

# Thrapston Market Town Initiative Healthcheck Action Plan

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## **Market Town Initiative**

### **Introduction**

#### **Countryside Agency Market Town Initiative**

The Market Town Initiative has been set up to help revitalise the role of the market town as a rural service centre in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. An important aspect of the initiative is that it aims to involve the local community in making decisions and taking responsibility for the future of their town.

The Countryside Agency has created a vision for the initiative which is to:

*Promote local solutions and help market towns to become places where people from the town and surrounding countryside can:*

- *Buy most things they need*
- *Obtain a range of basic services, such as legal advice and libraries*
- *Find housing of all types – rental and for purchase*
- *Have a choice of jobs, particularly in business related to the products of the surrounding countryside*
- *Obtain the training and education they need*
- *Enjoy eating out, the cinema, theatre and musical events*

#### **Thrapston Market Town Initiative**

In March 2001, the Thrapston Town Centre Working Party, a sub-group of the East Northamptonshire Business Partnership, was successful in its bid for funding under the Countryside Agency Market Town Initiative. As part of this bid, the Working Party expanded to form a wider partnership and drive the project forward. Renamed as the Thrapston 2020 Vision Group, the partnership represents many elements of the local community, including East Northamptonshire Council, Thrapston Town Council, Northamptonshire County Council, local organisations and private sector businesses. A full list of members is shown in Appendix A.

#### **Healthcheck**

The first stage of the Market Town Initiative to be carried out was the Healthcheck. The main aims of the Healthcheck process were to involve the local community in:

- Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the town
- Compiling an action plan for the future regeneration of the town

The Thrapston Healthcheck began in December 2001. The process was led by the Project Partnership (2020 Vision Group) and supported by a Project Co-ordinator.



## Healthcheck Methodology

The Healthcheck was carried out over a 6-month period. The main stages involved in the process were:

- Extending the Project Partnership to form the Thrapston 2020 Vision Group.
- Appointing a Project Co-ordinator to support the Healthcheck process.
- Identifying a catchment area for the town.
- Compiling a “Snapshot” report for the area – summarising the socio-economic situation in Thrapston.
- Conducting a questionnaire survey via the Nene Valley News, East Northamptonshire Council website and a public consultation event to allow residents to express their views on what should be done in the town. The main findings of the survey are shown in Appendix B.
- Involving local school pupils in a questionnaire survey and photograph project – asking them to take photographs of what they perceived to be the positive and negative aspects of Thrapston. The results of the survey are detailed in Appendix C.
- Organising an open event, held in February 2002, to enable people to find out more about the project, contribute their ideas and get more involved.
- Involving local residents and the 2020 Vision Group in a number of focus group meetings to discuss issues relating to the economy, environment, transport and social problems within the town. The findings of each focus group are listed in Appendix D.
- Conducting a local business survey to assess prosperity, confidence and issues of concern within the town. The results of the survey are shown in Appendix E.
- Creating a vision for the town.
- Involving secondary school-aged pupils from Thrapston in a discussion workshop. The main findings are shown in Appendix F.
- Organising a second community consultation event in May 2002, to discuss the main issues of concerns and identify potential solutions to these problems. The results of the consultation can be found in Appendix G.
- Amalgamating all the information to prepare an action plan, detailing the main concerns in Thrapston and suggesting projects to improve the situation.







## Existing Initiatives and Partnerships

The Action Plan has taken into account a number of existing initiatives in Thrapston which will influence the future of the town. These include:

- Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme in partnership with English Heritage – provides grants to help repair and reinstate traditional features on commercial properties within the town centre Conservation Area.
- Environmental improvements carried out by the Town and District Councils – aimed at improving the town centre environment (improving the street lighting, bus shelter, litter bins etc.)
- Pathfinder Initiative – designed to develop and improve the electronic delivery of local information. The project incorporates Thrapston On Line.
- New swimming pool/community centre – proposals are currently out to tender and work should begin in the near future.
- Sub Regional Strategic Partnerships (SSPs):
  - Welland Partnership – comprising the 5 local authorities of East Northamptonshire, Harborough, Rutland, Melton and South Kesteven, together with businesses, voluntary and community organisations and the learning community.
  - Northamptonshire Partnership – Involving all of the local authorities in the county along with businesses, voluntary and community organisations and the learning community.
  - The SSPs have been created to help improve economic performance at sub-regional level.
- East Northamptonshire Business Partnership (ENBP) – provides a forum for local businesses/organisations and the local authority to discuss future actions in the district. The Partnership was successful in its bid to obtain funding for the current Market Town Initiative and has recently been awarded funding from the EU to develop training and skills initiatives.
- East Northamptonshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership – includes East Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire Police, local residents and other key organisations. Aims to improve community safety in the towns and villages within the district.
- Rural Transport Partnerships in association with the Countryside Agency (RTPs):
  - East Northamptonshire RTP - covering East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Corby.
  - Welland RTP – covering East Northamptonshire, Harborough, Melton, Rutland and South Kesteven.
  - The RTPs were set up in 2002 to draw the community and transport providers together to identify needs and improve transport provision in each area.



## **The Action Plan**

### **Introduction**

The following report details the main findings of the Healthcheck process. All of the points noted in the plan have been identified by the local community as things which are important to the future vitality of Thrapston and its rural hinterland.

A Project Officer will be appointed to carry forward, update and implement the projects detailed in this report over the next 3 years.

The first section of the Action Plan provides a summary of factual information relating to the socio-economic situation within the Thrapston area. This information may be used to assist with any funding bids associated with the projects detailed in the plan.

The second part of the plan summarises the vision and objectives for the Thrapston Market Town Initiative. The report gives details of the projects and actions, which have been suggested by the community to tackle the main areas of concern within the town. Each project description contains a suggested time scale alongside costs and possible sources of funding. Further ideas and themes to carry forward are also suggested.

The Action Plan has been written for the Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and aims to serve the needs of the local community. It will be regularly reviewed and updated as new funding sources come to light and priorities change over time. Suggestions and comments are welcome from members of the local community and should be addressed to the Market Towns Project Officer.



## **Thrapston Today** Factual Summary

This section highlights some of the key social, economic and environmental indicators, which can be used to determine the position of Thrapston in 2002. It is essentially a summary of the research, which has been carried out for the Healthcheck process. Further information can be found in the Healthcheck Snapshot Report which is available from East Northamptonshire Council.

