeds with and succeeds at appeal, the Council would no longer be able to seek affordable housing on sites of between 3 and 10 units unless the total floor space of the units combined is more than 1000 square metres. (Note: the average size of a dwelling in the Borough is 90 square metres but in the rural villages, where the policy applies, dwellings are usually considerably larger and the floor space cap may be exceeded for developments of less than 10 dwellings).

The changes, if eventually approved, would mean that a developer wishing to build up to 10 dwellings in one of the Borough’s smaller villages would only have to contribute towards affordable housing if the floor space cap of 1000 square metres was exceeded. Whilst this might encourage some builders to build smaller homes, the premium has always been in relation to larger dwellings in the rural areas and it is likely that builders would continue to propose a smaller number of larger houses.
3.20 The current policy of Bedford Borough Council is to base affordable housing requirements on the net increase in dwellings where a development involves demolition of a dwelling which has been occupied in the last 12 months. This approach would continue to be applied.

**POLICY CP10 - THE CREATION OF JOBS**
A minimum of 16,000 net additional jobs will be provided in the borough by 2021. Provision for new jobs will be made in accordance with policies CP3 and CP14 to support and/or create sustainable communities.
This policy also applies outside the Growth Area.

3.21 The job target for the Borough is set out in Policy CP10. Whilst the total set out in Policy CP10 is Borough wide and strategic in nature, the key message to Thurleigh is that job creation should be supported in the Parish where viable and necessary.

**POLICY CP11 - EMPLOYMENT LAND**
Up to 75 hectares of additional employment land will be provided in the period 2001-2021. In such allocations the emphasis will be on creating new B1 environments providing a range of quality development opportunities to encourage the development of high value knowledge-based industries and smaller units in both urban and rural areas.
The Council will allocate sites specific to the B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes to achieve a mix and range of sites and a balanced economy.
The preferred location for strategic employment sites will be the Growth Area in accordance with CP5.
Land allocated for employment and existing employment sites will only be considered for alternative uses where its retention is unnecessary and specific community and environmental benefits can be demonstrated and achieved.
This policy also applies outside the Growth Area.

3.22 Similarly to Policy CP10, Policy CP11 operates at a strategic level and deals with the Borough wide management of employment land. The neighbourhood plan should, however, be aware of its potential role in managing any employment land that falls within the Parish boundary.

**POLICY CP12 - SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS**
Settlement Policy Areas are defined for villages with a built-up character. The Settlement Policy Area boundary encloses the main built-up part of the village but excludes undeveloped areas or more loosely knit development.
This policy also applies in the Growth Area.
In line with Policy CP12, Thurleigh currently has a Settlement Policy Area. It is illustrated on the map below:

MAP 1 - THURLEIGH SETTLEMENT POLICY AREA
Policies CP13 and CP14 seek to manage the delivery of development in the rural area, using the defined Settlement Policy Area as a tool to control growth. It should be noted that, since Policy CP13 was drafted, the national policy contained in PPS7 has since been replaced by the NPPF. Similarly, however, the NPPF provides policy on the appropriate types of development that can be planned for in the open countryside. Policy CP14 complements this guidance by confirming the types of development that should sustainably be planned for in rural settlements that are not Key Service Centres, such as Thurleigh. Generally, both Policies CP13 and CP14, along with the NPPF, seek to ensure that communities can identify and meet local development needs through the use of neighbourhood plans.

Policy CP16 sets a strategic target for the rural area of 1,300 dwellings by 2021. Bedford Borough's monitoring indicates that this target was actually met by September 2012. Whilst technically there is no outstanding strategic housing requirement in the rural area under the policies of the adopted CSRIP it is an expectation of the NPPF that ‘sustainable’ development will continue to come forward. It should also be anticipated that the next iteration of Bedford Borough’s local plan will ‘reset’ the rural target necessitating the delivery of additional housing in the rural area up until 2032. What this does mean for Thurleigh, in the interim, is that the prerogative of the Parish should be to plan for the level of development required to help meet local needs (in line with Policy CP14 and the NPPF).
Specifically, Policy CP18 seeks to prevent the material loss of rural shops, services and community facilities – demolition, change of use, etc. More broadly, it is considered that the policy lends support to other initiatives that may seek to bolster the viability and levels of use of existing facilities and the introduction of additional services and infrastructure.

Green space and green infrastructure plays a key part in the retention of the character of rural settlements, such as Thurleigh. Policy CP22 seeks to ensure that both the retention and enhancement of local green space and green infrastructure is a foremost consideration if and when new development is planned for in the village.

There is also a further policy included in the recently adopted Allocations and Designations Local Plan (July 2013) of relevance to Thurleigh. New policy AD40 replaces old policy H25 of the Local Plan 2002 with regard to the management of important open space in the village.
Reference has been made (at 3.5 above, paragraphs 76-78) to the introduction by the NPPF of a new form of special protection for green areas; this is in addition and is a different designation to the existing urban open spaces and village open spaces contained in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013. The Local Green Space designation is more restrictive and the NPPF states that Local Green Spaces can only be designated when a plan (Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan) is prepared or reviewed and must be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. As the Borough Council is currently preparing its Local Plan for the period to 2032, Parish Councils have been invited to consider designating land in its area as a Local Green Space for inclusion in the Local Plan 2032. The criteria for designating a Local Green Space are as follows:

- Where green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and it holds a particular significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

The NPPF states that Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open spaces. There is no criterion to guide or restrict the location of the Local Green Space but the NPPF states that it is to be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves. This would normally be within easy walking distance which other planning policies suggest would be around 300 metres.

The CSRIP and Allocations and Designations Local Plan include additional policies that in time may be of relevance to Thurleigh depending on the scope of the plan. Additionally, it should be noted that Bedford Borough are currently in the process of reviewing their planning policies with a view to producing the new Bedford Borough Local Plan 2032. Whilst this replacement plan is at a very early stage, and there is no clear policy direction, it is not possible to provide clarity on what implications the new plan may have for Thurleigh. As a matter of best practice it is the intention of the Parish Council to work closely with Borough officers as both their and our own plans ‘emerge’ to ensure that they complement each other for the period up until 2032.
4.1 Neighbourhood Plans are intended to be developed by local communities, for local communities and it is, therefore, essential to find out what the community thinks about the local area as a pre-requisite to the production of a successful neighbourhood plan. In developing the Neighbourhood Development Plan, Thurleigh Parish Council has sought to engage with the local community to ensure that a Neighbourhood Plan is in tune with local needs and aspirations and the feedback has helped shape emerging policies and proposals.

4.2 It has been recognised that, without the benefit of local knowledge, key issues may be missed, or worse, proposals could be developed that are at odds with local needs or priorities, leading to conflict and delay in getting the Plan adopted. Thurleigh Parish Council has, therefore, used front-loaded consultation to find out what the local community thinks and identifies as important local issues and opportunities.

4.3 A "Launch Event" to promote local awareness about the Neighbourhood Plan was held on 1 December 2014 at Thurleigh Village Hall and was well attended. This represented the beginning of the neighbourhood planning process and the consultation event was organised with the aim of achieving an event that was open and accessible to all members of the local community. The launch consultation event provided details of what a Neighbourhood Plan is and the stages and timeline to take the initiative forward. Key questions were posed, such as:

- What do we need to retain a viable community in Thurleigh?
- What do we need to make Thurleigh an even better place to live?
- What do we value and what do we want to preserve?
- What is Thurleigh missing?
- What do you think should be changed or improved?

A total of 102 people attended the launch event and the process helped gather a large amount of useful information. A full summary of the comments received is reproduced at Appendix A. The exhibition material has continued to be available to the community on an established web-site, www.thurleighndp.com.

4.4 The key issues arising from the Launch event were as follows:

**Housing**

- There is a need for more affordable housing in the village which means for both young people and the elderly. This was very much aimed at existing residents rather than attracting incomers.
- Suggestions as to location included: demolishing the flats in The Close and building bungalows, developing the Officers' Mess site, Hayle Field and Church field. As well as providing (affordable) accommodation for existing residents, there was also an acknowledgement that increasing the housing stock would help retain existing facilities (e.g. the pub) and perhaps attract further facilities.
- Many respondents were keen on a small shop being available in the centre of the village.
• Coupled with the development of housing is the need to ensure sufficient/additional parking; this is a real issue in The Close and Keysoe Road.

Traffic

• Many concerns about the village being used as a thoroughfare for much traffic, both East-West and as an alternative to the A6.
• General feeling that there is a need for speed reduction schemes that might include average speed cameras, traffic calming (especially around school/Village Hall High Street area) and further speed limits.

Broadband

• A very high number of respondents would welcome the introduction of high-speed broadband to the village, perhaps with a central facility where people might access it if unable to access through home.

Young People

• There was a general feeling that there is a need for more opportunities/facilities for young people within the village.

Sense of Community

• Many respondents highlighted the need for a greater sense of community, which could include developing more community facilities, better use of Village Hall for activities, develop Community Garden/allotments.
• Retaining the school is a key part of developing the community and perhaps utilising its facilities.
• Look at the skills that residents can offer.

Access

• Maintain safe footpaths and provide additional access e.g. footpath from village to Cross End. Coupled with this, the need for additional public transport.

Heritage

• Make better use of the Church, perhaps illuminate it as a feature.
• Open up access to Bury Hill. Protect trees.

Environment

• Plant more trees.
• Have more pride in the village.
• Promote footpaths and bridleways and consider wildlife area.
• Maintain the rural nature of the village.

4.5 Further consultation, via a Neighbourhood Questionnaire, was undertaken during June and July 2015 and a full summary of comments received from this process is provided in Appendix B. This traditional form of questionnaire has enabled statistics to be produced and ideas for options, policies and proposals to be gleaned.
There were 173 questionnaires completed either online or as hard copies (representing a 38% return rate based upon the number of questionnaires issued and 57% based upon the number of properties in the village). 99.4% had Thurleigh as their main residence. The majority responded as follows:

**Housing:**

- Support for small scale development with over 45% indicating a priority for more than 20 new dwellings, and the highest number (representing 20% of respondents) indicating a preference for over 30 new dwellings. This was in addition to the local need for 11 homes that had been ascertained from a recent Housing Needs Survey;
- The respondents felt that new housing development should comprise a mix of dwellings, with the majority supporting a mix of 3 or more bedroom detached housing, 2/3 bedroom semi-detached or terraced housing and the provision of bungalows.
- The respondents felt strongly that flats/apartments and three storey housing should not be provided as part of new developments;
- There was a very good level of support for retirement housing and affordable homes for sale or rent, with over 73% supporting the allocation of a rural exception site to make provision for locally established housing needs as part of new provision in the village;
- In terms of location, there was a very good level of support for sites numbered 274 and 276 on Map 2 in the report (below), with over 46% agreeing or strongly agreeing with new development at site 274 and over 68% agreeing or strongly agreeing with new development at site 276;
- There was robust feedback from the survey for low density development (less than 20 dwellings per hectare) and an emphasis for a few medium sized (62.4% of respondents) or several small development (63.3% of respondents). The support for individual plots, including gardens of existing houses, was less obvious.

**Infrastructure:**

- Key concerns were local road congestion, the provision of safe cycle routes, safe walks to school, the speed of traffic, footpath provision, footpath standards, HGV traffic, through traffic and parking in the village.
- There were, however, no constructive solutions to improved parking in the village and, in particular, the concerns in The Close and Keysoe Road.
- In respect of measures to control speed, there is considerable support for traffic calming measures, and reduced speed limits and a weight limit for the High Street was suggested.
- Narrow footpaths were also identified and a good level of support for more designated footpaths.
- A specific concern was the level of inconsiderate parking in the High Street, particularly associated with school drop off and collections.

**Green Spaces:**

- Protecting existing open space was strongly emphasised by respondents, with over 90% regarding this to be important or very important. In relation to the six areas of designated Open Space, the support for the protection of these spaces was overwhelming.
• There is a good level of demand for the provision of allotments and, as such, the potential scope to allocate land in the village to encourage the use of allotments could be considered.
• Over 88% emphasised the importance of maintaining ground water quality.
• Almost 80% regarded reducing the risk of flooding as important or very important.
• Reducing the carbon footprint was important to over 70% of respondents.
• Maintaining air quality was important to 88% of respondents.
• Over 91% considered good housing design and improving road safety to be important when considering the local environment.
• There was a very good level of support for improvements to surface water drainage, sewerage systems and gas provision and over 60% of respondents regarded improvements to recycling provision to be essential.
• There was a reasonable level of concern for air pollution and noise pollution in and around the village and, to a lesser extent, light pollution.
• Almost 70% supported improved landscaping of public areas.
• 51% of respondents supported the provision of more formal or informal green spaces.
• The provision of picnic area was supported by 37.6% of respondents.
• Additional or improved play areas for children was supported by over 56% of respondents.
• Dog fouling was identified as an area that needed attention with over 77% concerned or very concerned at the issue in and around the village).
• The maintenance of footpaths and bridleways was identified by some as a concern.
• Litter was a significant concern, with over 74% responding about the issue.
• There was some concern at the level of crime in and around the village.

Recreation, Sporting and Community Facilities:

• There was considerable support for improved "high-speed" broadband provision in the village (with almost 94% of respondents regarding this important or very important).
• Bus service, mobile post office and playing fields was important or very important to over 90% of respondents.
• The public house, village hall, mobile library, play area and church all recorded over 80% in terms of importance to the community.
• The consultation also identified the aspiration for additional or improved facilities as a consequence of small scale new development, such as play areas for children (with support from 56.4% of respondents), a communal broadband facility (58.5% of respondents), improved mobile telephone network (78.7% of respondents), provision of a local/community shop (86.4% respondents), more recreational or sporting facilities (48.7% of respondents) and provision of an outdoor exercise/gym equipment (34.6% of respondents).
• There was a also a high level of support for an improved local bus service, medical provision and dental care facility.
• The strength of "community" in the village scored highly (with over 40% of respondents considering that it is excellent or good, 40.9% average and only 16.2% poor or very poor).
• The importance of village identity, community spirit and feeling part of the community was regarded as important to many, as did Thurleigh being a quiet village, its rural atmosphere, the peaceful and safe neighbourhood and existing local services.
• There is a good level of desire for improvements to these services, such as better public transport and a Village shop if more houses were built.

Business and Employment

• The response was not convincing in terms of the need for more employment land allocations in addition to the existing Thurleigh Business Park, with only 25.9% of respondents providing positive feedback.
• Feedback did, however, emphasise the importance of the Airfield site in meeting the need for employment land allocations.
• There was little prospect of new business start from the local community, with only 4% of respondents indicating the possibility of starting their own business.
• There was a good level of support for the provision of specific types of business including of service trades, pub, cafes and restaurants, agricultural/food production, tourism and leisure, office based business (such as consultancies), retail and small scale industrial (manufacturing, skilled artisan etc).
• Several remarked strongly that there should not be a new recycling/composting/incinerator facility in the area.
• Only 8.8% agreed or strongly agreed that there should be no new employment provision.
• The feedback to the consultation did identify some concerns in making new employment land allocations in Thurleigh. Adequate parking, traffic impact (including HGV's), noise, hours of operation, scale of development and type of business were identified as significant concerns.
• The need for faster reliable broadband speed was regularly identified as an issue to address.

Young People:

• Over 70% consider that the School and Pre-School are adequate/very adequate.
• Almost 65% consider that sports facilities are adequate/very adequate.
• 70% of respondents consider that children's play areas are adequate/very adequate.
• Only 43% of respondents considered facilities for teenagers to be adequate or very adequate, whilst 38% felt that they were limited or not adequate.
• 57.2% supported additional or improved child care/nursery facilities (5.9% of respondents did not).
• 53.9% supported additional or improved recreational/sporting facilities for the youth (4.5% did not).
• 48.3% supported additional or improved facilities for teenagers (5.3% of respondents did not).
• 68% supported additional or improved play areas for children (5.9% did not).
• 42.8% supported the provision of a youth centre (13.8% did not).
• There was other suggestions made (including provision of a cycle or skate park, tennis courts and bowls provision) and a recognition of the benefits of social interaction. There was also recognition that, for example, facilities had closed due to lack of interest (e.g. a previous youth club) and that sometimes facilities rely on volunteers or need to be supervised.
• There was also a view that the play area did not cater for all age ranges.
Local Distinctiveness:

- Protecting, managing and enhancing nature conservation (biodiversity, flora and fauna) with 92.7% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Maintaining existing views/vistas, with over 90% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Protecting local wildlife and habitats with 97% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Maintaining rights of way for the benefit of local people and visitors with 91.5% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Preserving hedgerows and trees from further loss with 93.4% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Protecting the "Village Garden" with 82.9% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- There were high levels of support for additional or improved facilities, including planting of trees/orchards (with 84.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing), recreating wildlife meadows (with 79.2% support), improving footways and bridleways (88.4% support), provision of new footpaths e.g. Village to Cross End (with 86.1% support), developing a series of Parish Walks promoting less well routes and features of local interest (with 80.5% support) and enhancing signage and environmental improvements to increase accessibility to the landscape (with 72.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this proposal).

Heritage Assets:

- There was a mixed reaction to the idea of feature lighting the Church with over 50% supporting the proposal, about 19% disagreeing with the proposal and almost 25% remaining neutral on the issue.
- The Church featured a few times in terms of ideas to exploit heritage assets, with feedback suggesting that more events should be held and publicised to attract people (such as afternoon teas and jumble sales).
- The support for providing access to Bury Hill Castle Mound was significant with over 75% of respondents to the survey supporting the proposal.
- Other feedback suggested that Bury Hill should be cleared to provide access and that an information board should be provided for visitors to Bury Hill.
- At a more general level, heritage trail leaflets were suggested, together with a website showing buildings of interest.

4.7 A further exhibition was held on 25 May 2016 to enable the further sites that had been put forward by landowners, as part of the further consultation by the Borough Council, to be displayed and to obtain views on these sites from the community. This was necessary as the original feedback had been based upon the original submission of only 2 sites put forward for residential development, recognising that the further consultation by the Borough Council had prompted a further 9 submissions in respect of Thurleigh, including a proposed sustainable new settlement of up to 5,250 homes on the Thurleigh Airfield Business Park.

4.8 Data was collated based upon a supplementary questionnaire that was issued and the results, based upon 35 responses, provided no real consensus in terms of the level of growth for the village and the best location for growth.
4.9 The key feedback can be summarised as follows:

- There was about equal support for the original feedback in terms of the level of growth (approximately 40 new dwellings during the Local Plan period) and broadly an equal number supporting a greater level of growth and, alternatively, a preferred lesser level of growth. In terms of the original feedback, most respondents were neutral on the matter.

- There was concern that high density development should be avoided and, furthermore, that sufficient off road parking was paramount. There was concern at the impact of development on the existing infrastructure.

- There was a view that development should be within or close to the current village envelope, with some recognition that sites on the immediate edge of the village could have less impact. Several references were made to Site 276 (Hayle Field) in this regard; although indicative proposals for 90 dwellings on this site were not, however, supported. Some similar comments were also made in respect of other sites adjacent to The High Street.

- There was a high level of resistance to all of the proposed development sites, although the Land adjacent to the Village Hall, on Church land (site 402) received the highest level of positive responses and the originally submitted sites (referenced 274 and 275) received a reasonable level of support, as did the "Officers Mess" site (referenced 629) and the former Thurleigh Farm Centre (site referenced 688).

- There was a mixed reaction to the potential new settlement at the Thurleigh Airfield with 48% of respondents (16 out of 33) strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with development in this location and only 18% agreeing or strongly agreeing with such a proposal.

4.10 The responses to the consultation exercises have been used to help review and shape the draft vision and overarching objectives, together with the content of the Issues and Options consultation document. It has provided a good level of data which has been invaluable in establishing priorities, identifying problems and generating ideas. Issues and options in relation to each of the key objectives are considered more fully in sections 6 to 13 of the report.
5

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 Thurleigh is a special place with a distinctive landscape; it stands on a 250ft high plateau, said to be the largest in England, and consists of about 3,400 acres of clay soil. About 750 people live in the village, in about 300 dwellings in a village that is spread across 5 ends - Church End, Cross End, Scald End, Backnoe End and Park End, and this covers an area of about 6 square miles. Community life continues to thrive, with regular events held at the Village Hall, the Church and the Playing Field Club. The small village has lots of character, traditional buildings, good local facilities and it is surrounded by working farms and beautiful countryside. There are about 30 miles of footpaths and bridleways within the Parish.

5.2 It is essential that the special characteristics of the village are protected and enhanced and, in recognition of this, the following Vision Statement has been proposed for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan:

“We passionately believe that Thurleigh is a special, quiet village with a real sense of community. Any future development should, therefore, be sustainable and sensitive, respecting the character of our Village and protecting its beauty, vitality and the natural environment. Thurleigh must retain its distinctive characteristics and continue to grow as a strong, thriving and vibrant place in which to live, work and visit”.

