

THURLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

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23rd July 2020

Dear Ms Burden

Further to your letter of 10th July our responses are below and I can confirm that we have discussed this with Bedford Borough Council.

3. The reason given for allocating land for 30 new homes is 'to help sustain local services' (paragraph 4.12). Are there any other reasons, and what local services are to be sustained? You ask 'are there any other reasons for allocating land for new homes in Thurleigh and in particular the precise number of 30 houses put forward in TNP

A Housing Needs Survey undertaken when the plan first started showed a requirement for 11 units. In June 2015 survey residents were asked if they wished to see more housing than the 11 the Housing Need Survey showed, and if so how many. Whilst close the largest support was for 30+.

In October 2015 Bedford Borough Council carried out a consultation which invited comments on a number of things, including a first go at a draft spatial strategy, before the Local Plan itself was drafted. The draft strategy focused growth first on Bedford and Kempston and then suggested growth in rural settlement in line with the settlement hierarchy - including 10-20 dwellings for Group 3 settlements which Thurleigh was classified as. This is a link to the consultation paper.

https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Files/Consultation_Paper_2015.pdf

Thurleigh NDP group subsequently agreed to work on a figure of 40- ie 11 from the housing needs survey plus 29 taken via the Survey in July 2015, across three sites. This would take into account the proposed allocation from the Borough Council.

During the October 2015 consultation the Borough Council received a number of new sites through the Call for Sites process. As a result more land was available in Bedford and Kempston and they started to look at new settlements so the amount of development that needed to be allocated in the villages was reduced. By the 2017 consultation no development was needed in Group 3 settlements, however the Thurleigh plan continued to work on providing a number of new dwellings, which would contribute to the windfall figure within the Local Plan 2030 figures

As Thurleigh's plan has progressed there have been a number of extra dwellings built including a new house in Vicarage Green, the conversion of a pool house at 62a High Street, the conversion of the Baptist chapel into four dwellings and, at the time the decision was taken to amend the numbers, two barn conversions were at the application stage so the decision was taken to reduce the number to 30 across the two sites.

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7. Policy HS2 The Beeches:

- ***This site is located within the village. NPPF paragraph 123 seeks to optimize the use of such sites. The site assessment indicates that it could accommodate 18 dwellings. Why is the allocation limited to 10 dwellings?***

You refer back to the requirement in Policy HS1d) for developments to be low density (less than 20 dwellings per hectare). Has any specific justification or evidence been produced during the production of the TNP to support this requirement having regard to NPPF paragraph 123?

The original consultation with residents asked a question relating to housing density and there was overwhelming support for density to be low- i.e. less than 20 houses per hectare. In addition there were a considerable number of comments advising that residents did not wish to see overdevelopment, inappropriate development, the village become too built up or the character of the village change.

In addition residents were asked what developments they would like to see, i.e. one large one, medium size developments or small developments, with number evenly split between small and medium.

The NPPF 123 states that *where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities*. Bedford Borough Council have a minimum five year land supply, therefore there is no shortage of land.

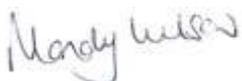
Paragraph 123 a) mentions minimum density standards being used for *'other locations that are well served by public transport'*. Whilst there is a rural bus service it is only 4 times a day, with the first one at 9.26am and the last 3.56pm, and therefore Thurleigh is not well served by public transport.

- ***How can the requirement for on street visitor parking in d) be justified and subsequently enforced? I note your response to this question, but even if the on street visitor parking is signed as such by the developer, how will the future reservation of those spaces for visitors be enforced, and who would take responsibility for renewing the signage when the development has been completed?***

The Bedford Borough Parking Standards policy dictates that 0.4 parking spaces per dwelling should be provided for visitors. This applies to all developments across the Borough, but does not state that this has to be formally enforced by anyone. Thurleigh Parish Council is not aware of any formal enforcement across the Borough, it seems to be self-enforced by residents. If the spaces were marked then any repairs would fall to either the developer to make, or Bedford Borough Highways if they subsequently adopted the road.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Miss Mandy Wilson
Clerk to Thurleigh Parish Council