### **Physical and Environmental Assessment**

- Thrapston is one of 6 historic market towns located within the district of East Northamptonshire. It is strategically placed on the junction of the A605 and A14 and served by an excellent road communication network. The town provides a number of basic services for local residents and those living in the rural hinterland.
- Thrapston falls within the Nene Valley landscape area - a rural part of Northamptonshire, characterised by a series of wetland features, flooded gravel pits, historic villages and traditional field patterns. Most of the land around Thrapston has a high likelihood of Best and Most Versatile land<sup>1</sup> and is thus important for agriculture. A cattle market is situated within the town centre, which has recently reopened following the end of the Foot & Mouth outbreak.
- The town developed as a commercial centre during the Middle Ages due to its location at a crossing point on the River Nene. The original settlement pattern is still evident today and covers the central area of the town from Chancery Lane to the High Street. This part of Thrapston is now a designated Conservation Area.
- There are a number of distinctive buildings and areas within the town, including:
  - \* C18 buildings in Chancery Lane/High Street
  - \* Medieval Nine Arches Bridge - marking the western entrance to the town over the River Nene
  - \* St James Church - oldest surviving building in Thrapston (dating from C13).
  - \* Montague House - home of Sir John Washington, the uncle of President George Washington
  - \* Plaza Centre - former cinema, now the main community venue in Thrapston
  - \* Peace Memorial Park - purchased by the Town Council in 1920 to commemorate those who died in WW1
  - \* East Northamptonshire House - previously the Union Workhouse, built in 1836.
  - \* Cattle Market - established in 1871, now located between the High Street and Market Road
  - \* Old Rectory and other listed buildings along Huntingdon Road

### **Social and Economic profile**

- In 1991, Thrapston had a population of 3,117<sup>2</sup>. By 2001, this figure had increased by 47% and the total population now stands at approximately 4,570<sup>3</sup>. The percentage increase over the same period for East Northamptonshire district was only 14%, indicating that Thrapston is a major growth area within the district.

A further breakdown of the population into gender/age structure will be possible once the 2001 Census figures are published.

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<sup>1</sup> BMV or Grade 1,2,3a agricultural land

<sup>2</sup> 1991 Census

<sup>3</sup> East Northamptonshire Council: Population Estimate, 2002

- Unemployment in Thrapston has gone down over recent years. In January 2002 the total unemployment figure for Thrapston ward was 19. This marks a decrease of 54% since February 1998. The percentage decrease for East Northamptonshire district over the same period was 20% and for England 30%<sup>4</sup>.

It is not possible to calculate the rate of unemployment in Thrapston (ward), as there is no up-to-date estimate of the workforce population. This will become available once the 2001 Census figures are published. It is clear however, that unemployment in Thrapston is very low – much lower than district and national averages.

Of those unemployed in Thrapston ward, 4 have been unemployed over 6 months and 2 over 1 year. (January 2002)

- Recent employment statistics show that the total number of employee jobs in Thrapston ward is increasing. Between 1998-1999, the total number of jobs increased from 1513 to 1752, a rise of 16%<sup>5</sup>. The statistics show that 4 industrial sectors account for 89% of the total employee jobs in the area. These are, Manufacturing (20.5%), Distribution (25.2%), Banking/Finance/Insurance (16.6%) and Public Administration (26.5%). These figures indicate that Manufacturing is still very important to the economy in Thrapston.
- The economy is dependent on a large number of small employers. In 2000, only 5 (2%) out of a total of 215 registered enterprises in Thrapston ward had 50 or more employees. The percentage of registered enterprises with 50+ employees in East Northamptonshire district was only 0.8%<sup>6</sup>. The A1-M1 Link Business Park in Thrapston could account for the greater proportion of larger employers in Thrapston compared to the district.
- The number of VAT registered enterprises in Thrapston ward decreased by 0.9% between 1999-2000. The figure for the district shows an increase of 2.1% over the same period<sup>7</sup>. These figures indicate the change in registrations but they do not necessarily indicate the number of business start-ups and failures as certain companies with branches located in Thrapston / East Northamptonshire may be registered elsewhere.
- Business support is available from the Economic Development Unit at East Northamptonshire Council. The Business Link (Northamptonshire Chamber) also offers advice and support for local businesses and holds surgeries at East Northamptonshire Council offices in Thrapston once a week. East Northamptonshire Business Partnership is working towards improving opportunities for local businesses in the district and has recently been awarded EU funding for training and skills initiatives. A number of other agencies offering help for local businesses can also be found within the County. These include:
  - \* East Northamptonshire & Wellingborough Lifelong Learning Service- offers a number of evening classes in Thrapston and a wider range of courses in the larger towns within the County.
  - \* Northamptonshire Co-operative Development Agency (NCDA) – offers business advice and holds surgeries in East Northamptonshire every fortnight.
  - \* Prince’s Trust – offers grants and support to help young people (aged 16-30) set up new businesses.
  - \* Countryside Agency – offers grants to support rural businesses including the Community Services Grant, which is available to shops, pubs and other service providers.

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<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics (NOMIS) 2002

<sup>5</sup> Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) 1998/1999

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2001

<sup>7</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2001

## Facilities and Services

Thrapston provides a number of basic services for the local community and those living in the surrounding villages. These include:

### Town Centre

- A number of shops catering for everyday needs - butchers, bakers, chemists, newsagents, florists, grocers, convenience store and post office. The largest food store is the Co-op, which has recently been extended and provides a substantial range of products.
- Several comparison goods stores selling a range of products - furniture and carpet store, hardware shop, bicycle shop, jewellers, craft shops and a wine shop.
- A number of other services including: 3 banks (+ATMs), several estate agents, 2 auctioneers, a veterinary centre, 2 beauty salons, optician, 3 hairdressers, 2 tea shops, several public houses and takeaways and a small library.
- A general market is held in Thrapston High Street every Tuesday and the Cattle Market has recently reopened, following the end of the Foot and Mouth outbreak.
- In December 2001, there were 7 vacant units in the High Street, representing a vacancy rate of 11%. Three of these units have since been occupied and the vacancy rate now stands at 6% (Apr. 2002).
- The results of the Market Town Questionnaire and Business Survey indicate that the local community would like to see more retail units in the town centre but that they feel business rates are too high to attract new retailers at present.

### Health Services

- There are 2 surgeries and 1 health centre located within Thrapston. There is a shortage of doctors within the Nene Valley PCG area and certain practices have now closed their books to new patients. This is not, however, the case in Thrapston and doctors are accepting new patients.
- The town has 1 private dental surgery. The nearest NHS dentist clinic is in Irthlingborough, although people also travel to Kettering and St Neots for this service.
- Thrapston has 1 optician, located on the High Street.

### Schools

- Thrapston Primary School takes pupils aged between 4-9 years from Thrapston, Denford, Islip, Lowick and Sudborough.
- King John Middle School takes pupils aged 9-13 years from Thrapston and the parishes listed above.
- Most pupils from the King John School go on to attend the Prince William School in Oundle (9 miles away).

- In 2000, the Prince William School had 11.8% more pupils attaining 5 or more GCSE's at grade C or above than the national average<sup>8</sup>.
- Figures for the King John School show that the percentage of pupils who achieved target level 4 in English was the same as the national average in 2000; in Maths the figure was 4% lower than the national average and in Science it was 5% higher than the national average<sup>9</sup>.
- There are also a number of pre-school nurseries and playgroups including, the LEA nursery located at Thrapston Primary, Thrapston Day Nursery and several pre-school playgroups.