5.3 In determining this overall Vision for Thurleigh, the Steering Group had regard to its administrative history and the character of the area. Thurleigh is an ancient parish, about 6 miles north of Bedford. The land is undulating boulder clay, ranging in height from 200 ft. to 275 ft. above sea level. A stream runs through the Parish to the south forming a valley which cuts through to the underlying Oxford Clay. The countryside around is in the main used for arable farming. A former airfield (known as RAF Thurleigh), to the north of the village, now accommodates Thurleigh Business Park and the runway is used for the storage of new cars. Part of the site is used by Bedford Autodrome, a corporate hospitality centre. This includes Thurleigh Museum which is dedicated primarily to the airfield and life in the area during World War 2 (WW2). Other major employers include Jackson Demolition, Monster Events, Star Hire and a number of agricultural businesses. There are only minor roads in the parish, though the A6 and B660 are just a few miles away. These roads are, however, used as a rat run throughout the day.

5.4 The village is relatively small, but has significant historic context and comprises a number of key landmarks. Excavations have shown evidence that the locality was occupied in the Iron-Age, Roman and Saxon periods. The Parish Church of Saint Peter is a grade II listed building, dating from approximately 1130, with 14th and 15th-century additions and restored in the 1880s. Other listed buildings include a windmill tower, built c.1890, and dwellings dating mainly from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The Baptist Chapel was built in 1888 on the same site as an earlier building. Thurleigh Castle was a medieval timber, motte-and-bailey, castle, but only earthworks survive today. A WW2 USA Memorial stands in the village in remembrance of those based at the former RAF Thurleigh, and there is a War Memorial near the Church exists to the men in the village that gave their lives in two world wars. Part of the village is a Conservation Area.
5.5 There is a real commitment to ensure that excellent local facilities and services are available to ensure a high quality of life for both current and future residents. Thurleigh Lower School and Pre-School offers excellent provision for the village’s children and there is a continued need to ensure their safety, well-being, education and enjoyment. Thurleigh Lower School and Pre-School takes children aged between 2½ and 9 years old, and Breakfast Club and After-School extends the hours of care for the children of working parents. Older children are served by Margaret Beaufort Middle School in Riseley and Sharnbrook Upper School.

5.6 The Launch Event, held on 1 December 2014, invited comments on the draft Vision, proposed objectives, together with a range of supporting actions to help develop the Neighbourhood Plan. A summary of the comments received at the event is reproduced at Appendix A. Reflecting on the feedback received, the Steering Group propose to adopt the Vision outlined at 5.2 above and endorse the commitment to maintain Thurleigh's distinctive and special characteristics.

5.7 The draft objectives that have been subject to consultation are in relation to the following eight topic areas:

- Housing
- Infrastructure Needs
- Green Spaces
- Village Facilities
- Business & Employment
- Young People
- Local Distinctiveness
- Heritage Assets

5.8 A total of 102 people attended the launch event and a total of 173 Neighbourhood Questionnaires returned. The results are summarised at Appendices A and B respectively. Whilst there is general support for the overarching objectives, a number of issues have been raised that have been used to determine options that are now subject to consultation and will help shape the content of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Issues and Options in relation to each of the key objectives are considered in the following sections of the report.
6
HOUSING

6.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to housing:

**OBJECTIVE 1 – DELIVERING HOUSING WHICH BOTH SUSTAINS THE CURRENT AND MEETS THE FUTURE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY**

6.2 The Steering Group recognised the need to undertake an assessment of local needs to pinpoint the type and amount of new housing that would help meet the current and future demands of the Parish. There was a recognition that new development needed to be tailored to the needs and context of the rural area and that an increase in population could help support and sustain local services and facilities, but growth must be realistic. There was an expectation that any development would be constrained to a few key areas and would be of a scale to ensure that the housing and infrastructure needs of the village could be met. There is a need to ensure sensitive development which protects and enriches the landscape and village setting, with the design and choice of building materials being sympathetic to the existing buildings. Any new development would, therefore, be small in scale, in keeping with the character of the village, and would be sensitively located. This would also protect any desirable open spaces from being built on.

Local Issues

6.3 Bedford Borough Council has commenced the preparation of a Local Plan that will set out how much growth there should be in the borough in coming years (housing, jobs and associated infrastructure) and where it should take place. As part of this process, the Borough Council invited details of possible development sites, known as a ‘call for sites’ and, in response to this, a number of sites in Thurleigh have been submitted for consideration. Not all the land that is submitted via this process is suitable for development and a technical assessment of each site is required.

6.4 This section identifies the issues that have been identified to date, based on consultation and evidence gathering, and sets out various options to address them.
6.5 The location of sites in Thurleigh that have been submitted to Bedford Borough Council in response to the 'call for sites' are identified on the map below:

MAP 2 - SITES SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO CALL FOR SITES PROCESS
6.6 Map 2 above identifies the submissions to the original "call for sites" process back in 2014, together with the additional call for sites submissions received in Autumn 2015. To help distinguish which are new sites, the sites received during the call for sites exercise in 2015 are numbered 400 onwards. There is a need to assess all of these sites in the context of housing need to enable the most appropriate sites to be selected for inclusion in the draft 2035 Local Plan for submission.

6.7 As expected, the community response to the objective "Housing" generated significant feedback. The response to the initial Launch consultation was generally positive and is summarised at Appendix A. Key issues raised include:

- There was support for housing development but an overriding consideration was the need to ensure that the village retained its character and rural nature.
- There was some support for more affordable housing in the village, for both young people and the elderly. This was aimed at existing residents, as opposed to attracting incomers although any development should be based on need.
- Some suggestions were made in terms of the potential location for development; demolishing the flats in The Close and building bungalows, developing the Officers’ Mess site, Hayle Field and Church field were identified as possible sites.
- As well as providing (affordable) accommodation for existing residents, there was also an acknowledgement that increasing the housing stock would help retain existing facilities and perhaps attract further facilities.
- Coupled with the development of housing in the village was the need to ensure the provision of sufficient/additional parking. This is a particular issue in The Close and Keysoe Road.

6.8 Further evidence gained by analysis of the Neighbourhood Questionnaire responses, summarised at Appendix B, identifies support for small scale development with over 45% indicating a priority for more than 20 new dwellings, and the highest number (representing 20% of respondents) indicating a preference for over 30 new dwellings. This was in addition to the local need for 11 homes that had been ascertained from a recent Housing Needs Survey that had been undertaken. The respondents felt that new housing development should comprise a mix of dwellings, with the majority supporting a mix of 3 or more bedroom detached housing, 2/3 bedroom semi-detached or terraced housing and the provision of bungalows. The respondents felt strongly that flats/apartments and three storey housing should not be provided as part of new developments. There was a very good level of support for retirement housing and affordable homes for sale or rent, with over 73% supporting the allocation of a rural exception site to make provision for locally established housing needs as part of new provision in the village.

6.9 In terms of location, there was a very good level of support for sites that were originally submitted in 2014 and these are numbered 274 and 276 on Map 2 above, with over 46% agreeing or strongly agreeing with new development at site 274 and over 68% agreeing or strongly agreeing with new development at site 276. Access constraints were identified that would render development at site 274 as small scale “infill” development, with a more significant allocation at site 276 preferred for sensitive, mixed use development. There was robust feedback from the survey for low density development (less than 20 dwellings per hectare) and an emphasis for a few medium sized developments (62.4% of respondents) or several small developments (63.3% of respondents). The support for individual plots, including gardens of existing houses, was less obvious.
6.10 Land adjacent to the Village Hall, on Church land, had been identified by several respondents for development and this land has now been submitted as part of the Borough Council’s further consultation (identified as site numbers 402 and 461, offering differing accesses and density of development - with up to 15 or 36 dwellings on each site respectively). It has the potential to improve access and capacity for the highly valued school and improved parking capacity for the Village Hall. It occupies a good, central village location close to local amenities and, as such, has the potential for small scale development. The “Officers Mess” site (site 629) has also been identified for a sensitive housing development, with 66.1% support (80 in number) for such development. There is a view that this site would be suitable for homes for the elderly, although its location and remote proximity to services is an issue.

6.11 Having regard to the feedback from the consultation and the evidence gathered to date, the Steering Group considers that the emphasis should be towards:

- resisting major growth due to the impact on local infrastructure.
- restricting development to that required to meet local need and to maintain the viability of the local community, including provision for young people to remain in the village (regarded as important by over 74% of respondents).
- accommodating approximately 40 new dwellings on suitable, available land, to enable tangible community benefits to be derived, with a preference for low density, small or medium size, developments.
- protecting and enhancing open spaces, and protecting the entrances and exits to and from Thurleigh.
- balancing and managing new infill development to protect character and amenity, whilst enabling flexibility to meet needs through acceptable extensions in line with existing planning policies, renewable energy, etc.

6.12 This enabled the Steering Group to establish the following "guiding principles" to help decide WHAT should be built within the Neighbourhood Plan area, WHERE it should be built and HOW it should be achieved:

- Further development should not damage environmental and heritage features that give Thurleigh its special character; housing development should respect the existing character of the village.
- Regard should be given to the continued protection of an urban boundary, currently defined by the existing Settlement Policy Area (SPA) boundary, and permitting development to support the aspired growth on land which represents a limited natural extension to the existing built up area (where there would be merits to the overall sustainability of the village from doing so).
- A range of well-designed property types and sizes should be provided including affordable housing and housing for younger and older people, so as to promote a balanced housing market.
- To require new housing to contribute to well designed, high quality living environments and neighbourhoods and maintain local distinctiveness. Compliance with good highway access, car parking space, amenity space, energy efficiency, height, massing and external finish standards is paramount.
- Housing development must be linked to sufficient capacity/investment in local services and infrastructure.
**Issue 6.1: Determining Housing Need and Demand**

6.13 Baseline household information was obtained from the 2011 census and is summarised at Appendix C.

6.14 A Housing Needs Survey (HNS), undertaken by the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), has provided some valuable information to inform the process. The survey has sought to identify the housing needs of local people over the next 20 years, and aimed to assess the need of local people for either affordable housing or market housing in Thurleigh. The full report is available at www.thurleighndp.com. The key outcomes of the HNS is summarised at Appendix D and reported below.

6.15 In relation to Thurleigh, the key findings from the HNS (based upon statistics reported in Appendix C) are as follows:

**Population and Demographics:** There has been some ageing of the population of Thurleigh over the last 10 years, with the proportion aged 65+ increasing by around a third and the proportion under 16 decreasing by around a sixth. However, the general demographic is not far off the Bedford Borough average. The HNS has identified that 7 households are seeking to downsize, with a number of households seeking to move out of the family home and/or get on the housing ladder.

**Household Composition:** The number of families with dependent children is above the Borough average, possibly indicating relatively high levels of children still living with their parents.

**Housing Tenure:** Thurleigh has slightly higher levels of owner occupation (around the 70% mark) than the Bedford Borough average, and lower levels of private renting. It has one of the highest levels of social renting of all rural parishes in the Borough, the same as the Borough average.

**Dwelling Types:** As with many Bedfordshire villages, there are relatively more detached houses, and relatively fewer flats, terraced and semi-detached houses, in Thurleigh. This is likely to mean that there are relatively fewer affordable properties on the market.

**Housing in Poor Condition:** Overcrowding counts as a housing need for households applying for affordable housing through the Choice Based Lettings scheme. In 2011 the proportion of households in Thurleigh classified as overcrowded was much lower than the Bedford Borough average. Where central heating is not present, fuel poverty is statistically significantly more likely. The level of households in Thurleigh without central heating is well over the Bedford Borough average, however the level of fuel poverty is under the Borough average.

**People on Low Incomes:** 7.1% of people in Thurleigh are classified as “experiencing income deprivation”, well under the Bedford Borough average of 12.1%. 7.8% of working age people were claiming DWP benefits in August 2012, below the Bedford Borough average of 13.4%; and 20.7% of people over 65 were claiming pension credit, around the Bedford Borough average of 21.0%.

**Health and Disability:** Limiting illnesses and disabilities can affect the type of housing that people need in order to remain independent. 17.2% of those aged 65 and over in Thurleigh are claiming Attendance Allowance (a non-means-tested benefit for severely disabled people aged 65 or over who need help with personal care), above the Borough average of 15.7%. The proportion of the population claiming Disability Living Allowance is 3.5%, under the Bedford Borough average of 4.2%. 12.5% of people have a limiting long-term illness, below the Borough average of 16.0%.
6.16 The market housing policies for the Neighbourhood Plan (e.g. proposed numbers, size and type) would need to be based on a broad evidence base. This would include local housing need identified through the HNS, although the wider housing market would also need to be taken into consideration, as there would be no restrictions placed on the sale of this housing.

6.17 The NPPF makes it clear that authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. The intention is to help to ‘balance’ the housing market and so new development should meet gaps in the current stock and create secondary gains by improving turnover in both the private and social sectors. The HNS shows that there is a need for properties of various types, sizes and tenures, but the evidence identifies (i) a need for affordable housing within Thurleigh from household residents in (or with strong links to) the Parish that is unlikely to be met by normal market provision, and (ii) that there is a particular need for smaller market housing (2-3 bedrooms) if Thurleigh is to meet the identified current and future needs of its existing residents wishing to stay in the village. The HNS report, summarised at Appendix D, indicates that some of the new provision could be met by including a rural exception site policy in the neighbourhood plan. Further details on responding to affordable housing needs is considered at Issue 6.3 below.

6.18 The provision of a range of property types, sizes and tenure in new build development would enable all households, and in particular younger and older people, to move to more appropriate properties. This would create secondary gains through making best use of the existing housing stock by addressing under-occupation and promoting improvements in the rate of turnover of existing family units; this would be further enhanced if specialist accommodation to meet the changing requirements of the increasing older population was also provided. An important key objective in the Neighbourhood Plan will be to deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Thurleigh, ensuring that a mix of housing types is delivered across all tenures.

6.19 In considering the outcome of the HNS, and to provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home, the following Policy Options have been developed to address the issues identified:

**OPTION H1:** All new housing should help to broaden the range of stock available in the Parish. It should complement and add to the existing stock, broaden choice and extend the opportunity to own a house or live in the village to a wide range of people. The type, tenure and cost of new housing should meet the housing needs of the local area and, in this regard, the particular need for smaller market housing (2-3 bedrooms) should be recognised.

**OPTION H2:** Affordable rented and shared ownership housing for local people in Thurleigh should be provided by including a rural exception site development within the Neighbourhood Plan, as recommended by the Housing Needs Survey. This would provide for the recommended seven units plus four 2-3 bedroom bungalows or retirement properties delivered alongside or as part of a rural exception site, with the market housing cross-subsidising the affordable housing.
Issue 6.2: Scale of Development

6.20 Thurleigh is fortunate to be located on the edge of attractive open countryside and to have several areas of open space, all of which are highly valued by local people. The majority of the village has been designated as a conservation area and any development within it should be sympathetic, as should any development adjacent to it. The community has expressed a good level of support for the provision of new housing to support local need and to help sustain and improve local services and facilities. A key overriding consideration is, however, the need to ensure that the village retains its character and rural nature and, the emerging preference, is for a small number of low density, small or medium size, developments. A key objective within the Neighbourhood Plan will, therefore, be to meet new housing demand in a way that ensures that the right type of housing is built in the right locations, and that protects the village from uncontrolled, large scale, or poorly placed development.

6.21 The original "call for sites" prompted three submissions for potential land allocation and the original neighbourhood questionnaire was distributed on this basis (including one site, reference 275 on Map 2 above, for commercial/industrial development). The further consultation by the Borough Council, ending on 14 December 2015, prompted a further 9 submissions for housing development in respect of Thurleigh, including a proposed sustainable new settlement of up to 5,250 homes on the Thurleigh Airfield Business Park. As a consequence the further exhibition was held on 25 May 2016 and a supplementary questionnaire was issued to those attending to record the feedback. This provided the opportunity to summarise the original findings and also to outline the proposals relating to the now extended list of 11 housing development sites in Thurleigh that had been submitted for consideration. Reference was also made to the proposed mixed use development on Thurleigh Airfield Business Park, comprising employment led development and a sustainable new village settlement (including associated services, facilities and infrastructure) but, because of the strategic nature of this site, Bedford Borough Council will be undertaking public consultation on the proposals and Thurleigh residents will be able to comment on whether the site is acceptable as an allocation in the Borough Council Local Plan.

6.22 The outcome of the further consultation is summarised in Section 4 of the report. It is based on only 35 responses (maximum) and it provided no real consensus in terms of the level of growth and the best location for growth. There was about equal support for the original feedback in terms of the level of growth (approximately 40 new dwellings) and broadly an equal number supporting a greater level of growth and, alternatively, a preferred lesser level of growth. There was a high level of resistance to all of the proposed development sites, although the Land adjacent to the Village Hall, on Church land (site 402) received the highest level of positive responses and the originally submitted sites (referenced 274 and 275) received a reasonable level of support, as did the "Officers Mess" site (referenced 629) and the former Thurleigh Farm Centre (site referenced 688).
A key purpose of this consultation is to allow the community to comment on the acceptability of the sites put forward as potential allocations for future development in Thurleigh. Planning legislation also requires a site assessment methodology to balance sustainability and deliverability objectives in a way which ensures that the Neighbourhood Plan intentions are met whilst achieving sustainable development which is defined in paragraphs 18-19 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A Site Assessment Report has, therefore, been prepared by independent planning consultants, Mato'design Associates Limited, and forms part of the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Plan evidence base. The purpose of this report is to provide a consistent assessment of all of the sites evaluated in terms of their suitability for potential allocation for future development in the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan. Each site has been assessed against its suitability, availability and achievability (as set out in paragraph 47 of the NPPF). This is an important process in neighbourhood planning as any policies contained with the final Plan will need to be in conformity with the NPPF and in general conformity with the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2002 and the emerging Local Plan 2035. The full site assessment report includes the detailed Red/Amer/Green assessments and is available at www.thurleighborough.com.

This detailed site assessment covered a four stage process to establish which sites best fit the Plan objectives and provides the basis for making a decision about which sites should be allocated. The four stages are as follows:

- Identifying the sites which are in locations identified as being suitable for development. At this stage sites which have overriding physical or environmental constraints will be filtered out.
- Assessing the availability of each potential site.
- Assessing the deliverability of each site including viability.
- The acceptability of each site as an allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed based upon the outcome of this consultation.

A summary of this assessment of the full range of sites submitted to Bedford Borough Council for potential housing development in response to the 'call for sites' is reproduced at Appendix E.

In considering potential land allocations, special regard has been given to the feedback from the neighbourhood questionnaire in terms of sites offered for development and the commitment to locate a planned level of growth focussed at the centre of the village, close to local amenities. Areas of land identified as site numbers 274 and 276 on Map 2 above and land adjacent to the Village Hall, on Church land, (site number 402) have been identified for a further development to meet local need and growth targets. The latter allocation could respond to the particular requirement, demonstrated by the HNS, for affordable homes and smaller market housing (2-3 bedrooms) to enable Thurleigh to meet the identified current and future needs of its existing residents wishing to stay in the village. It has been further suggested that some of the new provision could be designed as retirement housing. This land would, therefore, respond to researched need and would be accessed from within the village, thus providing organic internal expansion.

There is strong support for the development of the “Officers Mess” site, on Keysoe Road, but the Steering Group is concerned that its remote out of village location, adjacent to sewage works, renders the site difficult for sensitive housing development. Suggestions for the delivery of homes for the elderly in this location are also resisted due to the remote proximity to services and facilities. The assessment of sites, at Appendix E, identifies this site for potential commercial use.
Site 276, Hayle Field, on the High Street (3 hectares), received the highest level of support (68% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to the allocation of this site) and offers the location for a medium size development of about 15 homes, or a larger development of more than 20 homes. The community preference, indicated by the neighbourhood survey, was for a small number of low density (less than 20 dwellings per hectare), small and medium developments. Site 274, The Beeches, on the High Street (0.68 hectares), also received good support but, given access considerations, it is considered that a small to medium scale development of up to 10 dwellings would be appropriate.

The frontage of Site 276 is part of a gentle mature transition — its own kind of ‘gateway’ — approaching Thurleigh from Cross End and hedged fields. Frontage development in this location would need to be very sensitive and sympathetic to ensure that associated accesses and other structures do not radically and adversely affect this pleasant village approach. It is, however, a deep site offering the potential to create a suitable development that responds to growth targets and that could be designed in a way that is sympathetic and sensitive to its surroundings, thus enhancing the village approach. Special regard should be given to the scope to enable a significant improvement to the entrance to the village; this could include the provision of some form of entrance feature, such as public art or entrance signage, to signify the entrance to the beautiful village of Thurleigh from Cross End.