### Community facilities

- The main community facilities are the Thrapston Plaza Centre, Thrapston Centre and sports pavilion (Castle Playing Fields), Thrapston Swimming Pool and the Peace Memorial Park.
- The need to improve the range and standard of community and leisure facilities has been recognised by the District Council and proposals for a new community centre /swimming pool on Cedar Drive are currently out to tender. Work should begin in the near future.

### Organisations

- The main headquarters of the District Council are located within the town. Offices are open to the public from 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday. A number of schemes aimed at improving Thrapston have been co-ordinated by the District Council including the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme which aims to improve the town centre by providing property owners with grants to help repair and improve commercial properties within the town centre.
- Thrapston Town Council is based in the Thrapston Centre (High Street) and represents community interests at local level.
- The Thrapston Volunteer Centre, located on the High Street, operates a number of community transport schemes which support the public transport provision within the area and help elderly residents/people living in rural areas, get to basic services in Thrapston and other towns nearby.

### Transport and Accessibility

- Thrapston is situated next to the A14 (A1-M1 link road) making it easily accessible from other areas of the country. The town and its hinterland is, however, poorly served by public transport.
- There are a number of commercial transport providers in the county, including Stagecoach. Northamptonshire County Council subsidises routes which are considered to be important to the rural transport network.
- From the Market Town survey, it is clear that local residents travel elsewhere to take advantage of the greater level of services in the larger towns within the district. Most respondents look to Kettering (9 miles) for extended retail, leisure and sporting facilities.

<sup>8</sup> Department For Education and Skills (performance tables 2000)

<sup>9</sup> Department For Education and Skills (performance tables 2000)

- There are several return services from Thrapston and some of the more accessible villages (Denford, Islip) to Kettering each day. However, from certain villages such as Sudborough no return service is provided, any day of the week<sup>10</sup>. It is also difficult to get into Thrapston from all but the most accessible villages using public transport.
- The Volunteer Centre provide a number of community transport schemes (Ring and Ride/Volunteer Car Scheme) to enable people from rural areas and the mobility impaired, to access services in Thrapston and beyond. Recent funding from DTLR<sup>11</sup> through the Rural Bus Challenge will enable the Centre to expand the level of service it provides.
- The Rural Transport Partnerships (East Northamptonshire and Welland) aim to bring the community and the transport providers together to identify the needs and improve transport provision in the area for the period until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004.
- A number of traffic problems have been identified in Thrapston through the Market Town Questionnaire and Transport Focus Group. These include:

Parking – Car parking space in the High Street is often occupied all day by people working in the area, leaving no space for people who want to shop in the town. It has been suggested that this is having a detrimental effect on the town centre as people prefer to drive to the large retail parks in Kettering and other parts of the district, where parking isn't a problem. The lack of clear signage to the car parks in the town is also an issue.

Congestion – The main areas of congestion within the town are on Market Road and Midland Road. Market Road is particularly busy at school times although the *Safer Routes to School* project is currently looking at ways to address this problem.

Speeding Traffic – This has been identified as a problem on Oundle Road, Huntingdon Road and in the new housing estates within the town. The County Council will be installing a zebra crossing near the Co-op on Oundle Road. This should help to improve pedestrian access and slow down traffic approaching the road junction with the High Street. The Council will also be looking at ways of improving the crossing from Huntingdon Road to Market Road through the *Safer Routes to School* project. It has also been suggested that the signage for speed limits could be improved in certain areas of the town.

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<sup>10</sup> Public Transport in Northamptonshire – Thrapston District, Northamptonshire County Council, 2001

<sup>11</sup> Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions



## The Thrapston Vision

In the past, Thrapston was a major social and economic hub within the area of East Northamptonshire. Today, people are looking to larger towns such as Kettering, Peterborough and Northampton for extended retail, leisure and employment opportunities. The aim of the Thrapston Market Town Initiative is to regenerate and promote the role of the town as a major service centre for people living in Thrapston and the surrounding rural area. The following vision statement and objectives summarise the issues, which have been raised by the community over the 6-month consultation period.

### **Vision Statement:**

*To promote the role of Thrapston as a market town and service centre for the wider community both now and in the future.*

### **Vision Objectives:**

- **To improve the vitality of the town centre:**
  - to see vacant premises filled and to attract new retailers to Thrapston
  - to encourage residents to shop in Thrapston by diversifying the commercial base
  - to engage with and identify opportunities which could benefit existing businesses
- **To enhance the visual appearance of the town centre:**
  - to continue improving the town centre environment
  - to improve the appearance of the area between the Fire Station and Chancery Lane
- **To enhance the “gateways” to Thrapston and to make better use of the natural resources:**
  - to enhance the visual appearance of the “gateway” into Thrapston over the Nine Arches Bridge and ensure that future development fits in with the surrounding area
  - to promote and improve access to Thrapston Lake, the Town Walk and other footpaths in the area
- **To promote the town and improve communication:**
  - to improve public internet access and support *Thrapston On Line*
  - to erect a notice board in the town centre
  - to produce a regular newsletter focussing on events in Thrapston, working with key partners such as Thrapston Town Council
- **To improve transport provision and minimise traffic problems:**
  - to alleviate traffic congestion and parking problems in the town centre
  - to improve the standard of information on public and community transport schemes in the area
  - to explore better transport links between the town and surrounding rural area
- **To improve the provision of sport, leisure and community facilities and to improve local services:**
  - to provide a new leisure centre and pool
  - to enhance and promote the use of existing community facilities such as the Plaza Centre
  - to improve basic service provision for residents within the town
- **To improve facilities for young people:**
  - to provide a drop-in centre or cafe for young people in the area
  - to investigate the possibility of building a skate park in the town
  - to provide a video/film club in the town



## Themes, Ideas and Projects

Many of the ideas suggested by the local community include aspects that are controlled and influenced by a number of different external bodies. This section outlines how the Project Officer and the 2020 Vision Group should tackle these issues by working with the various organisations involved. The ideas are discussed under each vision objective to illustrate how they relate to the overall aims of the Market Town Initiative.

Specific projects, which have been identified for action by the 2020 Vision Group and the local community are also included. For each project, possible funding sources, timescales and key project partners have been given. Several projects overlap a number of vision objectives and this has been noted, where relevant, at the end of each section.

Project timescales give a rough indication of the priorities for action during each year of the Thrapston Market Town Initiative. The exact order in which the projects will be tackled will depend on the availability of funding sources and other external factors. Since these factors are subject to change over time, further prioritisation has not been carried out at this stage.

The Action Plan is a working document and the projects detailed in the following pages may be modified as the Market Town Initiative progresses.

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### Key to abbreviations

ENC - East Northamptonshire Council  
ENBP - East Northamptonshire Business Partnership  
CDRP - East Northamptonshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership  
NCC - Northamptonshire County Council  
NFMN - Northamptonshire Farmers’ Market Network  
RTP - Rural Transport Partnerships (East Northamptonshire and Welland)  
TTC - Thrapston Town Council  
TVC - Thrapston Volunteer Centre  
2020VG - Thrapston 2020 Vision Group

### Project funding scale

SMALL - £1-£5,000  
MEDIUM - £5,000-£15,000  
LARGE - £15,000+



**Objective: To improve the vitality of the town centre**

Idea/Theme	Details	External Organisations Involved	Suggested Action for Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and the Project Officer	Phasing
Attract more retailers to the town to expand the variety of shops and encourage residents to use their local town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• business rate concessions</li> <li>• better parking</li> <li>• availability of property for retail us</li> </ul>	ENC NCC Northamptonshire Police Local Estate Agents Local businesses 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with ENC to investigate the possibility of business rate concessions and the use of vacant premises for local information displays</li> <li>• work with ENC to identify central sites which could be used for retail/other small businesses in the future</li> <li>• work with local Estate Agents to encourage retailers to occupy vacant premises in the town centre</li> <li>• work with businesses to ensure that they are aware of support initiatives and the work of the Economic Development Unit at ENC</li> <li>• work with and help promote existing businesses to residents (e.g. via the Town Directory etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• years 1-2</li> <li>• years 2-3</li> <li>• years 1-2</li> <li>• years 1-3</li> <li>• years 1-3</li> </ul>
Cattle Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify alternative site</li> <li>• redevelop existing site</li> </ul>	ENC Thrapston Cattle Market 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with ENC and the Thrapston Cattle Market to identify a suitable alternative site outside the town centre</li> <li>• support and encourage the future development of the existing site as a mixed-use area, including car parking, shops and small business units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• years 1-3</li> <li>• years 2-3</li> </ul>
Street market/farmers' market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve the street market and ensure that it benefits other businesses within the town</li> <li>• consider a farmers' market for Thrapston</li> </ul>	ENC TTC Local businesses Thrapston Market Company NFMN 2020 VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigate the current situation and look at ways of improving the street market</li> <li>• investigate the possibility of holding a farmers' market in Thrapston</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• years 2-3</li> <li>• years 2-3</li> </ul>

Project	Details	Delivery Mechanism (partners involved)	Funding scale	Possible funding sources	Phasing
Improve car parking - improve access from car parks to the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>signposts to direct traffic to designated parking areas</li> </ul>	NCC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL	NCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> </ul>

**Objective: To improve the visual appearance of the town centre**

Idea/Theme	Details	External Organisations Involved	Suggested Action for Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and the Project Officer	Phasing
1960s buildings in the High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve the area between the Fire Station and Chancery Lane</li> </ul>	ENC NCC TTC Property owners 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with ENC and local businesses to investigate the most feasible way of improving this area so that it fits in with the rest of the Conservation Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 3</li> </ul>
Empty buildings (e.g. Chancery Lane)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage the development of these buildings for commercial, community or residential use</li> </ul>	ENC TTC Property owners 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with ENC to encourage property owners to tidy up and improve derelict buildings in the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-3</li> </ul>

Project	Details	Delivery Mechanism (partners involved)	Funding scale	Possible funding sources	Phasing
Promote HERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) in Thrapston during its final year</li> </ul>	ENC English Heritage Local businesses 2020VG Project Officer	Variable – depends on individual project	English Heritage - <i>HERS</i> ENC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> </ul>
Lighting in the churchyard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carry out improvements to the lighting in the Churchyard</li> </ul>	ENC TTC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL	ENC TTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> </ul>
Urban tree-planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate sites for and implement urban tree-planting and bulb-planting schemes in the town</li> </ul>	ENC TTC 2020 VG Project Officer	SMALL	ENC TTC Local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>

High Street paving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate the feasibility of extending the paved area outside Barclays Bank, to other areas of the High Street</li> <li>investigate and implement further improvements</li> </ul>	ENC NCC TTC Local businesses 2020VG Project Officer	MEDIUM- LARGE	TTC ENC NCC Countryside Agency - <i>Local Heritage Initiative</i> Local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 3</li> <li>year 3+</li> </ul>
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**Objective: To enhance the “gateways” to Thrapston and make better use of the natural resources**

Idea/Theme	Details	External Organisations Involved	Suggested Action for Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and the Project Officer	Phasing
Environmental Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve the gateway to the town from Islip</li> <li>ensure that future development fits in with the character of the town</li> <li>investigate ways of tackling the litter problem in Thrapston</li> <li>make better use of the natural resources – especially in the area of Thrapston Lake and the Town Walk</li> </ul>	ENC NCC TTC 2020VG Project Officer Local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with ENC to ensure that future development plans are appropriate and will enhance the town</li> <li>work with ENC to ensure that the area beside the River Nene is tidied up</li> <li>work with ENC and TTC to investigate the litter problem in Thrapston including the suggested shortage of litter bins on the new housing developments and the provision of dog bins around the town</li> <li>work with NCC to improve and promote the use of natural resources around the town (Thrapston Lake, Town Walk)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 2-3</li> <li>years 1-3</li> <li>years 1-2</li> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>

Project	Details	Delivery Mechanism (partners involved)	Funding scale	Possible funding sources	Phasing
Design guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produce shop front design guide</li> <li>produce urban design guide</li> </ul>	ENC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL	ENC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> <li>year 1</li> </ul>
Local footpaths/ Town map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>audit/produce a map of footpaths in and around Thrapston to include information about the town and area</li> <li>maintain and improve footpaths around Thrapston</li> </ul>	ENC NCC TTC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL-MEDIUM	Countryside Agency Environment Agency Nene Valley Project Esmée Fairbairn Foundation – <i>Environment Programme</i> TTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>

Health Walks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>audit/produce map of Health Walks in the area – including Denford, Islip, Woodford</li> </ul>	ENC NCC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL- MEDIUM	Countryside Agency ENC NCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> </ul>
Village Walks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>audit/update information about walks in the villages around Thrapston</li> </ul>	ENC NCC	SMALL- MEDIUM	Countryside Agency ENC NCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>
Thrapston Walk/Lake area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signposts directing people to the area</li> <li>Improved access road/car park</li> </ul>	ENC NCC TTC 2020VG Project Officer	MEDIUM	NCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 2</li> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>
Cycle routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>audit/improve the former Thrapston-Irthlingborough railway line for use as a cycle path</li> <li>produce a map of cycle routes in the district</li> </ul>	ENC TTC NCC RTP 2020VG Project Officer	MEDIUM	Countryside Agency Environment Agency Esmée Fairbairn Foundation – <i>Environment Programme</i> Sustrans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 2-3</li> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>
<b>See also...</b>					
Urban tree-planting – page 31					