The Site Assessment Report, prepared by the Planning Consultant, indicates that the following sites identified on Map 2 above are not considered suitable for development for the reasons outlined in the report which is summarised at Appendix E:

- Site 403: Land at The Windmill, Milton Road, Thurleigh (0.916 hectares), proposed for 9 dwellings;
- Site 443: Land at Mill Hill, Thurleigh (1.14 hectares), proposed for 21 dwellings;
- Site 445: Land at High Street, Thurleigh (3.39 hectares), proposed for 65 dwellings;
- Site 461: Church Estate Land, North of High Street, Thurleigh (1.88 hectares), proposed for 36 dwellings and includes relocation of village open space (identified as “A” on Map at 4 below);
- Site 538: Land at Greensbury Cottage, Thurleigh Road, near Bolnhurst (1.4 hectares), proposed for 25 to 30 dwellings;
- Site 550: The Jackal, High Street, Thurleigh (0.4 hectares), proposed for 10 to 16 dwellings;
- Site 629: The Officers Mess, Keysoe Road, Thurleigh (1.83 hectares), proposed for 40 dwellings;
- Site 688: Land at the former Thurleigh Farm Centre (0.35 hectares), proposed for 7 to 9 dwellings.

There are inevitably risks associated with bringing the preferred sites forward for development - such as the inability to demonstrate that land designated as Important Open Space will not be compromised or that suitable highway access can be provided to the site. The Site Assessment Report specifically identifies that preferred Site 402 is, at least in part, designated as Important Open Space. This is because it provides a gap or break in the frontage which contributes to the character of a settlement, for example, by providing a view into a village which forms part of the village setting, or a view into open countryside establishing the relationship between the form of the village and the countryside beyond; and, moreover, it assists the transition between village and countryside providing a soft edge to the village which is pleasing visually. The onus will be on the site promoter to demonstrate (with concept plans and perhaps some visual sketches) how any development in this location would protect the Important Open Space designation.
The Site Assessment Report has further identified land at High Street, Cross End, Thurleigh (site numbered 444 on Map 2 above) for potential development if appropriate footpath links can be provided. The proposal submitted, as part of the Call for Sites process, is for 53 dwellings on 2.81 hectares of land. This could, therefore, provide an alternative site for development if the scale of development is more reasonably set, or it could be identified as a Reserve Site for the development of new houses if constraints on other preferred sites cannot be overcome.

The **Policy Options** determined to cover the scale of housing sought in response to growth targets are as follows:

**OPTION H3:** The Neighbourhood Development Plan will identify sites considered suitable for potential housing development. On the basis of current need, sustainability and existing infrastructure, the Neighbourhood Plan will allocate sites sufficient to accommodate a total of up to 30 residential units within the Plan period in addition to the local need for 11 homes that has been ascertained from a recent Housing Needs Survey.

**OPTION H4:** Development to meet identified need in the village should take place on a number of small sites with access to local amenities rather than concentrated in one place.

**OPTION H5:** Allocation of the sites identified in Map 3 below for new housing to meet local needs and growth targets will be supported for the following approximate scale of development:

1. Land known as The Beeches, High Street, Thurleigh (part of Call for Site 274) for a small to medium size development of up to 10 dwellings.

2. Land known as Hayle Field, High Street, Thurleigh (part of Call for Site reference 276) for a medium to large development of up to 20 dwellings.

3. Land behind School, adjacent to the Village Hall (part of Call for Site reference 402), as a site for the provision of 11 dwellings to meet local need in line with Policy H2 above.

**OPTION H6:** Would you prefer some allocation for housing development on the alternative site known as Land at High Street, Cross End, Thurleigh (Site Reference 444 on Map 2 above) which has been identified as a possible site for housing if the scale of development is acceptable and access issues/footpath links can be resolved.

**OPTION H7:** In the event that there are issues with bringing forward development on sites 274, 276 and 402 that cannot be resolved - such as the inability to demonstrate that land designated as Important Open Space will not be compromised or that suitable highway access can be provided to the site - do you consider that Land at High Street, Cross End, Thurleigh (Site Reference 444 on Map 2 above) should be identified as a Reserve Site for the development of new houses, OR;

**OPTION H8:** In the event that there are issues with bringing forward development on sites 274, 276 and 402 (or Site 444 if this is identified as a preferred site) that cannot be resolved - such as the inability to demonstrate that land designated as Important Open Space will not be compromised or that suitable highway access can be provided to the site - do you agree that the proposed allocation of houses should be distributed on the other preferred locations for growth if this can be accommodated.
OPTION H9: The following sites identified on Map 2 above as 403, 443, 445, 461, 538, 550, 629 and 688 are not considered suitable for development. All sites have been assessed by an experienced Planning Consultant against their suitability, availability and achievability in line with Planning Practice Guidance and, following assessment, the sites are not considered to be appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.

OPTION H10: There will be a presumption in favour of a mix of 3 or more bedroom detached housing, 2/3 bedroom semi-detached or terraced housing and the provision of bungalows.

OPTION H11: There will be a presumption against the provision of flats/apartments and three storey housing as part of new developments.

MAP 3 - SITES PROPOSED FOR SMALL/MEDIUM SCALE DEVELOPMENT
(Areas marked blue)

Issue 6.3: Responding to Affordable Housing Need

6.33 Affordable housing can be affordable rented property (where rent is charged at up to 80% of market value), or it can be shared ownership in which people can own a share in the property and pay rent on the remainder. It is usually provided by Registered Providers, such as housing associations. Affordable housing in rural areas is often progressed through Rural Exception Site developments – this is where the planning authority accepts that there is a need for affordable housing in the parish, and is prepared to grant an “exception” to planning policy, providing that the development is for affordable housing that will be available to local people in perpetuity. A Neighbourhood Plan can contain a Rural Exception Site policy; households seeking affordable rented accommodation through any new exception site development would have to apply through the Bedfordshire Choice Based Lettings scheme, through which they would have to demonstrate both a housing need and a local connection to Thurleigh.
An analysis of dwellings in lower Council Tax bands has identified that 4.4% of dwellings in Thurleigh are in Council Tax Band A, and 16.6% in Band B, compared to 13.6% and 24.9% for Bedford Borough as a whole. This indicates a relative shortage of affordable housing for purchase in Thurleigh.

The HNS reported that, in March 2015, there were 10 properties for sale (or recently sold) in Thurleigh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling Size/Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Asking Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom house</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>£185,000 - £450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom bungalow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom bungalow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£360,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bedroom house</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£425,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ bedroom house</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£570,000 - £975,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This represented around 4% of total private housing stock in the parish. None were being marketed as retirement properties.

Property sales over the last 3 years have been analysed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£100,000 and under</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£100,001 – 150,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£150,001 – 200,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£200,001 – 300,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£300,001+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only two properties were sold for under £150,000 in the last 3 years. The cheapest of these (a 2 bedroom terraced house) went for £120,000.

Similarly, in March 2015, the HNS identified one property currently or recently available for rent in Thurleigh: a one bedroom barn conversion at £775 per month.

The HNS report identified the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guideline that “a household can be considered able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5 times the gross household income for a single earner household or 2.9 times the gross household income for dual-income households”. This is reflected in the fact that the ‘average income multiple’ in lending to first-time buyers in December 2014 was 3.39. According to the DCLG guidance, in order to purchase the cheapest property available in Thurleigh (the 3 bedroom house at £185,000) as a first time buyer, a single earner household would need an annual gross income of nearly £53,000, and a dual-income household would need nearly £64,000. For the cheapest property available over the last 3 years (the 2 bedroom house at £120,000), these figures would fall to over £34,000 and over £41,000 respectively. It should be noted that the median annual full-time wage in the UK stood at £26,884 in April 2013.

According to the same guidance, “a household can be considered able to afford market house renting in cases where the rent payable was up to 25% of their gross household income” (The ‘Rent Payable’ figure is defined as the entire rent due, even if it is partially or entirely met by housing benefit). To be able to rent the cheapest property available in Thurleigh, a household’s gross income would, therefore, need to be over £37,000.
The HNS report emphasised that a further major barrier to entry to the property market for first-time buyers was the high deposit needed for a competitive mortgage rate. The report identified that the average loan to value for first time buyers nationally in December 2014 was 81%, meaning that the average deposit was 19%.

Smaller deposit mortgages all but disappeared following the onset of the financial crisis but Phase 2 of the government’s Help to Buy scheme has, however, more recently facilitated a market in mortgages for first-time buyers at up to 95% loan to value. These mortgages are generally offered at higher rates of interest than for buyers with larger deposits. At 95% loan to value, a first-time buyer household might have been able to purchase the 4 bedroom house highlighted above with a deposit of around £9,250. At the current average of 81% loan to value, a deposit of around £35,000 would be required.

While house prices have reduced from their 2007 peak, they are still unaffordable for many people looking to buy within the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Plan area. The operation of the housing market will not resolve this without planning intervention and so affordable housing needs to be considered as an integral part of the delivery of any new housing schemes in the area. One of the most common ways of delivering affordable housing currently is on ‘mixed tenure’ developments where, in addition to market housing, affordable housing is also provided by the developer. The subsidy required by the affordable housing is in essence provided from the sale of the market housing. The options identified at section 6.19 support this principle and seek to deliver a housing stock consistent with local needs.

The provision of a mix of housing size and type to meet local need is further supported by the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan. Policy CP7 accords with the guidance of the NPPF in that it seeks to ensure development meets the needs of all sectors of the community. In the event that new housing is planned for in Thurleigh, an appropriate mix will be expected. In addition, Policy C18 clearly sets out an expectation that 30% affordable housing is provided on sites of 3 dwellings or more (or over 0.1ha) in villages having a population of less than 3,000.

Recent changes have, however, been made to National Planning Policy Guidance and these are outlined at sections 3.16 to 3.18. The changes in relation to affordable housing include, if adopted locally, a national policy threshold beneath which affordable housing contributions should not be sought of ten-units or less (and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1,000 square metres).
Issue 6.4: Achieving Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness

6.45 Thurleigh has experienced limited post war growth but this has been mainly delivered by standard developer designed estates, which do little to reflect local design and materials and the character of the settlement area. The result is that, although providing some variety, there is a lack of distinction. There is a need to ensure that any new development is sensitively laid out to respect local landscape, assisted by a high proportion of low density and single storey houses, which facilitates the retention and addition of considerable additional tree, hedge and other planting. Where appropriate, development should integrate with the surrounding landscape and countryside and, therefore, avoid being laid out with hard edges. Consideration should be given not only to individual house design, but also the provision of landscaping and street layout including accessibility, appearance and public spaces.

6.46 The designated conservation area has ensured the retention of many listed and historic traditional buildings which has largely preserved the character of the historic core. It is critical that any further infill development is sympathetic to the area. Design should be of a high standard, probably assisted by more stringent planning policies guiding rural design and the use of preserved local traditional design and materials.

6.47 The NPPF comments that design is not solely about appearance or location, but must also provide a sustainable quality of life in terms of energy efficiency and affordability. To assist this aim the national publication Code for Sustainable Homes lays down standards for high quality sustainable housing.

6.48 There is a strong and positive response from the community for respecting the character of the village (with almost 95% of respondents regarding this as being important or very important) and for high design standards. There is a high level of support for setting car parking standards, amenity space standards, height and massing standards, external finish standards, highway access standards and protection for trees and hedges. Over 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the development of a Village Design Statement.
6.49 There is a need, therefore, to provide housing which is high quality in design, layout and materials, appropriate in size and suitable for the whole life needs of residents. There is clearly a need, therefore, to ensure that the village retains its character, rural atmosphere and, in particular, its compact and historic nature. This could be achieved by including detailed design criteria in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and adopting a Thurleigh Village Design Statement incorporating the design criteria to further support the policies that exist in the Borough Council Local Plan. To achieve this, the following Policy Options are proposed:

**OPTION H12:** Proposals for new housing development should adopt the approach to design, siting and layout set out in a Village Design Statement.

**OPTION H13:** The proposed Village Design Statement should incorporate proposals to improve and enhance at a local level:

- car parking space standards, with a minimum number of dedicated off street parking spaces relative to the number of bedrooms in the dwelling as follows: 1 car parking space per 1 bedroom dwelling; 2 car park spaces for 2-3 bedroom dwellings and 3 car parking spaces for 4 or more bedroom dwellings;
- amenity space standards, with at least 50% of the completed residence allocated as amenity space (parking, garden, courtyard, patio, play area);
- height standards;
- massing standards (building shape and size);
- external finish standards.

6.50 There is, therefore, a commitment to support sensitive development which is sympathetic to the area, protects and enriches the look and feel of the village and that minimises the impact of such development on the natural and built environment. The following additional Policy Options are proposed to reinforce this commitment:

**OPTION H14:** There will be a presumption in favour of low density development (less than 20 dwellings per hectare).

**OPTION H15:** New development proposals will only be supported if they consume its parking requirements on site so as not to add to the existing congestion.

6.51 It is important, therefore, that any new development is accommodated in a way that maintains and enhances the built environment and that it improves the quality of life of all current and future residents. Policies need to be designed to ensure that new development respects the existing form and function of the settlements within the parish. New development should not be prominent in scale, visually dominant or significantly change the character of the village or outlying hamlets. New development should reflect the grain, density, quality and materials that should be identified in the Thurleigh Village Design Statement. Additionally, all new development should be of a height, massing and appearance that does not adversely affect key distinctive views into and out of the Parish. Particular attention should be given to views to and from listed buildings, open space within villages, the conservation area and key landscape features.
INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

7.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to infrastructure:

**OBJECTIVE 2 – MANAGING BOTH EXISTING AND FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND ENCOURAGING SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT**

7.2 Improvements to transport and utility infrastructure and to digital connectivity are essential to meet the existing and future requirements of local residents (such as faster broadband connectivity). Ideally, both new and, where possible, existing homes should be better served by physical infrastructure, including as appropriate improved traffic management, car parking, pedestrian walking and cycle routes that preserve and create a pleasant and safe environment. Similarly any employment growth should be supported by adequate infrastructure and services.

7.3 The Steering Group has recognised that many households today have access to the use of more than one car and that the current parking facilities in the Village are overloaded. Through a combination of the Neighbourhood Plan, and a complementary community strategy, the Parish Council is committed to ensure that any additional private cars in the village are accommodated through sufficient parking and safe access. A particular concern that has already been identified is the lack of parking provision in The Close and Keysoe Road and the need for additional off-road parking in this area. In addition, the plan should promote alternative forms of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking.

7.4 The capacity of the physical infrastructure will be a key factor that will impact on the extent and location of new development. Ultimately the Neighbourhood Plan must be consistent with the new Bedford Borough Council Local Plan when it is finalised and it will have to provide at least the number of homes required by that Local Plan, and include affordable homes in line with established policy. Key factors that impact where development can realistically be considered:

- Growth will impact on infrastructure such as drainage, sewage, health services, public transport etc. and capacity issues must be addressed within careful, integrated planning.

- Development will impact upon the existing highway network. Thurleigh is a small village and the access very constricted and, as such, the impact of additional traffic must be considered carefully.

- Schools and other local facilities need to be able to cope with demand.

7.5 These factors have, therefore, been considered to some extent in Section 6 of the consultation report (above) to determine the delivery of housing which both sustains the current and meets the future needs of the community. They will also be robustly considered as part of the planning process.
7.6 The response to the initial Launch consultation, summarised at Appendix A, identified the concerns about the village being used as a thoroughfare for much traffic, both East-West and as an alternative to the A6. The general feeling is that there is a need for speed reduction schemes that might include average speed cameras, traffic calming (especially around school/Village Hall High Street area) and further speed limits. Coupled with this, the need for additional public transport was recognised. In addition, a very high number of respondents would welcome the introduction of high-speed broadband to the village, perhaps with a central facility where people might access it if unable to access through home.

7.7 Further evidence was sought from the Neighbourhood Questionnaire, with the responses summarised at Appendix B. Key concerns were local road congestion, the provision of safe cycle routes, safe walks to school, the speed of traffic, footpath provision, footpath standards, HGV traffic, through traffic and parking in the village. There were, however, no constructive solutions to improved parking in the village and, in particular, the concerns in The Close and Keysoe Road. In respect of measures to control speed, there is considerable support for traffic calming measures, and reduced speed limits and a weight limit for the High Street was suggested. Narrow footpaths were also identified and a good level of support for more designated footpaths. A specific concern was the level of inconsiderate parking in the High Street, particularly associated with school drop off and collections. The Steering Group has prompted the suggestion that development of the land behind the School, adjacent to the Village Hall, could enable improvements to parking provision and safety to be delivered as part of the scheme benefits.

7.8 Paragraph 2.8 above outlines that the Community Infrastructure Levy has been introduced to help ensure that necessary additions or improvements to physical and community infrastructure that arise from new development can be funded. This may, therefore, provide a source of funding to enable new parking to be provided or traffic related improvements (such as the provision of average speed cameras).

Borough Wide Information

7.9 Various information is available in relation to public transport, highways, walking/cycling and parking and this can be found on the Borough Council website at http://www.bedford.gov.uk/transport_and_streets.aspx. There is, however, no particular transport studies or schemes that might affect Thurleigh.

Local Issues

7.10 Thurleigh is distant from the major road network and is served by a number of minor roads which connect to the A6 trunk route. Other roads link to surrounding villages and hamlets. Roads between the village and the outlying hamlets lack pavements and there is no provision for cyclists. National speed limits apply outside the village with a 30 mph limit in the built up area where there is street lighting.

7.11 It is evident from the response to the consultation and local knowledge that there are a number of issues that need to be considered for potential inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. These are considered in the sections below.

Issue 7.1: Physical and Communications Infrastructure

7.12 There is a need to ensure that any proposal for development ensures adequate and enhanced physical and communications infrastructure. This has led to the following Policy Option:
OPTION I1: Any proposal for development should demonstrate that it will provide sufficient capacity for sewerage, water supply, electricity, telephone land line and broadband service.

Issue 7.2: Existing Traffic Movement

7.13 Traffic speeding in Thurleigh village is recognised as a continuing problem and possible solutions, including traffic calming measures and average speed cameras should be considered, together with measures to improve safety for all.

7.14 There is a need, therefore, to ensure that Thurleigh is well connected for pedestrians and cyclists in the village and to surrounding destinations and that roads and paths provide safer and more accessible routes, better balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

7.15 This has led to the following Policy Options for this issue:

OPTION I2: The Parish Council will work to improve local awareness of traffic problems by supporting the provision of regulation compliant locally designed signs to encourage traffic to slow down and improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists

OPTION I3: The Parish Council will work with Bedford Borough Council to assess the cost/benefits of traffic calming measures, including the potential provision of average speed cameras, to improve local safety.

OPTION I4: The Parish Council will commit funding from the retained Community Infrastructure Levy to establish a priority schedule of footpaths for upgrade or extended provision across the parish.

OPTION I5: The Parish Council will work with Bedford Borough Council to introduce white lines along the sides of roads to mark recommended places for pedestrians and cyclists.

Issue 7.3: Impact of New Development on Traffic Movement

7.16 It is important that any new development is accommodated in a way that maintains and enhances the built environment and that it improves the quality of life of all current and future residents. Policies will, therefore, need to be developed to ensure that any new development respects the existing form and function of the settlements within the parish. Improving accessibility to, and around the village, will be a consideration in all residential development applications. This has led to the following Policy Options to address this issue:

OPTION I6: Any applications for development in Thurleigh should identify and demonstrate the additional level of traffic that they are likely to generate. They should assess the potential impact of this traffic on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion within the Parish and include within their proposals measures to mitigate the impact. Proposals which are likely to increase the impact of traffic on road users will need to demonstrate how that traffic will be managed.

OPTION I7: There will be presumption against development which would impact detrimentally on road safety.
8

GREEN SPACES

8.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to Green Spaces:

**OBJECTIVE 3 – PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR EXISTING AND FUTURE OPEN SPACES**

8.2 The Steering Group has recognised that a strong aspect of the character of Thurleigh is its rural feel, its openness and the access residents enjoy to open space and the countryside, including the "Village Green" situated in the High Street. Protecting and enhancing the existing open spaces that have a clear community value and promoting new communal open space, such as allotments or recreation areas, will be a key objective of the plan.

8.3 Thurleigh is fortunate to be located on the edge of attractive open countryside and to have several areas of open space, all of which are highly valued by local people. These should be protected and enhanced. The Steering Group outlined the commitment, at the initial exhibition launch, to safeguard existing green spaces of demonstrable local importance and, where possible, to identify the most suitable sites for the provision of green spaces within any new developments or the creation of additional, enhanced green spaces within the village. The consultation feedback to date endorses such a commitment.

8.4 There was also a commitment under this objective to identify land for allotments or other communal open space, subject to a need being identified, to protect existing cemetery provision and ensure future provision and to review opportunities to improve access to the countryside.