**Objective: To promote the town and improve communication**

Idea/Theme	Details	External Organisations Involved	Suggested Action for Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and the Project Officer	Phasing
Communication between groups, organisations and the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve public access to information on local groups, organisations, services and events in Thrapston</li> </ul>	Welland Partnership ENC ENBP TTC TVC Local residents, groups and organisations 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with various groups and partnerships to ensure that the local community are aware of events, services and projects which are taking place in the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-3</li> </ul>

Project	Details	Delivery Mechanism (partners involved)	Funding scale	Possible funding sources	Phasing
Public notice board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>erect a notice board in the town centre</li> </ul>	TTC ENC	SMALL	TTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> </ul>
Thrapston newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate current provision and consider improvements</li> <li>organise frequency, printing and distribution</li> </ul>	ENC TTC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL	TTC ENC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>
Town logo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop logo for use on letters generated by the 2020VG, TTC and other organisations promoting events in Thrapston</li> </ul>	ENC TTC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL	TTC ENC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>

Town sign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>erect a town sign in a prominent location within the town centre to help promote the identity of the town</li> </ul>	Thrapston and Raunds Rotary Club TTC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL	Rotary Club TTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>
Internet access and electronic information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve public internet access</li> <li>encourage local businesses, organisations and residents to take advantage of the Pathfinder project and promote local information through <i>Thrapston On Line</i></li> </ul>	Welland Partnership ENC ENBP TTC NCC Local businesses 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL-MEDIUM	Welland Partnership - <i>Pathfinder</i> Local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>
<b>See also...</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map of local footpaths – page 33</li> <li>Health Walks – page 34</li> <li>Village Walks – page 34</li> <li>Thrapston Walk – page 34</li> <li>Cycle routes – page 34</li> <li>Information about transport provision – page 38</li> </ul>					

**Objective: To improve transport provision and minimise traffic problems**

Idea/Theme	Details	External Organisations Involved	Suggested Action for Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and the Project Officer	Phasing
Improve Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve information about public transport</li> <li>• improve public transport links to and from Thrapston</li> <li>• support community transport providers</li> </ul>	NCC ENC TVC RTP 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with NCC and RTP in securing better public transport links including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- better services from Thrapston to Oundle to link in with onward services to Peterborough</li> <li>- extending the timetable to provide services in the evening and at weekends</li> </ul> </li> <li>• support the Volunteer Centre and help publicise their services</li> <li>• work with the RTP to help identify further transport needs in the area and to improve the information which is available on transport provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• years 1-3</li> <li>• year 1</li> <li>• years 1-3</li> </ul>
Traffic Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce congestion on Market Road</li> <li>• reduce the number of HGVs passing through the High Street</li> <li>• tackle the problem of speeding traffic in certain areas of the town</li> </ul>	NCC TTC Local Schools CDRP Northamptonshire Police Local residents 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with local schools on the <i>Safer Routes to School</i> project to help alleviate problems on Market Road</li> <li>• consider the opportunities, which may arise from the Cedar Drive development - i.e. the new sports centre/swimming pool, the link to the schools and how this can help to alleviate traffic problems on Market Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• years 1-3</li> <li>• years 1-3</li> </ul>

Traffic Problems (continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with NCC and local residents to investigate ways of tackling the problem of speeding traffic in certain areas</li> <li>work with NCC to investigate ways of reducing the number of HGVs passing through the town centre (including the feasibility of imposing a weight restriction on the Nine Arches Bridge)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 2-3</li> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>
Car Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure parking in the High Street is time restricted</li> <li>improve the provision of parking for the mobility impaired within the town centre</li> <li>tackle the safety issue of cars exiting from the Bullring car park onto Chancery Lane</li> </ul>	NCC TTC CDRP Northamptonshire Police Local businesses 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with the Police and local businesses in deciding the best course of action for maintaining short stay parking in the High Street</li> <li>work with NCC to investigate and improve provision for disabled parking within the town centre</li> <li>work with CDRP to investigate ways of improving traffic safety on Chancery Lane/Bullring car park</li> <li>work with ENC on future car parking sites in Thrapston (e.g. land to the rear of the library)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> <li>years 1-2</li> <li>years 1-2</li> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>

Project	Details	Delivery Mechanism (partners involved)	Funding scale	Possible funding sources	Phasing
Improve information about transport provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the TVC in their work and help to publicise their services</li> <li>improve information about all transport services available in the area</li> </ul>	TVB RTP ENC 2020VG Project Officer	SMALL	ENC TVB Countryside Agency - RTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>
<b>See also...</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage for car parks – page 30</li> </ul>					

**Objective: To improve the provision of sport, leisure and community facilities and to improve local services**

Idea/Theme	Details	External Organisations Involved	Suggested Action for Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and the Project Officer	Phasing
NHS dental provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase the availability of NHS dental provision in the area</li> </ul>	Northamptonshire Heartlands PCT/ Nene Valley Local Health Group 2020VG Project Officer Local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate the level of NHS dental provision in the area</li> <li>work with the Local Health Group and PCT to identify the need for NHS dental provision and investigate ways of improving access to this service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve access to the library by extending the opening hours</li> <li>consider the need to extend or relocate this facility given the population growth in the town</li> </ul>	NCC ENC TTC 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with NCC to investigate the need to extend library opening hours and improve/relocate this facility as the town grows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>
Fire Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate the need to relocate this facility</li> </ul>	NCC ENC TTC Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with NCC and the Fire Authority to investigate current provision and the need to expand/relocate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>
Children's play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate ways of improving these areas (including safety issues)</li> </ul>	TTC CDRP Northamptonshire Police Local playgroups 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with TTC to investigate ways of improving the children's play areas in Thrapston (including safety issues)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-3</li> </ul>

Project	Details	Delivery Mechanism (partners involved)	Funding scale	Possible funding sources	Phasing
Plaza Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure future use of centre as a community venue</li> <li>secure funding to improve facilities</li> </ul>	ENC Plaza Trust TTC Local groups and residents 2020VG Project Officer	MEDIUM-LARGE	Community Fund Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - <i>Arts and Heritage Programme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>
New Pool/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the project</li> <li>keep public informed of progress</li> </ul>	ENC 2020VG Project Officer	LARGE	Funding already sourced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-2</li> <li>years 1-3</li> </ul>
Castle Playing Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with the Town Council to secure funding for the proposed improvements in this area</li> </ul>	NCC TTC 2020VG Project Officer	LARGE	Sport England - <i>Playing fields and community green spaces</i> Countryside Agency - <i>Doorstep Greens</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 2</li> </ul>

**See also...**

- Map of local footpaths - page 33
- Health Walks - page 34
- Village Walks - page 34
- Thrapston walk - page 34
- Cycle routes - page 34
- Drop-in centre - page 43
- Skate park - page 43
- Film club - page 43



**Objective: To improve facilities for young people**

Idea/Theme	Details	External Organisations Involved	Suggested Action for Thrapston 2020 Vision Group and the Project Officer	Phasing
Involve young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that young people continue to be involved in the project</li> </ul>	Lifelong Learning Local schools 2020VG Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that young people are consulted about the projects which affect them (see below)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years 1-3</li> </ul>

Project	Details	Delivery Mechanism (partners involved)	Funding scale	Possible funding sources	Phasing
Skate park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate similar schemes (e.g. Rushden)</li> <li>investigate suitable site (e.g. Castle Playing Fields development proposals)</li> <li>secure funding</li> </ul>	Lifelong Learning Local youth group and other young people TTC ENC 2020VG Project Officer	LARGE	ENC TTC Youth Council Sport England- <i>Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces/ Community Capital Programme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 2</li> <li>year 2</li> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>
Film club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate similar schemes</li> <li>investigate possibility of sharing equipment with other towns and villages in the district (using mobile unit to transport equipment to other venues)</li> <li>organise venues</li> <li>secure funding</li> </ul>	ENC Local groups and residents 2020VG Project Officer	MEDIUM	Arts Council - <i>Arts Capital Programme</i> Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - <i>Arts and Heritage Programme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 2</li> <li>year 2</li> <li>years 2-3</li> <li>years 2-3</li> </ul>
Drop-in centre - meeting place for youths and local groups to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate current provision</li> <li>investigate need to improve provision</li> <li>investigate possible locations for a drop-in centre (e.g. derelict building</li> </ul>	Lifelong Learning ENC Property owners Local youth group and	LARGE	Community Fund Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - <i>Arts and Heritage Programme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 1</li> <li>year 1</li> <li>years 1-2</li> </ul>

include café, internet access etc.	on Chancery Lane) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>secure necessary funding</li> </ul>	other young people 2020VG Project Officer		English Heritage - <i>HERS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>year 2</li> </ul>
<b>See also...</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castle Playing Fields – page 40</li> <li>New pool/community centre – page 40</li> </ul>					

**Appendix A**  
**Members of the Thrapston 2020 Vision Group**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mrs Alison Barlow	East Northamptonshire & Wellingborough Lifelong Learning
Mr David Bletsoe	Henry H Bletsoe & Son
Mrs Siân Connolly	Northamptonshire ACRE
Mr Bernard Dennison	Thrapston Town Council
Miss Claire Keck	East Northamptonshire Council
Mr John Murray	Northamptonshire County Council
Mr Colin Ray	East Northamptonshire Council
Mr David Scott	Scotts of Thrapston
Mrs Sylvia Smith	Nene Valley PCG
Thrapston Police Officers	Northamptonshire Police
Miss Joanna Walker	Thrapston Co-ordinator (Healthcheck process)
Cllr. Madeline Whiteman	East Northamptonshire Council (Thrapston ward)

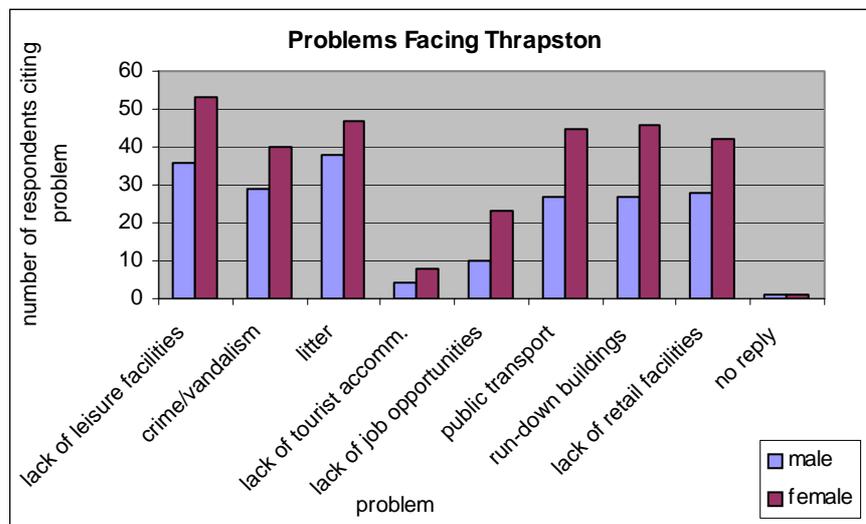


## Appendix B Market Town Questionnaire: Main Findings

### Sample Breakdown

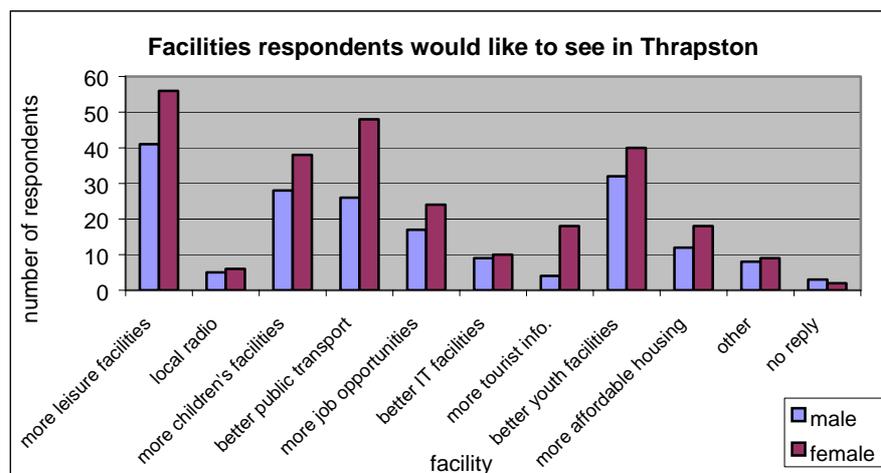
- There were a total of 135 returns. 75% of these came from Thrapston residents.
- The total number of female respondents was 77 - significantly greater than the number of male respondents, totalling 58.
- The majority of respondents (72%) were over the age of 39. There was a significant lack of information from residents below the age of 25. This was later addressed by a separate survey and workshop at the King John School and Prince William School (see Appendix C and F)

### Q What problems do you think face Thrapston?



The main problems identified by respondents were the lack of leisure facilities and litter. Respondents were also concerned about the public transport provision, the condition of town buildings and the lack of retail facilities in the town.

### Q What facilities/services would you like to see more of in Thrapston?



The main facilities respondents would like to see in Thrapston include, improved leisure/sports facilities, improved public transport and more facilities for children and youths.

### Answers to open-ended questions

#### **Q. Please give details of the facilities you would like to see in Thrapston.**

More than 1 response was allowed.

The most important points are highlighted in bold.