Borough Wide Information

8.5 Details of environmental protection designations, such as tree preservation orders and sites of special scientific interest, are available on the Bedford Borough Council web-site. Tree preservation orders (and other useful local information such as rights of way and the location of listed buildings) are plotted on the Council’s LocalView Fusion website which can be accessed on the Bedford Borough website at http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside/rights_of_way/localview.aspx.
More specifically, designated Open Space and Sites of Special Scientific Interest can be viewed on the Bedford Borough Council’s Policies Map at [http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning-town_and_country/planning_policy_its_purpose/policies_map.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning-town_and_country/planning_policy_its_purpose/policies_map.aspx) (select Thurleigh).

The Council's Policies Map is shown below and identifies six areas of designated Open Space, labelled A to F, including Playing Fields (which is now identified as Village Open Space rather than Important Open Space).

**MAP 4 - AREAS OF DESIGNATED OPEN SPACE**
8.8 Village Open Space Policy (AD40 in the Allocations & Designations Plan) protects the designated areas but allows development if it does not compromise the reasons for designation or if other material considerations outweigh the need to retain the space. The reasons for designation are given in the Allocations & Designations Plan background document for Village Open Spaces which can be found at http://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/PlanningBrowse.aspx?id=mC8DXmBiU9qbxspxX%2fAwMXQ%3d%3d. If development is proposed this will need to be considered and documented in the Neighbourhood Plan supporting evidence.

8.9 Other sources of information have been used to help build the evidence base to support preparation of the Plan. This includes evidence under-pinning the Local Plan and, in this regard, a range of technical reports can be accessed at http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/planning_policy_its_purpose/technical_reports.aspx. Specifically in relation to "The Environment" objective, the following have been reviewed:

(a) Consultants LUC worked with Bedford Borough Council to prepare an update to the 2007 landscape character assessment for Bedford Borough. The 2014 landscape character assessment provides technical guidance and evidence to underpin planning and landscape management decisions in the borough. In respect of Thurleigh, the assessment specifically identifies the Thurleigh Castle Scheduled Monument and the Moat at Blackburn Hall. Specific reference is also made to the Thurleigh Airfield and the Thurleigh Clay Farmland. Settlement within the Thurleigh Clay Farmland character area takes the form of dispersed villages and scattered farmsteads.

(b) A Level 2 assessment of strategic flood risk has been completed for the borough area and this supersedes that prepared for the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. There is no reference to Thurleigh in the document.

(c) A Bedford Waterspace Strategy was commissioned in 2011 by Bedford Borough Council. The study provides a framework for promoting river related projects, which will help stimulate long-term regeneration of the river corridor within the Bedford Area. There is no reference to Thurleigh in the document.

(d) The Borough Council has worked with partners Anglian Water, Central Bedfordshire Council, the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Board Bedford Group to produce a Water Cycle Study. The study is in two parts, an Outline Report and a Detailed Report. The Water Cycle Study addresses water infrastructure issues associated with the delivery of growth to 2021. There is no reference to Thurleigh in the document.

8.10 Work has commenced on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough to identify and plan for future needs for new homes, jobs and other uses up to 2032. This has been subject to initial consultation and further refinement, having regard to a range of technical studies and consultation responses, and a second consultation commenced in October 2015. Importantly, the emerging Local Plan 2032 includes objectives that are relevant to the green infrastructure and natural resources. Objective 8 (as drafted) identifies the commitment to "develop a strong and multifunctional urban and rural green infrastructure network through protecting, enhancing, extending and linking landscapes, biodiversity sites, heritage sites, green spaces and paths", whilst objective 10 (as drafted) identifies the commitment to "protect and enhance our natural resources including air, soil and water to minimise the impacts of flooding, climate change and pollution". It is critical that this commitment is made Borough wide.
Local Issues

8.11 The response to the initial Launch consultation, summarised at Appendix A, emphasised the importance of protecting the green space in the village. Maintaining the rural nature of the village was emphasised, together with a desire to plant more trees and to promote footpaths and bridleways. Furthermore, there was a view that additional access should be provided and, by way of example, a footpath from the village to Cross End was identified.

8.12 Further evidence gained by analysis of the Neighbourhood Questionnaire, summarised at Appendix B, indicates that there is a good level of support for the provision of allotments in the village at this time, with a good level of respondents to the survey in favour of providing allotment land.

8.13 There are, in addition, a number of other issues that need to be considered as part of the preparations of, and for potential inclusion in, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. There is some correlation with Objective 7, Local Distinctiveness (detailed in section 12 of the consultation report), but matters relevant to Green Space and the environment generally are considered in the sections below.

Issue 8.1: Protection of Open Space

8.14 In developing the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group is committed to ensuring that further development on green fields and open spaces will be resisted; Thurleigh is not considered to be in need of significant housing development and there is a need to ensure sensitive development which protects and enriches the landscape and village setting. Any new development would, therefore, be relatively small in scale, in keeping with the character of the village, and would be sensitively located. This would also protect any desirable open spaces from being built on.

8.15 Protecting existing open space was strongly emphasised by respondents to the neighbourhood questionnaire with over 90% regarding this to be important or very important. In relation to the six areas of designated Open Space, labelled A to F on Map 4 above, the support for the protection of these spaces was overwhelming, with 96.9% supporting the protection of area A, 84% area B, 87.3% area C, 73.8% area D, 87% area E and 96.3% supporting the protection of area F.

8.16 Thurleigh has approximately thirty miles of public rights of way across the surrounding countryside to be enjoyed by all. There is a local volunteer group who, in conjunction with the Borough Council, help maintain these paths and way markers and also prepare local circular walks. Just a few minutes, walking to the north of the village, lie two Reservoirs abundant with wildlife. These can be reached by following the footpath that runs north behind the school, past the water treatment works, to reach the two Reservoirs via a Permissive path which is maintained by the local volunteer environmental group. This is an unspoilt and very tranquil area, which possess two benches for quiet contemplation while enjoying the spectacle of various wildlife on the waters. The bird sound on a summer’s evening is worth a visit in itself.
The twin reservoir area has been identified by the community for special protection. It is currently on land owned by St. Modwen and is not currently designated as important open space. It is proposed, therefore, that this land is designated as important village open space (and potentially Local Green Space in accordance with the new form of special protection for green areas introduction by the NPPF - paragraph 3.29 above refers). The area is identified in blue on Map 5 below.

MAP 5 - PROPOSED ADDITIONAL AREA OF DESIGNATED OPEN SPACE

The commitment to protect, improve and enhance community open spaces, and to maintain the distinct character of the village by preserving, protecting and enhancing the green and rural identity of our surroundings, has led to the following Policy Options to address these key issues:

**OPTION G1**: The areas of open space and countryside identified in Map 4 above will be protected from inappropriate new development.

**OPTION G2**: That a new protection be supported for the area comprising the two reservoirs and the immediately adjacent area (on last to the North of the Village and west of Keysoe Road), identified in Map 5 above, which defines this important green space.

**Issue 8.2: Improved Accessibility**

Improved accessibility to green space and the countryside is covered more appropriately at section 12 of the report, which looks at Objective 7 "Supporting and Enhancing Local Distinctiveness"

**Issue 8.3: Burial Ground**

The Parish Council has been concerned to ensure that sufficient grave yard capacity exists and whether, therefore, there is a need to identify a new area of land for burial use, preferably within the Parish Boundary to meet local needs.

Liaison with St. Peter's Church has confirmed that the churchyard has adequate capacity for the next 100 years and, as such, this issue will not be considered for inclusion in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
8.22 Sustaining the vitality, health and safety of the community is vital and this can be achieved by ensuring that all residents have easy access to community facilities and community green, open spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment. In this regard, it is apparent that there is a good level of demand for the provision of allotments and, as such, the potential scope to allocate land in the village to encourage the use of allotments could be considered.

8.23 Such provision does, however, need to be carefully considered, particularly in terms of the eventual management of such a facility and, in this regard, ideally responsibility would be entrusted to an Allotments Association and a form of lease determined for the transfer of land to the Association.

8.24 This has led to the following **Policy Options** to address this issue:

**OPTION G3:** The Parish Council will work with the local community to identify whether interest exists in establishing a Thurleigh Allotments Association and, if so, to identify land within Thurleigh for the provision of allotments, OR:

**OPTION G4:** The Parish Council will not identify possible new sites for allotment provision in Thurleigh but will refer the matter to Bedford Borough Council to ensure that future requirements can be accommodated in the municipal allotments that exist in Bedford, OR:

**OPTION G5:** The Parish Council will work jointly with other Parishes to identify the overall demand for allotments and, if a good level of interest exists for the provision and management of allotment land, to identify a suitable shared space for allotments in the area.
Issue 8.5: Protection of Natural Resources

8.25 The response to the neighbourhood survey in relation to green spaces and the local environment generally was overwhelming in identifying the importance of issues such as flooding, carbon footprint and air quality and in supporting improvements to services to meet the future needs of the village, such as surface water drainage, gas, sewerage system and recycling provision. A summary of the key highlights from respondents to the survey are as follows:

- Over 88% emphasised the importance of maintaining ground water quality;
- Almost 80% regarded reducing the risk of flooding as important or very important;
- Reducing the carbon footprint was important to over 70% of respondents;
- Maintaining air quality was important to 88% of respondents;
- Over 91% considered good housing design and improving road safety to be important when considering the local environment;
- There was a very good level of support for improvements to surface water drainage, sewerage systems and gas provision and over 60% of respondents regarded improvements to recycling provision to be essential;
- There was a reasonable level of concern for air pollution and noise pollution in and around the village and, to a lesser extent, light pollution.

8.26 It is encouraging that key objectives of the emerging 2032 Local Plan (identified at 8.10 above) focus on the green infrastructure and natural resources. These are significant issues, requiring a strong strategic commitment on a Borough wide basis.

Issue 8.6: Environmental Improvements

8.27 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan concentrates on land use and related matters, the community have identified some important local investment opportunities and beneficial proposals that deserve more detailed consideration. In terms of green space, some of the additional or improved facilities identified include:

- Almost 70% supported improved landscaping of public areas;
- 51% of respondents supported the provision of more formal or informal green spaces;
- The provision of picnic area was supported by 37.6% of respondents;
- Additional or improved play areas for children was supported by 56% of respondents;
- Dog fouling was identified as an area that needed attention with over 77% concerned or very concerned at the issue in and around the village;
- The maintenance of footpaths and bridleways was identified by some as a concern;
- Litter was a significant concern, with over 74% responding about the issue;
- There was some concern at the level of crime in and around the village.

8.28 An Action Plan has, therefore, been developed and covers a range of local issues that have been identified through the consultation processes. This is detailed in Appendix F and seeks to respond to the high level support for the environmental improvements identified by the consultation process.

8.29 There is a need to ensure that any further development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment and, to further enhance the prospects of improvement, the following Policy Options are proposed:

**OPTION G6**: Proposals for new development in excess of five dwellings should produce a green infrastructure plan to show how the development can improve green spaces and corridors for people and nature and how wildlife can be protected and enhanced.

**OPTION G7**: Proposals to establish wind farms or solar farms within Thurleigh will not be supported.
9 RECREATION, SPORTING & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

9.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event held in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to the provision of recreation, sporting and community facilities:

**OBJECTIVE 4 – ENSURING THAT THE VILLAGE BENEFITS FROM SUFFICIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

9.2 The Steering Group has recognised that, if new homes are to be delivered in Thurleigh, it is vital that they are supported by adequate local facilities and services to ensure a high quality of life for current and future residents. It also recognised that the plan should investigate opportunities to enable both new and, where possible, existing homes to be better served by telecommunications infrastructure.

9.3 The Playing Field was opened in 1962 and includes a Sports & Social Club. The original pre-war wooden Village Hall was renovated in the 1970’s and then replaced by a new and larger building. Only one Public House, The Jackal, remains of the original four but has recently closed. Unfortunately the Post Office/Shop closed on the retirement of its owners, although there is now a Mobile Post Office that operates for a few hours on 4 days each week.

9.4 The Steering Group envisaged, in accordance with this objective, that potential community support would exist to:

(a) Consider the adequacy of the existing provision for recreational, sporting and Community facilities within the village and immediate area and, if any shortfalls are identified, to identify potential sites where new or enhanced facilities might best be located (whether within the existing built environment or in new development).

(b) Consider the provision of new or upgraded community facilities.

(c) Investigate the scope for the delivery of superfast broadband services.

9.5 The response to the initial Launch consultation, summarised at Appendix A, emphasised the need for improved “high-speed” broadband provision in the village. The position has developed now with Bedford Borough Council working in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council, Milton Keynes Council, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and BT Openreach to deliver superfast broadband to homes in the three local authority areas. The rollout has been drawn up by BT Openreach and will see superfast broadband made available 95% of homes in Bedford Borough, over several phases. In addition, the project will see broadband above 2 Megabits per second made available to all homes in the Borough that would otherwise still be getting slower speeds. The Council’s involvement in the national extension programme to reach 95% of premises, including match-funding the project locally, means thousands more homes, especially in rural parts of the Borough, will be included. Thurleigh is included in the plan for delivery by the first quarter of 2017.
The response to the initial consultation, summarised at Appendices A and B, emphasised the importance of village facilities to the community, ranging from high speed broadband (with almost 94% of respondents regarding this important or very important), bus service, mobile post office and playing fields (important or very important to over 90% of respondents), and the public house, village hall, mobile library, play area and church (all recording over 80% in terms of importance to the community). The consultation also identified the aspiration for additional or improved facilities as a consequence of small scale new development, such as play areas for children (with support from 56.4% of respondents), a communal broadband facility (58.5% of respondents), improved mobile telephone network (78.7% of respondents), provision of a local/community shop (86.4% respondents), more recreational/sporting facilities (48.7% of respondents) and provision of an outdoor exercise/gym equipment (34.6% of respondents). There was a also a high level of support for an improved local bus service, medical provision and dental care facility.

Many respondents at the original launch highlighted the need for a greater sense of community, which could include developing more community facilities and, for example, the need to expand and support the village hall as the centre of village activities. The strength of "community" in the village scored highly (with over 40% of respondents considering that it is excellent or good, 40.9% average and only 16.2% poor or very poor). The importance of village identity, community spirit and feeling part of the community was regarded as important to many, as did Thurleigh being a quiet village, its rural atmosphere, the peaceful and safe neighbourhood and existing local services. There is a good level of desire for improvements to these services, such as better public transport and a Village shop if more houses were built, but there is a need to recognise that existing facilities are generally "occasionally" used and there would be a degree of the uncertainty over the demand for additional community facilities in the village. The economic viability of a village shop would also represent a challenge and, similarly, bus operators will generally only operate commercially viable routes or rely on bus subsidies to continue services.

Borough Council - Planning Context

Policy CP18 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan emphasises the commitment to ensure the continued viability of the rural economy and support the sustainability of local services by (i) resisting proposals that would lead to a loss of employment generating uses, (ii) restricting the change of use of shops, post offices and public houses where it would impact on local services and communities and (iii) support the retention of local community facilities. Specifically, Policy CP18 seeks to prevent the material loss of local services and facilities and lends support to other initiatives that may seek to bolster the viability and levels of use of existing facilities and the introduction of additional services and infrastructure.

Policy CP14 seeks to ensure that, where there is a proven need for development in the rural area, it will be restricted to that which is required to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the viability of those communities.

Local Issues

Issue 9.1 - Sustainable Community Facilities and Amenities

Thurleigh has a limited range of community facilities which should be protected. These include a Village Hall, Sports & Social Club, Public House, Mobile Post Office, Mobile Library and St. Peter's Church.
9.11 Such community facilities help to engender a stronger sense of community and pride and make Thurleigh an attractive and appealing location for people to live in. Events are organised, throughout the year, to bring people together, such as the local fete.

9.12 The commitment to protect, and where possible enhance, local amenities which provide a community focus has led to the following Policy Options:

**OPTION C1**: Local facilities and services will be protected and supported by the Parish Council in accordance with other policies in the Development Plan that seek to ensure the continued viability of the rural economy and support the sustainability of local services.

**OPTION C2**: There will be a presumption against development which would detrimentally affect community assets such as The Jackal Public House, The Village Hall, Sports and Social Club, Playing Fields, The Church, The War Memorial, Memorial Garden, Bus stops, post box and benches.

**OPTION C3**: Proposals for a village shop, medical provision and dental care facility will be supported.

9.13 Furthermore, there is a keenness to encourage opportunities for all generations to participate in a range of educational, sporting and leisure activities and this has led to the following Policy Option to address this issue:

**OPTION C4**: The Parish Council will continue to promote the use of the Village Hall and will support appropriate plans to improve community provision. The Parish Council will also support and promote other existing clubs and facilities in the area, for instance by helping to identify sources of funding such as developer contributions.

**Issue 9.2 - Improvement of Community Facilities**

9.14 The Parish Council recognises the limited prospects for large scale new development in Thurleigh, given existing constraints, but there is support for a reasonable level of growth with a number of small and medium scale housing development sites in the village to respond to local need and to support the retention, viability and improvement of existing facilities.
An important key objective in the Neighbourhood Plan will be to sustain the vitality, health and safety of the community by ensuring that all residents have easy access to community facilities and community green, open spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment. This has led to the following Policy Option to address this issue:

**OPTION C5:** Any proposals that come forward over the plan period should identify developer contributions to further support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.

Moreover, a key objective in the Neighbourhood Plan will be to ensure that any new development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment. This has led to the following Policy Options:

**OPTION C6:** The additional Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arising from consented proposals that is retained by the Parish Council should in part be allocated to support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.

**OPTION C7:** The provision of recreational facilities will be supported, provided that their design and scale are in keeping with the local character and that the impact on the amenity of surrounding residential properties is acceptable.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan concentrates on land use and related matters, the community have identified some important local investment opportunities and beneficial proposals that deserve more detailed consideration. An Action Plan has, therefore, been developed and covers a range of local issues that have been identified through the consultation processes. This is detailed in Appendix F and seeks to respond to the high level support for the improvements to recreational, sporting and community facilities identified by the consultation process.
10 BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

10.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to housing:

OBJECTIVE 5 – IDENTIFYING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE FURTHER EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE VILLAGE WHILST SAFEGUARDING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT PROVISION FOR THE COMMUNITY

10.2 The Steering Group recognised that Thurleigh continues to be a thriving business community with major employers including Jackson Demolition, Monster Events, Star Hire and a number of agricultural holdings. Amongst the latter, Thurleigh Farm Centre attracts visitors from a wide area. Palmer Sport is also located on the former Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) airfield site and provides a corporate hospitality centre and a car refurbishment and storage service.

10.3 There is a continuing commitment to encourage and enable growth in local employment opportunities and it is envisaged that any development will be constrained to a few key areas and will be of a scale to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the existing infrastructure and services. Moreover, any new development would be small in scale, in keeping with the character of the village, and would be sensitively located. Desirable open spaces would be protected.

Local Plan 2032

10.4 Bedford Borough Council has commenced the preparation of a Local Plan that will set out how much growth there should be in the borough in coming years (housing, jobs and associated infrastructure) and where it should take place. As part of this process, the Borough Council invited details of possible development sites, known as a ‘call for sites’ and, in response to this, a number of sites in Thurleigh have been submitted for consideration for employment based uses. These are identified on Map 2 on page 27 of the report, as sites 164 (actually in Milton Ernest Parish) and 275.

10.5 In relation to Thurleigh Airfield Business Park and Twinwoods Business Park, the development of these sites are being strategically dealt with at Borough Council level and, at this stage, it is not possible to speculate how planning policies may change in the forthcoming new Local Plan. It would, however, be appropriate to feedback to Bedford Borough Council the community’s reasonable aspirations and concerns about employment land allocations arising from the community engagement and then liaise with the Borough Council as to whether they are matters that are appropriate to a Neighbourhood Plan or are of a more strategic nature.
Importantly, the emerging Local Plan 2032 includes an objective (number 2 in the draft consultation report) to "support a stronger local economy delivering growth and employment for the benefit of the Borough’s existing and future residents". It is critical that this commitment is made Borough wide.

Local Issues

The response to the community engagement, summarised at Appendices A and B, was not convincing in terms of the need for more employment land allocations in addition to the existing Thurleigh Business Park, with only 25.9% of respondents providing positive feedback. Feedback did, however, emphasise the importance of the Airfield site in meeting the need for employment land allocations. There was little prospect of new business start from the local community, with only 4% of respondents indicating the possibility of starting their own business.

In response to specific questions about the type of business or activity that should be encouraged in Thurleigh, there was a good level of support for the provision of service trades, pub, cafes and restaurants, agricultural/food production, tourism and leisure, office based business (such as consultancies), retail and small scale industrial (manufacturing, skilled artisan etc). Several remarked strongly that there should not be a new recycling/composting/incinerator facility in the area. Only 8.8% agreed or strongly agreed that there should be no new employment provision.

The feedback to the consultation did, however, identify some concerns in making new employment land allocations in Thurleigh. Adequate parking, traffic impact (including HGV's), noise, hours of operation, scale of development and type of business were identified as significant concerns. The need for faster reliable broadband speed was regularly identified as an issue to address.

Options

This section of the report considers options for the location, scale and type of employment land to meet the needs of the community. Planning for sustainable growth in Thurleigh is considered critical and supports the wider Borough level aspirations to retain an active working population and to attract new investment to the area. There is no doubt that Thurleigh Business Park is the focus for employment activity and the responses to the neighbourhood consultation questionnaire reinforced this message and also the following further issues that warrant further discussion with the Borough Council about growth in Thurleigh:

- The need to support existing businesses and facilitate entrepreneurship - 58.5% of respondents indicated that the Neighbourhood Plan for Thurleigh should have policies to encourage existing and new small to medium sized enterprises and micro-businesses to develop in the Parish;
The need to support small scale local and new businesses. 65.6% of respondents indicated that land should be reserved for businesses suited to Thurleigh’s rural environment in order to encourage local employment. This could include supporting growth in tourism and leisure opportunities;

The importance of improving infrastructure, including highways, parking and public transport to assist economic growth.

10.11 Undoubtedly one of Thurleigh’s key assets is the natural environment within which it sits. This is important not just in supporting employment growth opportunities, but in attracting people to live and invest in the village. As a constrained village, locations for new growth are difficult, and thus it is inevitable that it will be concentrated on the existing business park. Whilst visibility and accessibility are important to some users, high levels of services infrastructure, is key to others. This, along with the sensitivity of the landscape, limit the choice of locations for new employment areas.

10.12 In Thurleigh, realistically, the only option to consider is the allocation of the former "Officers Mess" site for either (i) employment use or (ii) live/work accommodation. In this regard, the assessment of sites, at Appendix E, identifies the site for potential commercial use. Infrastructure is constrained for significant commercial development and adjacent sewage works may have an impact. Small business uses, such as artisan skilled based businesses that could potentially attract some tourism and keep commercial traffic to a minimum, may be preferable but commercial rents may render the prospects for success difficult. In respect of the latter, 32.3% of respondents felt that the Neighbourhood Plan should have a wider statement on prosperity which includes the specific endorsement of live/work uses (52.3% of respondents were neutral). It is relevant that the new Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012, contains a particular recommendation for live/work and it states that, when drawing up local plans, Councils should facilitate flexible working practices, such as the integration of residential and commercial units within the same unit.

10.13 Key objectives that have emerged as part of the Neighbourhood Plan are to enhance the prospects for local employment, the creation of an environment that makes it attractive for small businesses to locate and flourish in the area but also to ensure that future employment development within the Parish is sensitive, sustainable and built in the right location. In considering this potential location for growth in this context, the following Policy Options have been developed:

**OPTION E1:** That the former "Officers Mess" site, on Keysoe Road, be allocated for additional employment growth in the village, with employment uses restricted to those classes that do not rely on the regular use of commercial traffic movements. Classes A1, A2, B1 and B2 in the table below are deemed relevant uses for this site, OR:

**OPTION E2:** That the former "Officers Mess" site, on Keysoe Road, be allocated for the development of live/work accommodation to enable flexible working practices, with employment uses restricted to those classes that do not rely on the regular use of commercial traffic movements. Classes A1, A2, B1 and B2 in the table below are deemed relevant uses for this site, OR:

**OPTION E3:** The Parish Council will not identify possible new sites for employment provision in Thurleigh but will refer the aspirations and concerns raised from the community engagement to Bedford Borough Council to ensure that these issues are made aware to the Local Planning Authority.
The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. This Order is periodically amended, the most recent amendment comprising The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015. The following list gives an indication of the types of use which may fall within each use class. Please note that this is a guide only and it is for local planning authorities to determine, in the first instance, depending on the individual circumstances of each case, which use class a particular use falls into.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Shops</td>
<td>Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices, pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 Financial and professional services</td>
<td>Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) and including estate and employment agencies. It does not include betting offices or payday loan shops - these are now classed as &quot;sui generis&quot; uses (see below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Restaurants and cafés</td>
<td>For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises - restaurants, snack bars and cafes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4 Drinking establishments</td>
<td>Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not night clubs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5 Hot food takeaways</td>
<td>For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 Business</td>
<td>Offices (other than those that fall within A2), research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 General industrial</td>
<td>Use for industrial process other than one falling within class B1 (excluding incineration purposes, chemical treatment or landfill or hazardous waste).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8 Storage or distribution</td>
<td>This class includes open air storage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 Hotels</td>
<td>Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 Residential institutions</td>
<td>Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2A Secure Residential Institution</td>
<td>Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Dwelling houses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4 Houses in multiple occupation</td>
<td>Small shared houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 Non-residential institutions</td>
<td>Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 Assembly and leisure</td>
<td>Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sui Generis</td>
<td>Certain uses do not fall within any use class and are considered 'sui generis'. Such uses include: betting offices/shops, payday loan shops, theatres, houses in multiple occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, launderettes, taxi businesses, amusement centres and casinos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YOUNG PEOPLE

11.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event held in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to the provision for young people.

**OBJECTIVE 6 – ENSURING THAT THE VILLAGE BENEFITS FROM SUFFICIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

11.2 There is a commitment to ensure that excellent local facilities and services are available for young people to ensure a high quality of life for both current and future residents in the village.

11.3 Thurleigh Lower School and Pre-School offers excellent provision for the village’s children and there is a continued need to ensure the safety, well-being, education and enjoyment of the village’s youngest children and the support that is provided to the families of Thurleigh. This includes a positive commitment to be a provider of educational excellence for young people in the village and the immediate locality and, as required, a preparedness to identify land for any redevelopment or relocation that may be required to enable this to continue.

11.4 The Steering Group envisaged, in accordance with this objective, that potential community support would exist to:

(a) Consider the adequacy of the existing provision of facilities within the village and immediate area for young people and, if any shortfalls are identified, to identify sites where new or enhanced facilities might best be located (whether within the existing built environment or in new development).

(b) Identify the most suitable new site should the primary school relocate and to consider the future use of its existing site if vacated.

(c) Identify the features which contribute to the rich quality of life for young people in Thurleigh and what other key attributes, events and activities might be exploited to increase its attractiveness for young people.

11.5 The response to the initial Launch consultation, summarised at Appendix A, indicated a general feeling that there is a need for more opportunities or facilities for young people. In addition, the retention of the school was regarded as a key part of developing the community and perhaps utilising its facilities.
The response to the initial consultation, summarised at Appendices A and B, emphasised that the range of facilities for young people was generally adequate or very adequate with the following feedback from respondents:

- Over 70% consider that the School and Pre-School are adequate/very adequate;
- Almost 65% consider that sports facilities are adequate/very adequate;
- 70% of respondents consider that children's play areas are adequate/very adequate;
- Only 43% of respondents considered facilities for teenagers to be adequate or very adequate, whilst 38% felt that they were limited or not adequate.

There was an overriding view that facilities for children should be improved and, thinking about the needs of young people, the following level of support was given to a range of areas to develop with additional or improved facilities:

- 57.2% supported additional or improved child care/nursery facilities (5.9% did not);
- 53.9% supported additional or improved recreational/sporting facilities for the youth (4.5% did not);
- 48.3% supported additional or improved facilities for teenagers (5.3% did not);
- 68% supported additional or improved play areas for children (5.9% did not);
- 42.8% supported the provision of a youth centre (13.8% did not).

There was other suggestions made (including provision of a cycle or skate park, tennis courts and bowls provision) and a recognition of the benefits of social interaction. There was also recognition that, for example, facilities had closed due to lack of interest (e.g. a previous youth club) and that sometimes facilities rely on volunteers or need to be supervised. There was also a view that the play area did not cater for all age ranges.

Borough Council - Planning Context

As identified at 9.8 above, policy CP18 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan emphasises the commitment to ensure the continued viability of the rural economy and support the sustainability of local services by (i) resisting proposals that would lead to a loss of employment generating uses, (ii) restricting the change of use of shops, post offices and public houses where it would impact on local services and communities and (iii) support the retention of local community facilities. Specifically, Policy CP18 seeks to prevent the material loss of local services and facilities and lends support to other initiatives that may seek to bolster the viability and levels of use of existing facilities and the introduction of additional services and infrastructure.

Local Issues

Issue 11.1 - Sustainable Community Facilities and Amenities

Thurleigh has a limited range of facilities for young people which should be protected in the same way as the range of recreational, sporting and community facilities. The Policy Options outlined at 9.12 and 9.13 above are, therefore, deemed relevant. They are reproduced here for completeness:

OPTION C1: Local facilities and services will be protected and supported by the Parish Council in accordance with other policies in the Development Plan that seek to ensure the continued viability of the rural economy and support the sustainability of local services.
OPTION C2: There will be a presumption against development which would detrimentally affect community assets such as The Jackal Public House, The Village Hall, Sports and Social Club, Playing Fields, The Church, The War Memorial, Memorial Garden, Bus stops, post box and benches.

OPTION C3: Proposals for a village shop, medical provision and dental care facility will be supported.

OPTION C4: The Parish Council will continue to promote the use of the Village Hall and will support appropriate plans to improve community provision. The Parish Council will also support and promote other existing clubs and facilities in the area, for instance by helping to identify sources of funding such as developer contributions.

Issue 11.2 - Improvement of Community Facilities

11.11 Similarly, the Policy Options outlined at 9.15 and 9.16 above for improvements to existing facilities are also deemed relevant to address the needs of young people:

OPTION C5: Any proposals that come forward over the plan period should identify developer contributions to further support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.

OPTION C6: The additional Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arising from consented proposals that is retained by the Parish Council should in part be allocated to support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.

OPTION C7: The provision of recreational facilities will be supported, provided that their design and scale are in keeping with the local character and that the impact on the amenity of surrounding residential properties is acceptable.

11.12 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan concentrates on land use and related matters, the community have identified some important local investment opportunities and beneficial proposals that deserve more detailed consideration. An Action Plan has, therefore, been developed and covers a range of local issues that have been identified through the consultation processes. This is detailed in Appendix F and seeks to respond to the high level support for the improvements to facilities for young people that have been identified by the consultation process.

11.13 The proposed development of the land behind the School, adjacent to the Village Hall, (see section 6 covering Housing provision) could enable capacity improvements to the School, including improvements to parking provision and safety to be delivered as part of the scheme benefits.
12

LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

12.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to Green Spaces:

**OBJECTIVE 7 – ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING OUR DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPE WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO A SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY, INCLUDING NATURAL FEATURES SUCH AS SMALL WOODLANDS, IN-FIELD TREES, HEDGEROWS, PONDS AND STREAMS WHICH DISTINGUISH THE PARISH.**

12.2 The Steering Group has recognised that local distinctiveness contributes to a sense of place and community and that all development proposals should fully embrace this concept. There is, therefore, a commitment to maintain existing views and vistas across open countryside and to retain the "village feel" and the sense of place. Natural features, such as small woodlands, in-field trees, hedgerows, ponds and streams are significant landscape components which distinguish the Parish and must be protected.

12.3 Thurleigh is very fortunate to enjoy a first class and rich landscape - it has the very peaceful "Village Garden" in the High Street, the Churchyard, various areas of communal green space, miles of hedges (generally well kept and trimmed) and over 30 miles of footpaths and bridleways within the parish, with many more in the surrounding countryside. The original Parish Plan described some of the trees in the village as "special". In terms of Wildlife and Nature Reserves, Spencer’s Wood, opposite Thurleigh Farm Centre, is listed by English Nature as a Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat (wet woodland).

Borough Wide Information

12.4 Details of environmental protection designations, such as tree preservation orders and sites of special scientific interest, are available on the Bedford Borough Council web-site. Tree preservation orders (and other useful local information such as rights of way and the location of listed buildings) are plotted on the Council’s LocalView Fusion website which can be accessed on the Bedford Borough website at [http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside/rights_of_way/localview.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside/rights_of_way/localview.aspx).
12.5 Other sources of information that has some relevance to the objective relating to local distinctiveness can be found in technical reports that have been commissioned by the Borough Council to provide evidence to underpin the emerging Local Plan 2032. The range of technical reports was specifically considered at paragraph 8.9 of the report (under the objective "Green Space") and can be accessed at http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/planning_policy_its_purpose/technical_reports.aspx.

12.6 The preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough seeks to identify and plan for future needs for new homes, jobs and other uses up to 2032. Importantly, the emerging Local Plan 2032 includes objectives that are, to some extent, relevant to the objective relating to local distinctiveness. Objective 8 (as drafted) identifies the commitment to "develop a strong and multifunctional urban and rural green infrastructure network through protecting, enhancing, extending and linking landscapes, biodiversity sites, heritage sites, green spaces and paths", whilst objective 10 (as drafted) identifies the commitment to "protect and enhance natural resources including air, soil and water to minimise the impacts of flooding, climate change and pollution". It is critical that this commitment is made Borough wide.

Local Issues

12.7 The response to the initial Launch consultation, summarised at Appendix A, emphasised the keenness to plant more trees, have more pride in the village, promote footpaths and bridleways and to consider the wildlife area. Maintaining the rural nature of the village was emphasised and there was a strong view that safe footpaths should be maintained and that additional access should be provided; a potential new footpath from the village to Cross End was identified.

12.8 Further evidence gained by analysis of the Neighbourhood Questionnaire, summarised at Appendix B, identified the importance of:

- Protecting, managing and enhancing nature conservation (biodiversity, flora and fauna) with 92.7% of respondents regarding this as important or very important;
- Maintaining existing views/vistas, with over 90% of respondents regarding this as important or very important;
- Protecting local wildlife and habitats with 97% of respondents regarding this as important or very important;
- Maintaining rights of way for the benefit of local people and visitors with 91.5% of respondents regarding this as important or very important;
- Preserving hedgerows and trees from further loss with 93.4% of respondents regarding this as important or very important;
- Protecting the "Village Garden" with 82.9% of respondents regarding this as important or very important;

12.9 This represents a strong endorsement for continuing to preserve and enhance natural features that contribute to local distinctiveness. The feedback from the community engagement identified high levels of support for additional or improved facilities, including planting of trees/orchards (with 84.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing), recreating wildlife meadows (with 79.2% support), improving footways and bridleways (88.4% support), provision of new footpaths e.g. Village to Cross End (with 86.1% support), developing a series of Parish Walks promoting less well routes and features of local interest (with 80.5% support) and enhancing signage and environmental improvements to increase accessibility to the landscape (with 72.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this proposal).
12.10 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan concentrates on land use and related matters, the community have identified some important local opportunities and beneficial proposals to encourage and support local distinctiveness. An Action Plan has, therefore, been developed and covers a range of local issues that have been identified through the consultation processes. This is detailed in Appendix F.

12.11 There are, in addition, a number of other issues that need to be considered as part of the preparations of, and for potential inclusion in, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. There is some correlation with Objective 3, Green Space (detailed in section 8 of the consultation report), but specific matters relevant to local distinctiveness are considered in the sections below.

**Issue 12.1: Protect and Improve Accessibility**

12.12 Thurleigh has approximately thirty miles of public rights of way across the surrounding countryside to be enjoyed by all. There is a local volunteer group who, in conjunction with the Borough Council, help maintain these paths and way markers and also prepare local circular walks. There is a need to improve accessibility for all throughout Thurleigh to support healthy communities. The network of footpaths and bridleways, providing access to the surrounding attractive open countryside, are identified on Map 6 below, with footpaths identified in purple and bridleways in green, and should be effectively promoted.

12.13 There may be opportunities for developing a series of “Parish Walks” promoting lesser known routes and features of local interest. There is likely, however, be a reluctance for landowners to allow a footpath to be created on their land as it comes with responsibilities and potentially impacts on land value. The further development of the network by persuading landowners to dedicate rights of way would necessitate developer contributions or other sources of funding.

12.14 Important key objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan will be to protect and enhance the high quality and distinctive rural landscape for present and future generations and, moreover, to minimise the impact of new development on the local area and, in doing so, to protect the distinctive views and visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside, landscape and heritage assets. The following **Policy Options** have been developed to address these issues:

**OPTION D1:** The Parish Walks identified in Map 6 below will be promoted and enhanced through signage and environmental improvements to improve accessibility for all. Further work is needed to assess these and to prioritise areas for improvement, such as seating and drop kerbs. Developer contributions and other sources of funding will be required to support the promotion and improvement of the Parish Walks.

**OPTION D2:** The Parish Council will work to develop improved linkages for walks connecting to neighbouring parishes in order to support and enhance health and wellbeing beyond Thurleigh Parish.

**OPTION D3:** Proposals for new development in excess of five dwellings should produce a green infrastructure plan to show how the development can improve green spaces and corridors for people and nature and how wildlife can be protected and enhanced.
Issue 12.2: Encouraging Local Distinctiveness

12.15 Natural features, such as trees, hedgerows, planting and woodlands, were prominent in respect of the positive changes that survey respondents felt could be made to improve the landscape and environment of Thurleigh. Tree planting was identified as a key change with over 85% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan should promote a Tree Planting Scheme for Thurleigh. Only 0.6% of respondents did not agree. The protection of trees and hedgerows was also highlighted, with some expressing concern that in the past trees and hedges had been removed but not replaced. The maintenance regime for existing rights of way, verges and hedgerows also featured.

12.16 The survey also identified some key areas where residents and visitors could enjoy the landscape. Wendy’s windmill, Robin’s folly, the reservoirs, Scald End Farm, churchyard, walks on the footpaths, Cross End and Village Garden all featured on a long list of places of interest. The scope for opening up Bury Mound was also highlighted as an area of interest for visitors. The provision of maps, direction signage and information boards was supported by over 75% of respondents to the survey with 53.7% agreeing and 21.6% strongly agreeing to such a proposal. Only 6.7% of respondents did not agree to the provision of maps, signage and boards.

12.17 Consideration of the feedback indicates that key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan will be (i) to protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, our local wildlife and its habitat and trees and preserve ecological corridors and sites of special interest and (ii) to maintain the distinct character of the village by preserving, protecting and enhancing the green and rural identity of our surroundings. This has led to the following Policy Options to address this issue:

**OPTION D4:** The Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan should promote a Tree Planting Scheme for Thurleigh.

**OPTION D5:** Proposals which affect sites with existing trees or hedgerows should be accompanied by an independent survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees or hedgerows, and a management plan to demonstrate how they will be so maintained.

**OPTION D6:** Development proposals must be designed to retain wherever possible ancient trees, trees of good arboricultural and amenity value and hedgerow; where it is proposed that trees of good arboricultural or amenity value be removed they must be replaced on a ratio of 3 new trees for each one removed.

**OPTION D7:** The Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan will encourage the protection of local wildlife sites and habitats and will support the development of wildlife corridors and the extension of green space and new nature conservation areas wherever possible. 'Buffer zones’ around wildlife sites should be implemented to minimise the impact of development.

**OPTION D8:** The Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan should include policies to address the provision of maps, direction signage and information boards to promote areas of interest in the Village and to ensure that these are informative and helpful whilst not becoming intrusive or detracting from the natural beauty of the area.
OPTION D9: There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation and enhancement of the existing network of footpaths, tracks and bridleways, and, where possible, improved access to the countryside with additional footpath links.

OPTION D10: Support will be given to proposals that improve or extend the existing footpath network and which provide bridle/cycle paths, allowing better access to the local amenities and services, to green spaces, to any new housing and to the open countryside, subject to compliance with other Plan priorities. The loss of existing footpaths will be resisted.
HERITAGE ASSETS

13.1 The original Community Engagement Report that helped guide the Launch Event in December 2014 identified the following key objective in relation to heritage assets:

**OBJECTIVE 8– PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR LISTED BUILDINGS AND THE ANCIENT MONUMENT (BURY HILL CAMP)**

13.2 The Steering Group has recognised that any new development in Thurleigh should positively respect and does not negatively impact on the shared heritage. One of the key provisions of the plan will, therefore, be to ensure that both the fabric and the setting of listed buildings and heritage assets continue to be protected.

13.3 A castle mound, known as Bury Hill, behind St. Peter's Church is scheduled as an Ancient Monument. It is thought that it was erected c1140 and it is possible that the church of St. Peter is built from stone originally used in the construction of the castle.

13.4 The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as follows:

‘A building, monument, site, place or landscape identified as having a degree of significance, meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interests’.

13.5 Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and those identified by the Local Planning Authority, including local listing. The value to this and future generations is because of its heritage interest: archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage assets physical presence but also from its setting. Residents in Thurleigh enjoy the privilege and way of life of a small quiet ancient village, with surrounding residential rural villages, making it a good place to live. There are historic characterful buildings and monuments, ancient green amenity spaces and farmland, with some nearby facilities and good schools.