Total number of responses:

Male - 80

Female - 114

Facility	Sub-topic	Male - % total responses <sup>12</sup>	Female - % total responses
<b>New pool/leisure</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>17.9</b>
<b>Improved shops</b>	<b>Economy</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>16.0</b>
<b>Facilities for young people</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.5</b>
<b>Improved public transport</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Cinema</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>NHS Dental Surgery</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Improved car parking</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>6.6</b>
<b>Arts centre/museum/cultural facilities</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6.6</b>
<b>Improvements to existing walkways</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<b>Better variety of group/clubs</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.7</b>
More restaurants	Economy	2.9	4.7
Improved Police presence	Social	4.3	0
Improved Library	Social	2.9	2.8
Restoration/repair of buildings	Environment	2.9	0.9
Improved waste disposal facilities	Environment	4.3	1.9
Continued use of Plaza Centre	Social	1.5	0
Improved park/pocket park/children's areas	Environment	1.5	2.8
Major supermarket	Economy	4.3	2.8
CCT cameras installed	Social	1.5	0
More street cleaners	Environment	1.5	0
Another school	Economy/ Social	0	0.9
Another doctors surgery	Social	1.5	0.9
Planting of trees/flowers	Environment	0	0.9
Pantomime society	Social	1.5	0
More taxi services	Transport	0	0.9
Improved employment opportunities	Economy	1.5	0
More adult education	Economy/ Social	0	0.9
Improved infrastructure/broadband	Economy	1.5	0
More sheltered housing	Social	1.5	0

<sup>12</sup> percentages may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding

**Q. In your opinion, what are the worst aspects of Thrapston?**

More than 1 response was allowed.

The most important points are highlighted in bold.

Total number of responses:

Male – 70

Female – 124

Aspect	Sub-topic	Male - % total responses <sup>13</sup>	Female - % total responses
<b>Run-down town centre/vacant shops</b>	<b>Economy/ Environment</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>19.4</b>
<b>Derelict land/buildings</b>	<b>Economy/ Environment</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>14.5</b>
<b>Litter/dog mess</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>12.1</b>
<b>Car parking</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>1960s redevelopment in the High St.</b>	<b>Economy/ Environment</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>Public transport</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>Traffic problems</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Disproportionate level of housing development for the level of service provision</b>	<b>Social/ Economy</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Lack of shops/major supermarket/poor opening times</b>	<b>Economy</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>Only 1 dentist</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Lack of arts provision	Social	0	0.8
Lack of flowers/trees	Environment	0	0.8
Waste disposal provision	Environment	1.4	0
House prices/quality	Social/ Economy	0	0.8
Uneven pavements	Environment	0	0.8
Lack of Tourist Information	Economy	0	0.8
A1M1 Link Park	Economy	1.4	0
Lack of part time employment	Economy	0	0.8
Developing in inappropriate areas	Environment/ Economy	0	1.6
Travellers	Social	2.9	0.8
Lack of community centre or meeting place	Social	1.4	1.6
Lack of street furniture	Environment	0	0.8

<sup>13</sup> percentages may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding



## Appendix C

### King John School Survey: Main Findings

The questionnaire survey was carried out in January 2002. The sample comprises 146 pupils between the ages of 11-13, attending the King John Middle School in Thrapston.

- Pupils were asked to write down what they perceived to be the best and worst features of Thrapston. The main responses are illustrated in the table below (more than 1 response permitted):

Best Things about Thrapston		Worst Things about Thrapston	
Aspect	Number of pupils	Aspect	Number of pupils
Shops	25	Graffiti	26
Pool	48	Litter	22
Park	39	Lack of Facilities	25
Sports Fields	42	Cattle Market	12
Sailing Lake	19	Derelict Houses/Land	17
Takeaways/Cafes	16	Traffic/Car-parking	10
Clubs	2		

- Pupils were then asked to focus on one thing that they would like to see in Thrapston and one thing that they would like to remove from the town. The results are detailed below:

Facilities pupils would like to see in Thrapston		Facilities pupils would like to see removed from Thrapston	
Facility	Number of pupils	Facility	Number of pupils
Cinema	26	Graffiti	10
Leisure centre	45	Pool	10
Skate Park	23	Spinney (derelict area near school)	22
		Cattle Market	22
		Derelict Houses/Land	19



## Appendix D

### Focus Group Findings

#### Economy Focus Group (14/03/02)

- Parking – The difficulty of car parking in the High Street was recognised as having a detrimental effect on town centre businesses. The group suggested that a maximum waiting time could be enforced, possibly by sharing a traffic warden with the other market towns in the district, to discourage the people who work in the area from parking in the High Street all day, leaving space for those wishing to shop in the town.
- High Rates – It was felt that the business rates in the town centre were high and that these would need to be reduced in order to attract new retailers to the town. The group also suggested that it was easier for office-based businesses to locate in the town rather than shops as they could take advantage of the lower rates associated with upper floor space and less favourable locations.
- Lack of Office/Industrial Space – It was noted that there was very little office space available in the town. The group suggested that the type of units required to help regenerate the town centre were small, centrally located business start-up units.
- Internet – The group identified one public Internet site within the town (Library). It was suggested that the level of provision could be improved.
- Availability of Training – It was noted that a number of training courses were available to businesses, free of charge, in Wellingborough. The group pointed out that private transport was necessary to take advantage of the courses and that this excluded certain employees from attending.

#### Social Issues Focus Group (20/03/02)

- Litter – The group recognised that this was a problem towards the outskirts of the town and on the A1-M1 Link Business Park. It was also noted that there were very few litter bins on the new housing estates and that dog bins were scarce throughout the town.
- Pedestrian Access – The group pointed out that it was difficult for people to cross the A605 to get to the A1-M1 Link Park and suggested that access could be improved to cater for employees working in the Business Park and encourage them to walk to work.
- Youth Facilities – The group noted that the views of young people needed to be considered when planning any future development. It was suggested that a skate park facility (similar to Rushden) might be needed to avoid teenagers making use of unsuitable areas.
- Cinema/Film Club – It was suggested that the town could make use of the Plaza Centre as a venue for a weekly film showing.
- Local Information – The group pointed out that there was a lack of information for residents on events/meetings taking place in the town. It was suggested that an information board could be erected in the town centre and a newsletter could be produced to help inform residents and promote the town. The group also suggested that a town map could be produced to help market the town to visitors.
- Speeding Traffic – this was noted as a problem along Oundle Road, Huntingdon Road and in the Lazy Acre estate.

#### Environment Focus Group (19/03/02)

- Nine Arches Bridge “Gateway” to Thrapston – The group recognised the need to enhance this area and suggested that landscaping would be preferable to further housing development. The group noted that if development were to proceed in the area, it should be designed to enhance the town and incorporate plenty of greenspace. The group also suggested that hanging baskets could be placed on the streetlights over the bridge.