13.6 There is no doubt that Bedford has many fine areas and buildings distinguished by their architecture, landscape and history, which creates an attractive and mixed environment. These areas are important examples of history and must be protected against unsympathetic change. There are two main ways this can be achieved - through Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.

13.7 A Listed building is one that is given additional protection because of its special architectural or historic interest. Development or alterations that can be carried out on these buildings will be limited and planning applications will be required for work that would normally be allowed in other buildings. There are 42 listed entries in Thurleigh and information about these listed buildings can be found at [http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/) (search on Thurleigh).
Conservation Areas are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance’ (Civic Amenities Act 1967) and give additional protection to an area of important historical value. Such a designation restricts what development can be carried out and, development that would generally be allowed outside of a conservation area, may not be allowed inside a designated area. Development proposals within a conservation area have to preserve or enhance the character of that area.

A map of the Thurleigh conservation area can be found on the Council’s website at http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/historic_environment/historic_areas_and_buildings.aspx.

Local Issues

The response to the initial Launch consultation, summarised at Appendix A, identified that better use should be made of the church, perhaps illuminating the asset as a feature. The protection of trees and opening up the Bury Hill Ancient Monument were also identified. The neighbourhood questionnaire consulted further on the specific proposals to Church feature lighting and providing access to Bury Hill. There was a mixed reaction to the idea of feature lighting the Church with over 50% supporting the proposal, about 19% disagreeing with the proposal and almost 25% remaining neutral on the issue. The Church featured a few times in terms of ideas to exploit heritage assets, with feedback suggesting that more events should be held and publicised to attract people (such as afternoon teas and jumble sales).

The support for providing access to Bury Hill Castle Mound was significant with over 75% of respondents to the survey supporting the proposal. Other feedback suggested that Bury Hill should be cleared to provide access and that an information board should be provided for visitors to Bury Hill. At a more general level, heritage trail leaflets were suggested, together with a website showing buildings of interest.

The survey of residents also identified a good level of support for the provision of maps, direction signage and information boards to highlight key heritage sites. This was supported by about 75% of respondents. Policy Option D8 has, therefore, been included in section 12 (Local Distinctiveness) which provides that the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan should include policies to address the provision of maps, direction signage and information boards to promote areas of interest in the Village and to ensure that these are informative and helpful whilst not becoming intrusive or detracting from the natural beauty of the area.
Issue 13.1 - Protection of Built Heritage

13.13 A key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan is to conserve the historic built environment and heritage assets. It is clear that there are several buildings and features of historical interest within Thurleigh as well as locally important heritage assets which should be protected. For new development to be supported, it must be sensitive and sympathetic to the area, protect and enrich the look and feel of the village and minimise the impact that the development has on the natural and built environment (including protected assets). The following Policy Options have emerged relevant to these objectives:

**OPTION HA1**: Statutory Listed Buildings and Ancient Monuments are already given protection from inappropriate development by law. The Parish Council will require that, in addition to this, locally important built heritage assets will be identified as important assets in the Neighbourhood Plan with the presumption that these assets should be protected.

**OPTION HA2**: The Parish Council will promote dialogue with English Heritage with a view to opening up access to Bury Hill Ancient Monument for visitors and, as part of this, will ensure that a Monument Management Plan is prepared to ensure that the heritage asset is protected and maintained.

Issue 13.2 - Preserve and Enhance Conservation Area

13.14 The protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area is a paramount consideration and, in view of this, the following Policy Option is proposed:

**OPTION HA3**: The effect of a proposal on the significance of these non-designated heritage assets will be taken into account in determining an application, in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of the heritage asset and its contribution to the distinctiveness of the Parish.
14 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

14.1 This Issues and Options Report has been published for public consultation between 1 November 2016 and 16 December 2016. Feedback from the consultation will increase local knowledge and “evidence” and indicate which of the initial ideas have attracted support to be taken forward. This will enable detailed policies, proposals and allocations to be developed and included in a Draft Neighbourhood Plan which will be the subject of a further round of public consultation.

14.2 Thurleigh Parish Council has produced Representation Forms for each Objective which provides a summary of the issues and options and is now at the stage when further public comments are invited and welcomed. A full summary of the issues and options is reproduced at Appendix G. Copies of the Representation Form will be distributed to all households and are also available from the website www.thurleighndp.com and at the Village Hall and St. Mary's Church. If preferred, comments can be made in writing or via e-mail to thurleighndp@gmail.com. Respondents are invited to support more than one Option.

14.3 Completed returns should be sent to:

Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan
Scald End Farm Shop,
Mill Road,
Thurleigh
MK44 2DP
15

NEXT STEPS

15.1 This Issues and Options document is a key step in the preparation of the proposed Thurleigh Neighbourhood Plan.

15.2 Following the public consultation process on the Issues and Options, careful consideration will be given to all the responses and these comments will inform the preparation of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. A summary of the responses, together with information about how they have been considered and whether or not they have informed the policies in the Draft Plan, will be provided in a published Issues and Options Consultation Statement.

15.3 It is envisaged that the Draft Plan will be published for consultation in Autumn 2016, before being revised and then finalised and submitted to Bedford Borough Council in Spring 2017. The Borough Council will then consider the document and undertake further consultation before the document is scrutinised by an independent inspector through an Examination (organised by the Borough Council).

15.4 Following this process, the Plan will be subject to a referendum to ensure that the Plan enjoys local support.
**APPENDIX A**

**THURLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**LAUNCH EVENT - CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

### HOUSING

- There is a need for more affordable housing in the village which means for both young people and the elderly. This was very much aimed at existing residents rather than attracting incomers.

- Suggestions as to location included: demolishing the flats in The Close and building bungalows, developing the Officers’ Mess site, Hayle Field and Church field. As well as providing (affordable) accommodation for existing residents, there was also an acknowledgement that increasing the housing stock would help retain existing facilities (the pub?) and perhaps attract further facilities.

- Many respondents were keen on a small shop being available in the centre of the village.

- Coupled with the development of housing is the need to ensure sufficient/additional parking; this is a real issue in The Close and Keysoe Road.

### TRAFFIC

- Many concerns about the village being used as a thoroughfare for much traffic, both East-West and as an alternative to the A6.

- General feeling that there is a need for speed reduction schemes that might include average speed cameras, traffic calming (especially around school/Village Hall High Street area) and further speed limits.

### BROADBAND

- A very high number of respondents would welcome the introduction of high-speed broadband to the village, perhaps with a central facility where people might access it if unable to access through home.

### YOUNG PEOPLE

- There was a general feeling that there is a need for more opportunities/facilities for young people within the village.

### SENSE OF COMMUNITY

- Many respondents highlighted the need for a greater sense of community, which could include developing more community facilities, better use of Village Hall for activities, develop Community Garden/allotments.

- Retaining the school is a key part of developing the community and perhaps utilising its facilities.

- Look at the skills that residents can offer.
ACCESS

- Maintain safe footpaths and provide additional access e.g. footpath from village to Cross End. Coupled with this, the need for additional public transport.

HERITAGE

- Make better use of the Church, perhaps illuminate it as a feature.
- Open up access to Bury Hill. Protect trees.

ENVIRONMENT

- Plant more trees.
- Have more pride in the village.
- Promote footpaths and bridleways and consider wildlife area.
- Maintain the rural nature of the village.
APPENDIX B

THURLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
SUMMARY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

The Thurleigh NDP questionnaire was circulated for responses during June/July 2015. There were 173 questionnaires completed either online or as hard copies (representing a 38% return rate based upon the number of questionnaires issued and 57% based upon the number of properties in the village). Of these:

- 26.3% had lived in the village for over 30 years.
- 99.4% had Thurleigh as their main residence.

OBJECTIVE 1 – HOUSING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73%</td>
<td>Provision should be made for the local housing needs by allocating a ‘rural exception’ site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>Over 30 units/new homes should be built in the period to 2032 - over and above the number of new homes already established to meet the local need (this represented the largest proportion of respondents). There was support for small scale development with over 45% indicating a priority for more than 20 new dwellings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Not think that new housing was required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60%</td>
<td>New housing provision and, in response to the style of housing, villagers responded as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Houses with 3 more bedrooms (40.6% agreed/16.1% strongly agreed).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Semi detached/terraced (57.3% agreed/16.7% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Bungalows (50% agreed/22.7% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Retirement housing (46.1% agreed/17.8% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Affordable homes for sale/rent (43.8% agreed/22.2% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Elderly sheltered homes (35.8% agreed/14.6% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Eco-friendly homes (33.8% agreed/25.7% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The respondents felt strongly that flats/apartments and three storey housing should not be provided as part of new developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>Neutral on the provision of either large or small gardens in new homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There was a strong view that houses should complement the village style and that any new development must have adequate parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Villagers agreed with the two Call for Sites identified:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Beeches (33.1% agreed and 13.6% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hayle Field (46.1% agreed and 22.7% strongly agreed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concerns about more housing related to traffic volume/speed, parking, current infrastructure, access to both sites, drainage, current sewage system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other locations that were identified for potential consideration were (i) Field behind the school, (ii) extending Glebe Close, (iii) the existing Village Hall site, (iv) existing Garage site at The Close, and (iv) behind the Post Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There was a mixed reaction to residential development on the former Officers Mess site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing density for future development: There was robust feedback from the survey for low density development (less than 20 dwellings per hectare) - with 56.8% of respondents supporting low density development) and an emphasis for a few medium sized (62.4% of respondents) or several small developments (63.3% of respondents). The support for individual plots, including gardens of existing houses, was less obvious with 46.7% agreeing to individual building plots in the gardens of existing houses. Key responses were as follows:

- 56.8% agreed to less than 20 per hectare
- Only 24.5% supported medium density development (30-40 per hectare)
- Only 2.9% supported high density development (over 50 per hectare)
- 66.7% agreed to being similar to neighbouring area
- Only 24.5% supported one large development of more than 20 houses
- Villagers expressed a preference for a few medium sized developments (62.4% agreed) or several small developments (63.3% agreed).
- 46.7% agreed to individual plots including building in gardens of existing houses, 40.8% did not support such provision.

Development was also considered appropriate:

- next to existing housing 33.3%.
- on brownfield sites 37.6%.

Respondents did not feel it was appropriate that there should be development on greenfield sites (61.8%) or on greenfield sites if no brownfield sites available (41.9%).

44.9% agreed that the existing village boundary should be maintained, whilst 73.1% responded that the existing boundary should not be significantly extended. 58.1%, however, supported, an extension of the existing boundary to enable fringe development (adjacent to existing boundaries). Only 34.3% supported an extension of the existing boundary to enable small developments (43.4% did not).

Respondents considered that any housing development should support:

- young people to stay in the village, with 74.2% regarding this as important or very important.
- local businesses/community groups and facilities, with 70.4% regarding this as important or very important.
- improved infrastructure (roads/amenities), with 60.6% regarding this as important or very important.
- the meeting of housing needs, with 63.3% regarding this as important/very important.
- the increase in vibrancy of the village, with 59.3% regarding this as important or very important.
- enhancement of village culture and social mix, with 46.8% regarding this as important or very important.

Concerns relating to any development in Thurleigh were identified as:

- the impact on environment (36.2% concerned/34.4% very concerned).
- the impact on view of the entrances and exits to and from Thurleigh (34% concerned and also 34% very concerned).
- increased parking need (35.8% concerned/48.1% very concerned).
- the access problems due to increased traffic and congestion (32.7% concerned/49.7% very concerned).
- having adequate infrastructure (35.8% concerned/43.2% very concerned).
- the pressure on school places (29.6% concerned/28.4% very concerned).
In considering any new development, the follow were seen as important or very important:

- Houses that are energy efficient and have low environmental impact (84.9%).
- Houses that are low cost to buy/rent (61.3%).
- Houses with gardens (77.9%).
- Houses with off street parking (98.7%).
- Houses that respect the existing character of the village (94.5%).

42.1% of villagers agreed and 34.6% strongly agreed that a Village Design Statement should be developed.

53.1% strongly agreed (and a further 39.5% agreed) that there should be car parking space standards set.

49.4% agreed and 29% strongly agreed that there should be an amenity space standard set.

57.7% strongly agreed and 31.7% agreed that there should be a height standard set.

50.9% strongly agreed and 31.7% agreed that there should be a massing standard set.

51.6% strongly agreed and a further 34.2% agreed that there should be an external finish standard set.

63.6% strongly agreed and 32.1% agreed that that there should be a highway access standard set.

54.5% strongly agreed that trees and hedges should be protected.

**OBJECTIVE 2 – INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

The main transport issues were identified as:

- 42% were concerned and 31.5% were very concerned with pedestrian safety.
- 37.3% were concerned and 27.3% were very concerned with local road congestion.
- 30.9% were concerned and 20.4% were very concerned with the provision of safe cycle routes (31.5% were neutral).
- 40.1% were concerned and 33.3% were very concerned about frequency of the local bus services.
- 39.5% were concerned and 34.6% were very concerned with the safe walks to school.
- 30.5% were concerned and 58.5% were very concerned about the speed of traffic through the village.
- 32.7% were concerned and 46.9% were very concerned about parking in the village.
- Over 60% were very concerned about the road maintenance standards.
- 46.3% were concerned and 27.4% were very concerned about footpath provision.
- 44.4% were concerned and 22.8% were very concerned with footpath standards.
- 30.7% were concerned and 60.7% were very concerned with HGV traffic in the village.
- 33.3% were concerned and 51.5% were very concerned about through traffic.

The main mode of transport is 95.1% by car; 69.7% get about the village on foot.

There is an average of 3 cars per household.

Villagers travel between 0 - 160 miles to work each day.
In terms of the improvements most needed in response to transport issues:

- 81.8% strongly agree to the need for an improved bus service.
- 44.4% agree and 37.5% strongly agree to the need for more designated footpaths.
- 84.5% strongly agree to the need for traffic calming.
- 72.7% strongly agree to the need for average speed cameras.
- 44.9% strongly agree to the need for reduction in on-street parking.
- 59.9% strongly agree and a further 29.9% agree to the need for reduced speed limits.
- 48.1% strongly agree to the need for improved highways/footpath maintenance standards.
- A weight limit for the High Street was suggested.

Designated cycle lanes (43.2%) and pedestrian crossings (50%) were seen as neutral options.

In terms of footpaths:

- 45.1% agree to the need to upgrade and extend footpaths.
- Over 60% agree to the use of footpaths as cycle paths (but not for speed cycling).
- 42.9% agreed to the introduction of white lines along the side of the road to mark recommended places for pedestrians and cyclists.

A specific concern was the level of inconsiderate parking in the High Street, particularly associated with school drop off and collections.

There were no constructive solutions to improved parking in the village and, in particular, the concerns in The Close and Keysoe Road.

Digital Connectivity: a very strong reaction for improved broadband. Ideas included working in partnership with satellite internet provision, using fibre optic from the airfield, use the church tower to gain better connectivity.

OBJECTIVE 3 – GREEN SPACES

The following are important when considering the local environment:

- 57.4% regarded the protection of existing open space as very important, with 33.3% regarding this as important.
- 46% regarded the maintenance of groundwater quality as very important, with 42.9% regarding this as important.
- 41.3% considered that reducing the risk of flooding was important, with 38.1% regarding this as very important.
- 39.5% considered that reducing the carbon footprint was important, with 33.1% regarding this as very important.
- 50% considered that the need to maintain air quality was very important, whilst 38.1% regarding this as important.
- 50.3% considered that encouraging good housing design was very important, with 41.6% also regarding this as important.
- 53.8% considered that improving road safety was very important, with 38.1% also regarding this as important.
- 47.9% considered that ensuring safe pedestrian routes was very important, with 39.3% also regarding this as important.
There was a very good level of support for improvements to meet future village needs with:

- 41.8% supporting improvements to surface water drainage.
- 47.4% supporting improvements to the sewage system.
- 61.5% supporting the installation of gas in the village.
- 62.9% of respondents regarded improvements to recycling provision to be essential.

In terms of additional or improved facilities to be included in the parish:

- 69.2% supported additional or improved landscaping of public areas.
- 51% supported the provision of additional formal/informal green spaces.
- 56.4% supported additional or improved play areas for children.
- There is a good level of demand for the provision of allotments.
- There was a mixed response to the need for more public seating and picnic areas.

Concerns within the village are:

- 23.6% were very concerned and 23% were concerned about air pollution.
- 37.8% were concerned and 26.8% were very concerned about fly tipping.
- 40.5% were very concerned and 36.8% were concerned about dog fouling.
- 38.2% were concerned and 36.4% were very concerned about litter.
- 27.3% were concerned and 18.6% were very concerned about crime.
- The maintenance of footpaths and bridleways was identified by some as a concern.

There was limited concern about light and noise pollution, flooding, grass cutting frequency, anti-social behaviour, vandalism, burglary and car crime.

In relation to the six existing areas of designated Open Space, the support for the protection of these spaces was overwhelming:

- 96.9% supported the protection of the School playing fields as green space.
- 84% supported the protection of the natural green space and public footpath of the High Street as green space.
- 87.3% supported the protection of the Bury Hill wooded area as green space.
- 84% supported the protection of the area of informal green space and private garden in front of Vicarage Green as green space.
- 87% supported the protection of the Village Garden as green space.
- 96.3% supported the protection of the Playing Fields as green space.

There was also significant support for the protection of the Memorial Garden (in Church Yard) with 96.3% of respondents supporting its protection.

Other places identified were the reservoir, pub garden, Cross End bridleway, corner of Robins Folly (with bench), corner of The Close and Keysoe Road.

The respondents felt that there should be a robust policy to prohibit the following:

- Industrial wind turbines (61.6% of respondents).
- Small wind turbines (29.8% of respondents).
- Industrial solar farms (50.3% of respondents).
- Small solar farms (26.3% of respondents).
The following community facilities are used occasionally or as stated:

- Broadband: 86% daily.
- Bus service: 52.2% never, with 29.6% occasionally.
- 85% never use the village bus.
- Over 80% occasionally use the mobile post office.
- 50.9% used the village pub.
- 50.9% use the Sports and Social occasionally with 39.9% never using it.
- 52.8% use the playing fields occasionally.
- 67.1% use the village hall occasionally.
- 9.8% use the church weekly with 51.1% using it occasionally.
- 75.2% never use the mobile library.
- 50.9% never use the play area at the playing fields.
- 54.9% use Scald End Team Rooms and farm shop.
- 45.7% used the Farm Centre.

The following are seen as very important facilities:

- There was considerable support for improved "high-speed" broadband provision in the village (with almost 94% of respondents regarding this important or very important).
- 55.2% regarded the bus service as very important (with a further 35.6% classifying this as important).
- 34.8% regarded the community bus as very important (41% classified this as important).
- 49.1% regarded the mobile post office as very important (with a further 41.1% classifying this as important).
- 43.9% regarded the Jackal Public House as very important (with 37.8% classifying this as important).
- 34.8% regarded the Sports and Social Club as very important (with 40.9% classifying this as important).
- 56.7% regarded the playing fields as very important (with 34.1% also classifying this as important).
- 44.5% regarded the Village Hall as very important (42.7% classified this as important).
- 51.2% regarded the Church as very important (33.3% classified this as important).
- Over 60% regarded the Mobile library as very important.
- 50.9% regarded the play area as very important (36% classified this as important).
- 32.7% regarded the Scald End Team Rooms and farm shop as important (with 22.4% of respondents classifying this facility as very important).
- 31.5% regarded the Farm Centre as important (20.4% classified this as very important).

The consultation also identified the aspiration for additional or improved facilities as a consequence of small scale new development, such as play areas for children (with support from 56.4% of respondents), a communal broadband facility (58.5% of respondents), improved mobile telephone network (78.7% of respondents), provision of a local/community shop (86.4% respondents), more recreational or sporting facilities (48.7% of respondents) and provision of an outdoor exercise/gym equipment (34.6% of respondents).
There was also a high level of support for an improved local bus service, medical provision and dental care facility. There is a good level of desire for the provision of a Village Shop if more houses are built.

The strength of "community" in the village scored highly (with over 40% of respondents considering that it is excellent or good, 40.9% average and only 16.2% poor or very poor).

The importance of village identity, community spirit and feeling part of the community was regarded as important to many, as did Thurleigh being a quiet village, its rural atmosphere, the peaceful and safe neighbourhood and existing local services. In particular:

- 43.5% regarded Village identity as important (24.8% as very important).
- 52.2% regarded feeling part of a community as important (22.4% as very important).
- 50.3% regarded community spirit as important (21.4% as very important).
- 43% regarded local services as important (17.2% as very important).
- 42% regarded having a say in decisions affecting the village as important (37.7% also classified this as very important).
- A quiet village was regarded as very important by 56.2% of respondents (with a further 35.8% regarding this as important).
- Easy access to the countryside was important or very important to 90% of respondents.
- 53.8% regarded rural atmosphere as very important (36.9% as important).
- 71.8% considered that a peaceful and safe neighbourhood was important or very important to over 95% of respondents.

**OBJECTIVE 5 – BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT**

The response was not convincing in terms of the need for more employment land allocations in addition to the existing Thurleigh Business Park, with only 25.9% of respondents providing positive feedback. 46.9% disagreed that there needs to be more employment land allocations made.

Feedback did, however, emphasise the importance of the Airfield site in meeting the need for employment land allocations.

36.7% of respondents considered that Thurleigh has poor job opportunities, with a further 25.9% regarding job opportunities as very poor.

12.4% of respondents operate a business from home, whilst 20.7% work from home.

There was little prospect of new business start from the local community, with only 4% of respondents indicating the possibility of starting their own business.

There was some limited need for new premises to rent for office space, workshop space, storage units, studio space and shop/retail space.

The feedback to the consultation identified some concerns in making new employment land allocations in Thurleigh. Adequate parking, traffic impact (including HGV’s), noise, hours of operation, scale of development and type of business were identified as significant concerns.

There was a mixed reaction to the use of the Officers Mess site being used for potential employment use.
In terms of providing further employment opportunities, respondents felt that the following types of business should be encouraged in Thurleigh:

- Tourism and leisure (47.3% agreed and 7.4% strongly agreed).
- Office based business (28.2% agreed and 47% strongly agreed).
- Retail (46.7% agreed and 14% strongly agreed).
- Small scale industrial (skilled artisans etc) (45.6% agreed and 3.4% strongly agreed).
- Agriculture and food production (53% agreed and 10.6% strongly agreed).
- Service trades (56.4% agreed and 6.7% strongly agreed).
- Pubs, cafes and restaurants (40.8% agreed and 13.6% strongly agreed).
- Only 8.8% agreed or strongly agreed that no new employment provision be made.

65.5% agreed that there should be land reserved for businesses suited to Thurleigh’s rural environment with 58.5% agreeing that the NDP should have policies to encourage existing and small to medium businesses to develop in the parish.

To encourage future employment opportunities in Thurleigh the following were considered to be important:

- 38.4% agreed (and 21.9% strongly agreed) that improved transport links to other places could help encourage growth.
- 36.6% agreed (and 6.5% strongly agreed) that more suitable business premises available to rent within Thurleigh were important (37.3% were neutral).
- 37.1% agreed (and 5.3% strongly agreed) that more suitable business premises available to buy within Thurleigh were important (37.1% were neutral).
- 36.4% agreed (and 7.9% strongly agreed) that access to communal office facilities was important.

Several remarked strongly that there should not be a new recycling/composting/incinerator facility in the area.

The need for faster reliable broadband speed was regularly identified as an issue to address.

**OBJECTIVE 6 – YOUNG PEOPLE**

Provision in the village for young people was generally viewed as adequate:

- Over 70% consider that the School and Pre-School are adequate/very adequate.
- Almost 65% consider that sports facilities are adequate/very adequate.
- 70% of respondents consider that children's play areas are adequate/very adequate.
- Only 43% of respondents considered facilities for teenagers to be adequate or very adequate, whilst 38% felt that they were limited or not adequate.

Potential additional or improved facilities for the village were identified as follows:

- 57.2% supported additional or improved child care/nursery facilities (5.9% of respondents did not).
- 53.9% supported additional or improved recreational/sporting facilities for the youth (4.5% did not).
- 48.3% supported additional or improved facilities for teenagers (5.3% did not).
- 68% supported additional or improved play areas for children (5.9% did not).
- 42.8% supported the provision of a youth centre (13.8% did not).
- 29.8% supported outdoor gym provision (33.8% did not).

There was also a view that the play area did not cater for all age ranges.
There was other suggestions made (including provision of a cycle or skate park, tennis courts and bowls provision) and a recognition of the benefits of social interaction. There was also recognition that, for example, facilities had closed due to lack of interest (e.g. a previous youth club) and that sometimes facilities rely on volunteers or need to be supervised.

OBJECTIVE 7 – LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

The following were seen as very important when considering the distinctive landscape:

- Protecting, managing and enhancing nature conservation (biodiversity, flora and fauna) with 92.7% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Maintaining existing views/vistas, with over 90% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Protecting local wildlife and habitats with 97% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Maintaining rights of way for the benefit of local people and visitors with 91.5% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Preserving hedgerows and trees from further loss with 93.4% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.
- Protecting the "Village Garden" with 82.9% of respondents regarding this as important or very important.

There were high levels of support for additional or improved facilities, including planting of trees/orchards (with 84.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing), recreating wildlife meadows (with 79.2% support), improving footways and bridleways (88.4% support), provision of new footpaths e.g. Village to Cross End (with 86.1% support), developing a series of Parish Walks promoting less well routes and features of local interest (with 80.5% support) and enhancing signage and environmental improvements to increase accessibility to the landscape (with 72.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this proposal).

53.7% agreed that there should be an NDP policy to make provision for maps, direction signage and information boards.

48.2% agreed that there should be an NDP policy to support existing and new Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) for individual trees or groups of trees in the parish. It was also agreed (48.2%) that the NDP should support a tree planting scheme.

OBJECTIVE 8 – HERITAGE ASSETS

39.3% agreed and 17.8% strongly agreed that there should be feature illumination of the church. 18.4% disagreed with the proposal and almost 25% remaining neutral on the issue.

The Church featured a few times in terms of ideas to exploit heritage assets, with feedback suggesting that more events should be held and publicised to attract people (such as afternoon teas and jumble sales).

39.3% agreed and 36.1% strongly agreed that there should be access provided to Bury Hill. Other feedback suggested that Bury Hill should be cleared to provide access and that an information board should be provided for visitors to Bury Hill.

58% agreed and 28.4% strongly agreed that the NDP should identify locally important heritage assets as protected assets.

At a more general level, heritage trail leaflets were suggested, together with a website showing buildings of interest.
## APPENDIX C

### THURLEIGH PARISH:

**HOUSEHOLDS BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS BY TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

**2011 CENSUS DATA**

### ALL HOUSEHOLDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedrooms</th>
<th>All Households</th>
<th>1 person in household</th>
<th>2 people in household</th>
<th>3 people in household</th>
<th>4 or more people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Households</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more bedrooms</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OWNED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedrooms</th>
<th>All Owned Households</th>
<th>1 person in household</th>
<th>2 people in household</th>
<th>3 people in household</th>
<th>4 or more people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Households</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more bedrooms</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RENTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedrooms</th>
<th>All Rented Households</th>
<th>1 person in household</th>
<th>2 people in household</th>
<th>3 people in household</th>
<th>4 or more people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Households</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more bedrooms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Population and demographics**

In 2011 in the parish of Thurleigh there were 285 households containing 695 residents\(^1\). The age profile (compared to Bedford Borough) is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>% Thurleigh 2011</th>
<th>% Thurleigh 2001</th>
<th>% Bedford Borough 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 15</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 29</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 64</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There has been some ageing of the population of Thurleigh over the last 10 years, with the proportion aged 65+ increasing by around a third and the proportion under 16 decreasing by around a sixth. However, the general demographic is not far off the Bedford Borough average.

2. **Household Composition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Thurleigh</th>
<th>% Bedford Borough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 person – pensioner</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 person – other</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family – all pensioner</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family – without dependent children</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family – with dependent child(ren)</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of families with dependent children is above the Borough average, possibly indicating relatively high levels of children still living with their parents.

3. **Housing Tenure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Thurleigh</th>
<th>% Bedford Borough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned outright</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned with mortgage/loan</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared ownership</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social rented</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private rented</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living rent free</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thurleigh has slightly higher levels of owner occupation (around the 70% mark) than the Bedford Borough average, and lower levels of private renting. It has one of the highest levels of social renting of all rural parishes in the Borough, the same as the Borough average.

---

\(^1\) 2011 census data – other data also from this source unless otherwise specified
4. **Dwelling Types**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Thurleigh</th>
<th>% Bedford Borough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detached house</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached house</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced house</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravan/other temp. accommodation</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with most Bedfordshire villages, there are relatively more detached houses, and relatively fewer flats, terraced and semi-detached houses in Thurleigh. This is likely to mean that there are relatively fewer affordable properties on the market.

5. **Housing in poor condition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Thurleigh</th>
<th>% Bedford Borough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowded households</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households without central heating</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households in fuel poverty (2011)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overcrowding counts as a housing need for households applying for affordable housing through the Choice Based Lettings scheme. In 2011 the proportion of households in Thurleigh classified as overcrowded was much lower than the Bedford Borough average.

Where central heating is not present, fuel poverty is significantly more likely. The level of households in Thurleigh without central heating is well over the Bedford Borough average, however, the level of fuel poverty is under the Borough average.

6. **People on low incomes**

7.1% of people in Thurleigh are classified as “experiencing income deprivation”, well under the Bedford Borough average of 12.1%. 7.8% of working age people were claiming DWP benefits in August 2012, below the Bedford Borough average of 13.4%; and 20.7% of people over 65 were claiming pension credit, around the Bedford Borough average of 21.0%.

7. **Health and disability**

Limiting illnesses and disabilities can affect the type of housing that people need in order to remain independent. 17.2% of those aged 65 and over in Thurleigh are claiming Attendance Allowance (a non-means-tested benefit for severely disabled people aged 65 or over who need help with personal care), above the Bedford Borough average of 15.7%. The proportion of the population claiming Disability Living Allowance is 3.5%, under the Bedford Borough average of 4.2%.

12.5% of people have a limiting long-term illness, just below the Bedford Borough average of 16.0%.
1. **Nature of local connection**

Local needs affordable housing would usually be made available in the first instance to people with a strong local connection. All 21 respondents identified a strong local connection (Q1) as follows (respondents could tick more than one):

<p>| Nature of local connection                                      | No. of households |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently living in Thurleigh</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously lived in Thurleigh and wish to return</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An immediate family member (parent, child, or sibling) lives in Thurleigh</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently employed in the parish</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Household composition of households in need**

Respondents were asked (Q2) which of a number of basic situations best described them:

| Situation                                                      | No. of households |
|                                                               |                  |
| A young single adult/couple without dependent children         | 3                |
| A young single adult/couple planning to start a family         | 1                |
| An older single adult/couple without dependent children        | 10               |
| A family with dependent child(ren) or other dependent(s)      | 6                |
| Other (all adults)                                             | 1                |

3. **Current living arrangements of households in need**

The current living arrangements by the 21 respondents (Q3) broke down as follows:

| Housing tenure                                                | No. of households |
|                                                             |                  |
| Living with parent(s) in their home                          | 2                |
| Renting from a Housing Association                           | 5                |
| Renting privately                                            | 4                |
| Owner occupier                                               | 9                |
| Housing provided with job                                     | 0                |
| Other (living with family)                                   | 1                |

4. **Reason for housing need**

The needs identified by the 22 respondents still under consideration (Q4) can be summarised as follows (respondents were able to identify more than one need):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Number of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present home too small</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present home too large</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to move out of the family home</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to get on housing ladder</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical reasons / disability</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At risk of losing current home</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to be closer to family or carer support</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial reasons</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (looking for retirement property)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The need was mainly divided between households wanting to move out of the family home and/or get on the housing ladder; households in rented accommodation seeking more living space; or older owner occupiers keen to downsize, and/or with financial reasons for moving.

5. **Size, type and tenure of housing sought**

The housing type, size and tenure sought by the households in need (Q5) broke down as follows (respondents could tick more than one):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing tenure</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent from a Housing association</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent privately</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy on the open market</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy on a shared ownership basis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of property</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungalow / retirement property</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of property</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One bedroom</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two bedrooms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three bedrooms</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than three bedrooms</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many respondents wanted to buy on the open market, with some interest in affordable and private rent and shared ownership. Most of the demand was for houses of 2 or 3 bedrooms.

6. **Timescale of housing need**

The timescale in which these respondents would be looking for different accommodation (Q6) was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 0-3 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 3-5 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 5-10 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 10-20 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. **Gross income of households in need**

The report identified that, in order to purchase the cheapest property available in Thurleigh (the 3 bedroom house at £185,000) as a first time buyer, a single earner household would need an annual gross income of nearly £53,000, and a dual-income household would need nearly £64,000. To rent, the only property currently available (1 bedroom barn conversion) would require an annual gross income of over £37,000.

The current gross annual income of anyone responsible for paying the rent/mortgage for the 21 households under analysis breaks down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current gross income</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than £20,000 / yr</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20,000 to £30,000 / yr</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£30,000 to £40,000 / yr</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than £40,000 / yr</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the data provided, at least 15 households could not currently afford to purchase on the open market in Thurleigh. The other 6 respondents were owner occupiers seeking to downsize or with financial reasons.
8. **Savings or equity of households in need**

The report identified that the average deposit required for a first-time buyer to purchase the cheapest property currently available in Thurleigh is around £35,000. The minimum (under a 95% Loan to Value deal) would be around £9,250. The savings or other equity that these 21 households could use to contribute towards a mortgage breaks down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savings/equity</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below £20,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20,000 - £50,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above £50,000</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least 9 respondents would not have enough savings or equity currently to buy a property on the open market as a first time buyer, except at high Loan to Value.

**THURLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY - SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

**Affordable Housing**

Analysis of the responses, and other evidence considered from the HNS, has identified a need for affordable housing within Thurleigh from households resident in (or with strong links to) the parish, that is unlikely to be met by normal market provision. This need generally comes from young adults/couples who want to move out of the family home and/or aspire to get on the housing ladder; older people wanting housing more suitable for their changing needs; and families.

Affordable rented and shared ownership housing for local people in Thurleigh could be provided by including a rural exception site policy within the Neighbourhood Development Plan, which would provide affordable housing for which households with a local connection would take priority. Based on data supplied by respondents, up to 14 households with a local connection would be suitable for housing within a rural exception site development, whether for rent or shared ownership. However, it must be recognised that this is a snapshot of current, self-assessed need: some respondents may withdraw, move, or be housed by other means during the planning and development of any future scheme. Some of these respondents aspired to buy on the open market only, however, did not appear to have the financial means to do so within Thurleigh.

In order to have reasonable confidence that any new housing provided through a rural exception site will be taken up by people with a local connection to Thurleigh, the recommendation from the HNS is to meet 50% of the need identified, which would be to provide **7 units**. The assessment from the data is that 7 units could be provided as follows:

- 1 x 1-2 bed bungalow (rent)
- 2 x 1-2 bed house (1 rent, 1 shared ownership)
- 2 x 2 bed bungalow (shared ownership)
- 2 x 3-bed house (shared ownership)

In making this assessment a number of factors were considered, including household size and circumstances; the type and tenure being sought by respondents; and their financial means. This breakdown is explained further below:
1 x 1-2 bed bungalow (rent)
2 respondents were older adults/couples seeking to rent.

2 x 1-2 bed house (1 rent, 1 shared ownership)
3 respondents were younger adults/couples living with parents or renting privately, 2 seeking to rent and 1 looking for shared ownership (The respondents looking to rent would normally be allocated a 1 bedroom property based on need; however, it should be noted that, in order to help to ensure sustainability in rural areas, it is generally accepted that young people/couples should be allowed to under-occupy 2-bed properties in the first instance, as this enables them to remain in the parish if and when they decide to start a family. On the other hand, government welfare reforms may make it unaffordable for some people to under-occupy properties).

2 x 2 bed bungalow (shared ownership)
4 respondents were older adults/couples interested in bungalows for shared ownership, with savings/equity of over £50,000 (this would probably disqualify them from affordable rented housing but would make shared ownership a realistic option).

2 x 3-bed house (shared ownership)
4 respondents were families renting from a Housing Association, and 1 a younger adult/couple renting privately, looking for larger properties or to get on the housing ladder. 2 were looking for shared ownership; the other 3 wanted to buy on the open market, however, their financial means suggested that shared ownership would be a more realistic option.

**Market Housing**

Analysis of the responses and other evidence considered in the HNS suggests that there is a need for **2-3 bed bungalows or retirement properties** (e.g. houses built to Lifetime Homes criteria) if Thurleigh is to meet the identified current and future needs of existing owner occupier residents wishing to stay in the village.

The evidence for this is as follows:

- The relative shortage of cheaper properties in Thurleigh;
- The increase in the 65+ age group between 2001 and 2011, compared to a shortage of properties targeted at older people in Thurleigh;
- The 7 older owner occupier respondents who would be looking for smaller properties at some point over the next 20 years, due to retirement, medical or financial reasons.

If suitable smaller properties were more widely available, this would be likely to address under-occupation and free up larger houses for growing families to purchase as they work their way up the housing ladder.

It should be noted that there is no guarantee that housing sold on the open market will be bought by people with a local connection to Thurleigh. It is, therefore, not possible to stipulate how much new housing would meet the needs of the 7 owner occupier respondents identified above. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the provision of **up to 4 units** would meet a reasonable proportion of the need while being in keeping with the size of the village. These could be delivered alongside or as part of a rural exception site, with the market housing cross-subsidising the affordable housing.
## APPENDIX E

### THURLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

#### SUMMARY OF SITES SUBMITTED FOR POTENTIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site reference</th>
<th>Site name</th>
<th>No. of dwellings</th>
<th>RAG score</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>The Beeches</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td>No constraints that cannot be mitigated. A new footpath fronting the site and a road crossing point to link with the existing footpath on the north side of High Street should be delivered if this site is supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276</td>
<td>Hayle Field High Street</td>
<td>Up to 90</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td>The site as proposed would have medium to high visual and landscape impacts as the land is flat and open with views from the open countryside. A smaller area of land that better relates to the frontage style of development that predominates in the High Street would more likely create low visual and landscape impacts. A new footpath as illustrated on the concept plan should be delivered if this site is supported to link with the existing footpath fronting 67 High Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>402</td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>AMBER</td>
<td>This site is, at least in part, designated as an Important Open Space (IOS). The splayed nature of the IOS boundary on the Borough Council’s inset map and the absence of a development moratorium in the related policy (AD40) mean that there may be scope to develop this centrally located site. However, to enable this to be considered further details (including a schematic layout) are likely to be required to demonstrate that the IOS policy will not be compromised and that suitable highway access can be provided to the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Size (Hectares)</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>461</td>
<td>Land North of High Street</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>RED</td>
<td>This site is a similar one to 402 above and further details would need to be provided to enable this site to be considered further. However, the scale of the proposed development, the inclusion of the school playing field for access purposes (also an Important Open Space) and the location of this in the conservation area would make it an unsatisfactory site for development and a far less preferable site than 402.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>444</td>
<td>Land at High Street (Cross End)</td>
<td>Up to 53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>AMBER</td>
<td>Although no point of access is illustrated the site abuts the public highway, Cross End. There do not appear to be any issues with achieving safe visibility although this should be clarified. The site is sustainably located being approximately 0.6 km from village hall. However, there is no footpath linking it to the village and there is no existing footpath on the southern side of the High Street fronting existing properties. If the Hayle Field site is supported and developed and includes the recommended public footpath, it may be possible to provide a footpath and crossing point to link footpaths from both sites. These requirements would appear to deliverable. If the site is supported, the policy should set out specific requirements in the formal neighbourhood plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403</td>
<td>The Windmill, Milton Road</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>RED</td>
<td>Concerns about whether suitable access can be delivered. Also, the site does not abut the village SPA boundary and is detached from the village (approximately 0.8km from village hall). There are no formal footpaths linking the site to the village. There appears little scope to provide adequate footpath access to the core village.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 443       | Land at Mill Hill | 21 | 47 | RED | The majority of the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Bury Hill Camp). It also lies with the Conservation Area. There are a
number of listed buildings to the north and west of the site. The information provided has not proven that safe highway access can be delivered. There are concerns also about delivering a development that is in character with the immediate area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Housing Units</th>
<th>Safeguarded Area</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>538</td>
<td>Land at Greensbury Cottage, Thurleigh Road</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>RED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This site is isolated away from the village centre (2.5km from village hall) and 2km from the village SPA. It has no footpath links to the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>629</td>
<td>The Officers Mess, Keysoe Road</td>
<td>Up to 40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>RED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The site is isolated although the fact it is previously developed land means that it should be considered for some sort of development. However, due to its distance from the village (0.9km) and the absence of any footpath links it would be a poor choice for a housing site. Some sort of commercial use should be considered here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>688</td>
<td>Thurleigh Farm Centre</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>RED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Although the site would make use of previously developed land, similar to Greensbury Cottages, this site is isolated away from the village centre (2.5km from village hall) and 2km from the village SPA. It has no footpath links to the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445</td>
<td>High Street (East)</td>
<td>Up to 65</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>RED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The site is approximately 0.7 km from village hall. There is no footpath fronting site and unless the adjoining site at Hayle Field were developed, the site would be isolated. The site as proposed would have medium to high visual and landscape impacts as the land is flat, open and isolated with views from the open countryside. The depth of the site would result in development out of character with the immediate built form. Notwithstanding the possibility that the adjoining site at Hayle Field might be supported, the site is likely to give the impression of sprawling development which would be inappropriate in character terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Size (m²)</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>RAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S50</td>
<td>The Jackal</td>
<td>10-16</td>
<td>51</td>
<td><strong>RED</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although this site scores highly in the RAG assessment, there is strong likelihood that the development of the site would affect the viability of the public house which is protected under development plan policy CP18. This is also the last commercial service premises for the village and therefore its retention is likely to be essential to the future vibrancy and vitality of the village. No details have been provided as to the future of the public house, garden and car park or how the technical requirements of the two uses (public house and residential) would be integrated. There is also a concern about the compatibility of a residential use of the land in juxtaposition to the public house (noise and disturbance). Given these technical and policy issues, the most appropriate way to consider this site for residential use would be through the submission of a formal planning application.

This Site Assessment Report has been prepared by independent planning consultants, Mato'design Associates Limited, and forms part of the Thurleigh Neighbourhood Plan evidence base. In terms of the RAG rating determined:

**GREEN** – recommends that site should be supported

**AMBER** – recommends that the site should be considered further

**RED** – recommends that the site is unsuitable
# Summary of Issues to Be Considered by the Parish Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area for Improvement/Enhancement</th>
<th>Target Date (To be set)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traffic Related</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Traffic issues - Consider provision of traffic calming measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parking issues in the Close and Keysoe Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amenity Related</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Footpaths to &quot;The Ends&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improving broadband</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider improving sporting equipment/activities (tennis courts etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider enhancing facilities for young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider provision of recycling facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider upgrading street lighting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment Related</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improve access to Bury Mound and better access to the reservoir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dog fouling issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider measures to improve litter nuisance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider measures to improving our hedgerows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distinctiveness Related</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Help develop an even better sense of community</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Protecting the heritage and style of Thurleigh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THURLEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND OPTIONS

THEME 1 - HOUSING

Future housing needs, suitable sites, etc.

CORE OBJECTIVE 1 - DELIVERING HOUSING WHICH BOTH SUSTAINS THE CURRENT AND MEETS THE FUTURE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Key issues identified:

- Better mix of housing (tenure and price).
- No major growth due to the impact on the infrastructure.
- Small and medium scale housing developments to meet identified need, growth targets and help sustain local services and facilities.
- Some provision of affordable homes.
- Need to ensure that the village retains its character, rural atmosphere and, in particular, respect environmental and heritage features.
- Any new housing should help to broaden the range of stock available in the Parish.
- The type, tenure and cost of new housing should meet the housing needs of the local area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Sub-Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Thurleigh, ensuring that a mix of housing types is delivered across all tenures and seeking to provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OPTION H1: All new housing should help to broaden the range of stock available in the Parish. It should complement and add to the existing stock, broaden choice and extend the opportunity to own a house or live in the village to a wide range of people. The type, tenure and cost of new housing should meet the needs of the local area and, in this regard, the particular need for smaller market housing (2-3 bedrooms) should be recognised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OPTION H2: Affordable rented and shared ownership housing for local people in Thurleigh should be provided by including a rural exception site development within the Neighbourhood Plan, as recommended by the Housing Needs Survey. This would provide for the recommended seven units plus four 2-3 bedroom bungalows or retirement properties delivered alongside or as part of a rural exception site, with the market housing cross-subsidising the affordable housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To meet new housing demand in a way that ensures that the right type of housing is built in the right locations, and that protects the village from uncontrolled, large scale, or poorly placed development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OPTION H3: The Neighbourhood Development Plan will identify sites considered suitable for potential housing development. On the basis of current need, sustainability and existing infrastructure, the Neighbourhood Plan will allocate sites sufficient to accommodate a total of up to 30 residential units within the Plan period in addition to the local need for 11 homes that had been ascertained from a recent Housing Needs Survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OPTION H4: Development to meet identified need in the village should take place on a number of small sites with access to local amenities rather than concentrated in one place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION H5</strong>: Allocation of the sites identified in Map 3 (in the issues/options consultation report) for new housing to meet local needs and growth targets will be supported for the following approximate scale of development:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1). Land known as The Beeches, High Street, Thurleigh (Call for Site reference 274) for a small to medium size development of up to 10 dwellings.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2). Land known as Hayle Field, High Street, Thurleigh (Call for Site reference 276) for a medium to large development of up to 20 dwellings.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3). Land behind School, adjacent to the Village Hall (Call for Site reference 402), as a site for 11 dwellings to meet local need in line with Policy H2 above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **OPTION H6**: Would you prefer some allocation for housing development on the alternative site known as Land at High Street, Cross End, Thurleigh (Call for Site Reference 444) which has been identified as a possible site for housing if the scale of development is acceptable and access issues/footpath links can be resolved. |

| **OPTION H7**: In the event that there are issues with bringing forward development on sites 274, 276 and 402 that cannot be resolved - such as the inability to demonstrate that land designated as Important Open Space will not be compromised or that suitable highway access can be provided to the site - do you consider that Land at High Street, Cross End, Thurleigh (Site Reference 444 on Map 3 in the issues/options consultation report) should be identified as a Reserve Site for the development of new houses, **OR** |

| **OPTION H8**: In the event that there are issues with bringing forward development on sites 274, 276 and 402 (or Site 444 if this is identified as a preferred site) that cannot be resolved - such as the inability to demonstrate that land designated as Important Open Space will not be compromised or that suitable highway access can be provided to the site - do you agree that the proposed allocation of houses should be distributed on the other preferred locations for growth if this can be accommodated. |

| **OPTION H9**: The sites identified on Map 3 (in the issues/options consultation report), as 403, 443, 445, 461, 538, 560, 629 and 688 are not considered suitable for development. All sites have been assessed by an experienced Planning Consultant against their suitability, availability and achievability in line with Planning Practice Guidance and, following assessment, the sites are not considered to be appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. |

| **OPTION H10**: There will be a presumption in favour of a mix of 3 or more bedroom detached housing, 2/3 bedroom semi-detached or terraced housing and the provision of bungalows. |

| **OPTION H11**: There will be a presumption against the provision of flats/apartments and three storey housing as part of new developments. |

3 | To provide new housing which is high quality in design, layout and materials, appropriate in size and suitable for the whole life needs of residents |

| **OPTION H12**: Proposals for new housing development should adopt the approach to design, siting and layout set out in a proposed Village Design Statement. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OPTION H13</strong>: The proposed Village Design Statement should incorporate proposals to improve and enhance at a local level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• car parking space standards, with a minimum number of dedicated off street parking spaces relative to the number of bedrooms in the dwelling as follows: 1 car parking space per 1 bedroom dwelling; 2 car park spaces for 2-3 bedroom dwellings and 3 car parking spaces for 4 or more bedroom dwellings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• amenity space standards, with at least 50% of the completed residence allocated as amenity space (parking, garden, courtyard, patio, play area);</td>
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<tr>
<td>• height standards;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• massing standards (building shape and size);</td>
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<tr>
<td>• external finish standards.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**THEME 2 - INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

Utilities, drainage, broadband, etc.

**CORE OBJECTIVE 2 - MANAGING BOTH EXISTING AND FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND ENCOURAGING SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT**

Key issues identified:

- Parking issues in the village, particularly on The Close and Glebe Road.
- Traffic issues and, in particular, speeding through the village.
- Growth will impact on infrastructure and, as such, capacity issues must be addressed with careful integrated planning.
- The impact of new development on traffic movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Sub-Objective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION I1</strong>: Any proposal for development should demonstrate that it will provide sufficient capacity for sewerage, water supply, electricity, telephone land line and broadband service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION I2</strong>: The Parish Council will work to improve local awareness of traffic problems by supporting the provision of regulation compliant locally designed signs to encourage traffic to slow down and improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION I3</strong>: The Parish Council will work with Bedford Borough Council to assess the cost/benefits of traffic calming measures, including the potential provision of average speed cameras, to improve local safety.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION I4</strong>: The Parish Council will commit funding from the retained Community Infrastructure Levy to establish a priority schedule of footpaths for upgrade or extended provision across the parish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION I5</strong>: The Parish Council will work with Bedford Borough Council to introduce white lines along the sides of roads to mark recommended places for pedestrians and cyclists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION I6</strong>: Any applications for development in Thurleigh should identify and demonstrate the additional level of traffic that they are likely to generate. They should assess the potential impact of this traffic on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion within the Parish and include within their proposals measures to mitigate the impact. Proposals which are likely to increase the impact of traffic on road users will need to demonstrate how that traffic will be managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION I7</strong>: There will be a presumption against development which would impact detrimentally on road safety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### THEME 3 - GREEN SPACES

Agriculture, green spaces, wildlife, allotments etc.

### CORE OBJECTIVE 3 - PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR EXISTING AND FUTURE OPEN SPACES

Key issues identified:

- The need to protect green space in the village.
- The need to protect natural resources.
- The scope to deliver local environmental improvements and the need to develop an action plan to respond to local issues raised via the consultation process.
- The need to consider the allocation of land for allotments given that there is some demand for such provision in the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To protect, improve and enhance community open spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION G1</strong>: The areas of open space and countryside identified in Map 4 (in the issues/options consultation report) will be protected from inappropriate new development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To maintain the distinct character of the village by preserving, protecting and enhancing the green and rural identify of our surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION G2</strong>: That a new protection be supported for the area comprising the two reservoirs and the immediately adjacent area (on last to the North of the Village and west of Keysote Road), identified in Map 5 (in the issues/options consultation report), which defines this important green space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To sustain the vitality, health and safety of the community by ensuring that all residents have easy access to community facilities and community green, open spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION G3</strong>: The Parish Council will work with the local community to identify whether interest exists in establishing a Thurleigh Allotments Association and, if so, to identify land within Thurleigh for the provision of allotments, <strong>OR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION G4</strong>: The Parish Council will not identify possible new sites for allotment provision in Thurleigh but will refer the matter to Bedford Borough Council to ensure that future requirements can be accommodated in the municipal allotments that exist in Bedford, <strong>OR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION G5</strong>: The Parish Council will work jointly with other Parishes to identify the overall demand for allotments and, if a good level of interest exists for the provision and management of allotment land, to identify a suitable shared space for allotments in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To ensure that any new development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION G6</strong>: Proposals for new development in excess of five dwellings should produce a green infrastructure plan to show how the development can improve green spaces and corridors for people and nature and how wildlife can be protected and enhanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION G7</strong>: Proposals to establish wind farms or solar farms within Thurleigh will not be supported.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### THEME 4 - RECREATION, SPORTING AND VILLAGE FACILITIES

Village hall, social club, amenities for children and young people, pub, playing field etc.

### CORE OBJECTIVE 4 - ENSURING THAT THE VILLAGE BENEFITS FROM SUFFICIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Key issues identified:

- The need to protect existing community facilities.
- Scope to extend community and social facilities over time.
- Encourage clubs or societies to use the Village Hall.
- Support and promote existing clubs and facilities in the area.
- The need for improved broadband provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To protect and enhance local amenities which provide a community focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION C1:</strong></td>
<td>Local facilities and services will be protected and supported by the Parish Council in accordance with other policies in the Development Plan that seek to ensure the continued viability of the rural economy and support the sustainability of local services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION C2:</strong></td>
<td>There will be a presumption against development which would detrimentally affect community assets such as The Jackal Public House, The Village Hall, Sports and Social Club, Playing Fields, The Church, The War Memorial, Memorial Garden, Bus stops, post box and benches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION C3:</strong></td>
<td>Proposals for a village shop, medical provision and dental care facility will be supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To encourage opportunities for all generations to participate in a range of educational, sporting and leisure activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION C4:</strong></td>
<td>The Parish Council will continue to promote the use of the Village Hall and will support appropriate plans to improve community provision. The Parish Council will also support and promote other existing clubs and facilities in the area, for instance by helping to identify sources of funding such as developer contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To sustain the vitality, health and safety of the community by ensuring that all residents have easy access to community facilities and community green, open spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION C5:</strong></td>
<td>Any proposals that come forward over the plan period should identify developer contributions to support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To ensure that any new development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION C6:</strong></td>
<td>The additional Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arising from consented proposals that is retained by the Parish Council should in part be allocated to support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION C7:</strong></td>
<td>The provision of recreational facilities will be supported, provided that their design and scale are in keeping with the local character and that the impact on the amenity of surrounding residential properties is acceptable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### THEME 5 - BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

Issues for local employers, those working from home, self employed, etc.

### CORE OBJECTIVE 5 - IDENTIFYING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE FURTHER EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE VILLAGE WHILST SAFEGUARDING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT PROVISION FOR THE COMMUNITY

Key issues identified:

- Employment activity will continue to focus on the existing Thurleigh Business Park.
- Any new development must be of a scale that will have limited adverse impact on existing services and infrastructure.
- Determining an appropriate future use of the former "Officers Mess" site on Keysoe Road.

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<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To enhance the prospects for local employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION E1</strong>: That the former &quot;Officers Mess&quot; site, on Keysoe Road, be allocated for additional employment growth in the village, with employment uses restricted to those classes that do not rely on the regular use of commercial traffic movements. Classes A1, A2, B1 and B2 in the table (in the issues/options consultation report) are deemed relevant uses for this site, <strong>OR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To create and maintain an environment that makes it attractive for micro and small businesses to locate and flourish in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION E2</strong>: That the former &quot;Officers Mess&quot; site, on Keysoe Road, be allocated for the development of live/work accommodation to enable flexible working practices, with employment uses restricted to those classes that do not rely on the regular use of commercial traffic movements. Classes A1, A2, B1 and B2 in the table (in the issues/options consultation report) are deemed relevant uses for this site, <strong>OR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To ensure, through our planning policies, that any future employment development within the Parish is sensitive, sustainable and low impact and built in the right location (specifically, previously built on/brownfield sites)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION E3</strong>: The Plan Council will not identify possible new sites for employment provision in Thurleigh but will refer the aspirations and concerns raised from the community engagement to Bedford Borough Council to ensure that these issues are made aware to the Local Planning Authority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### THEME 6 - YOUNG PEOPLE

Village hall, social club, amenities for children and young people, pub, playing field etc.

### CORE OBJECTIVE 6 - ENSURING THAT THE VILLAGE BENEFITS FROM SUFFICIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

**Key issues identified:**

- Thurleigh Lower School and Pre-School offers excellent provision for the village's children.
- Thurleigh has a limited range of facilities for young people which must be protected.
- There is scope to extend community and social facilities over time for the benefit of the youth in the village.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To protect and enhance local amenities which provide a community focus for young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION C1</strong>: Local facilities and services will be protected and supported by the Parish Council in accordance with other policies in the Development Plan that seek to ensure the continued viability of the rural economy and support the sustainability of local services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION C2</strong>: There will be a presumption against development which would detrimentally affect community assets such as The Jackal Public House, The Village Hall, Sports and Social Club, Playing Fields, The Church, The War Memorial, Memorial Garden, Bus stops, post box and benches.</td>
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<td><strong>OPTION C3</strong>: Proposals for a village shop, medical provision and dental care facility will be supported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To encourage opportunities for young people to participate in a range of educational, sporting and leisure activities</td>
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<td><strong>OPTION C4</strong>: The Parish Council will continue to promote the use of the Village Hall and will support appropriate plans to improve community provision. The Parish Council will also support and promote other existing clubs and facilities in the area, for instance by helping to identify sources of funding such as developer contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To sustain the vitality, health and safety of young people by ensuring that they have easy access to community facilities and community green, open spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION C5</strong>: Any proposals that come forward over the plan period should identify developer contributions to support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To ensure that any new development includes new appropriate and proportionate green spaces for leisure, recreation and enjoyment</td>
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<td><strong>OPTION C6</strong>: The additional Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arising from consented proposals that is retained by the Parish Council should in part be allocated to support the improvement of existing community facilities in the area, or the provision of new facilities, to meet local needs and aspirations.</td>
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<td><strong>OPTION C7</strong>: The provision of recreational facilities will be supported, provided that their design and scale are in keeping with the local character and that the impact on the amenity of surrounding residential properties is acceptable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### THEME 7 - LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

Footpaths, bridleways, and other natural features, such as small woodlands, in-field trees, hedgerows, ponds and streams etc.

### CORE OBJECTIVE 7 - ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING OUR DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPE WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO A SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY, INCLUDING NATURAL FEATURES SUCH AS SMALL WOODLANDS, IN-FIELD TREES, HEDGEROWS, PONDS AND STREAMS WHICH DISTINGUISH THE PARISH

Key issues identified:

- Potential scope exists to improve accessibility for all throughout Thurleigh to support healthy communities.
- The need to protect trees, hedgerows, and other distinctive features in the village.
- The potential for a tree planting scheme.
- The scope to deliver local improvements and the need to develop an action plan to respond to the issues raised via the consultation process.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To protect and enhance the high quality and distinctive rural landscape for present and future generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION D1</strong>: The Parish Walks identified in Map 6 (in the issues/options consultation report) will be promoted and enhanced through signage and environmental improvements to improve accessibility for all. Further work is needed to assess these and to prioritise areas for improvement, such as seating and drop kerbs. Developer contributions and other sources of funding will be required to support the promotion and improvement of the Parish Walks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To minimise the impact of new development on the local area and, in doing so, to protect the distinctive views and visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside, landscape and heritage assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION D2</strong>: The Parish Council will work to develop improved linkages for walks connecting to neighbouring parishes in order to support and enhance health and wellbeing beyond Thurleigh Parish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, our local wildlife and its habitat and trees and preserve ecological corridors and sites of special interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION D3</strong>: Proposals for new development in excess of five dwellings should produce a green infrastructure plan to show how the development can improve green spaces and corridors for people and nature and how wildlife can be protected and enhanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION D4</strong>: The Thurleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan should promote a Tree Planting Scheme for Thurleigh.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION D5</strong>: Proposals which affect sites with existing trees or hedgerows should be accompanied by an independent survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees or hedgerows, and a management plan to demonstrate how they will be so maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION D6</strong>: Development proposals must be designed to retain wherever possible ancient trees, trees of good arboricultural and amenity value and hedgerow; where it is proposed that trees of good arboricultural or amenity value be removed they must be replaced on a ratio of 3 new trees for each one removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION D7</strong>: The Neighbourhood Plan will encourage the protection of local wildlife sites and habitats and will support the development of wildlife corridors and the extension of green space and new nature conservation areas wherever possible. ‘Buffer zones’ around wildlife sites should be implemented to minimise the impact of development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 To maintain the distinct character of the village by preserving, protecting and enhancing the green and rural identity of our surroundings

**OPTION D8:** The Thurliegh Neighbourhood Development Plan should include policies to address the provision of maps, direction signage and information boards to promote areas of interest in the Village and to ensure that these are informative and helpful whilst not becoming intrusive or detracting from the natural beauty of the area.

**OPTION D9:** There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation and enhancement of the existing network of footpaths, tracks and bridleways, and, where possible, improved access to the countryside with additional footpath links.

**OPTION D10:** Support will be given to proposals that improve or extend the existing footpath network and which provide bridle/cycle paths, allowing better access to the local amenities and services, to green spaces, to any new housing and to the open countryside, subject to compliance with other Plan priorities. The loss of existing footpaths will be resisted.

## THEME 8 - HERITAGE ASSETS

Protected assets, listed buildings, ancient monuments etc.

**CORE OBJECTIVE 8 - PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR LISTED BUILDINGS AND THE ANCIENT MONUMENT (BURY HILL CAMP)**

Key issues identified:

- The need to ensure that any new development in Thurliegh positively respects and does not negatively impact on the shared heritage.
- The need to ensure that both the fabric and the setting of listed buildings and heritage assets continue to be protected.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To support sensitive development which is sympathetic to the area, protects and enriches the look and feel of the village and that minimises the impact of such development on the natural and built environment (including protected assets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION HA1:</strong> Statutory Listed Buildings and Ancient Monuments are already given protection from inappropriate development by law. The Parish Council will require that, in addition to this, locally important built heritage assets will be identified as important assets in the Neighbourhood Development Plan with the presumption that these assets should be protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To conserve the historic built environment and our heritage assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION HA2:</strong> The Parish Council will promote dialogue with English Heritage with a view to opening up access to Bury Hill Ancient Monument for visitors and, as part of this, will ensure that a Monument Management Plan is prepared to ensure that the heritage asset is protected and maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To preserve and enhance the Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTION HA3:</strong> The effect of a proposal on the significance of these non-designated heritage assets will be taken into account in determining an application, in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of the heritage asset and its contribution to the distinctiveness of the Parish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"BREATHTHING NEW LIFE INTO THURLEIGH"

November 2016