- A605 Roundabout – The group suggested that the visual appearance of this roundabout could be improved as it marked another gateway into the town.
- Oundle Road Junction – The group agreed that an urban tree-planting scheme could be implemented to improve the large pavement area opposite the Coop.
- Cattle Market – The group suggested that the appearance of the market could be improved and that ultimately, the area could be redeveloped for small business units, car parking and shops.
- Area between the Fire Station and 1960s buildings – The need to enhance this area was recognised. The group suggested that a short-term goal could be to improve the street furniture/visual appearance of the area outside the library and that a long-term project could focus on screening or redeveloping the 1960s buildings.
- Plaza Centre – The group agreed that the Plaza Centre was an important, historic building within the town and that its use as a community venue should be promoted.
- Derelict Building on Chancery Lane – The group suggested that this building could be renovated to provide a venue for an arts or youth centre.
- Litter – This was noted as a problem in the area beside The Bridge Hotel and in the ditches along Huntingdon Road.

#### Transport Focus Group (27/03/02)

- Public Transport Schedule – The limited frequency of services to Thrapston from the surrounding villages and larger towns in the area was noted as a problem. The group suggested that it was almost impossible to use public transport to get to work in the area. It was also acknowledged that Northamptonshire County Council subsidised transport services, which were considered to be important to the rural transport network.
- Timetables – The group commented that the timetables were difficult to obtain, understand and were often out-of-date. It was suggested that a “touch-screen” information point, similar to the one in Oundle, could be installed in the centre of Thrapston (instead of its current location at East Northamptonshire Council) to give details of public and community transport services available in the town. Another suggestion was to use a public notice board to display transport information in the town centre.
- Train Travel – It was noted that there were virtually no public bus services to the nearby mainline stations in Peterborough and Huntingdon, and very few to Kettering. The group also pointed out that there was a frequent service from Oundle to Peterborough but that it was very difficult to get from Thrapston to Oundle by public transport.
- HGVs – The group commented on the number of HGVs passing through the High Street and suggested that businesses should be encouraged to re-route their lorries along the A14. It was acknowledged that enforcing a weight limit might not be a viable option given the limited Police resources and that negotiating with the relevant businesses might prove to be more successful.
- Signage – The group suggested that signs indicating the speed limit in certain areas of the town could be improved and that signs for the car parks in Thrapston could be introduced.
- Congestion – The problem of congestion on Market Road was discussed and it was noted that the Primary and King John Schools were currently investigating methods to improve the situation through the “Safer Routes to School” project.
- Speeding Traffic – This was noted as a problem on Huntingdon Road, Oundle Road and in the new housing estates. Speed bumps and educating residents to slow down were suggested as potential solutions.
- Cultural Issue – The group suggested that one of the major problems in trying to reduce the number of cars on the road was the fact that people preferred to use their cars, regardless of whether public transport was available, because they represented a status symbol in today’s society.

- Communication - The group acknowledged that the commercial transport providers did not communicate with each other to provide the best possible service because they were in competition. It was noted that the aim of the Rural Transport Partnership was to bring transport providers together with the local community to identify the needs in the area and improve transport provision.
- Community Transport - The group noted that the Volunteer Centre had been awarded funding from DTLR to expand transport services in the area. It was reported that 4 extra mini-buses would be available for the "Ring and Ride" service and that the Volunteer Centre would be investigating the possibility of operating a shuttle service between the market towns in the district. It was also noted that the Volunteer Centre would soon be operating a "Wheels to Work" programme to help young people to get to work in the area by supplying them with mopeds.



## Appendix E Thrapston Business Survey (April 02)

### Sample Breakdown

Hand delivered (High Street) on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2002. - 36

Posted (Industry and Business Directory list) on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2002. - 51

Total distributed - 87

2 returned undelivered = 85

30 returned = 35% return rate

### Summary of Results

#### GENERAL

- 21 of the replies were from independent retailers.
- 6 of the replies were from non-food shops.
- 20 of the 30 returns were from companies with 9 or less members of staff, 8 had only one member of staff.

#### SALES

- The majority of businesses (36%) indicated that their turnover had increased, in different proportions, in the last financial year.

#### CONFIDENCE

- 53% of businesses were confident that their sales turnover would increase over the next 12 months, however, only 27% felt that town centre business conditions would improve over the same period and 16% believed that conditions would worsen.
- 53% of businesses that replied said that they would NOT be increasing their workforce.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

- Approximately two thirds of those responding had a business email address.
- 9 companies would have a demand for broadband in the next 3 years.

#### LOCAL BUSINESS ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- Of the support agencies mentioned, East Northamptonshire Council, Business Link, The Prince's Trust and East Northamptonshire Business Partnership had a higher percentage of having been heard of than not. Very few businesses had heard of Northamptonshire Co-operative Development Agency or the Learning and Skills Council.

#### BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- 47% of businesses felt that there were NOT enough events to draw the business community together.



## **Appendix F**

### **Prince William School Workshop (23/04/02)**

Pupils attending the Prince William School in Oundle were asked to participate in a workshop to help identify ways of improving facilities and services in Thrapston. Several pupils from the Thrapston area took part in the session and their suggestions are detailed below:

#### **Things the pupils would like to see in Thrapston:**

Priorities for Action:

- A modern café/drop-in centre – somewhere for pupils to meet after school. Possibly including Internet access points.
- Skate park facility – pupils commented that there was a need for such a facility in the town and suggested that it could be located near the Castle Playing Fields.
- Improved car parking – pupils suggested that the Bullring car park was not sufficient to cater for the number of vehicles passing through the town. They also commented that if the Cattle Market were to be relocated, this site could be used to provide additional car parking space.
- Improved access/use of Thrapston Lake – pupils suggested that this area was an asset to the town and that better use could be made of it. They commented that the access to the lake could be improved and signposts could be erected to help market the area.
- Improve the Plaza Centre – pupils commented that this could help to attract more groups/concerts/events to the town.
- Improve the facilities at Castle Playing Fields – pupils suggested that the Town Council proposals to improve this area should be implemented.
- Build a gym – pupils suggested that there was a need for a public gym in the town and asked whether this would be included in the new sport/community centre development.
- Lazy Acre – pupils commented that residents living in the new housing estate did not often come into the town centre because they found it easier to travel along the A14 to Kettering. They suggested that something should be done to help market the town and encourage residents from this part of Thrapston to make use of local facilities.

Other Ideas:

- Video shop and school supplies/stationery shop
- Improved street lighting between Islip and Thrapston
- Get rid of the old pool
- Improve the public toilets
- Tidy up area beside the Bridge Hotel
- More bike parking
- Reasonable prices for the new sport/community centre – not an annual fee



## **Appendix G**

### **Community Consultation Report (08/05/02)**

Greengage Consulting

#### **Priorities for Action**

The priorities for action identified at the consultation event are shown below. The prioritisation exercise was in three stages.

Stage 1 - generate ideas on how to improve Thrapston and the surrounding area. This resulted in 10 flipchart sheets full of ideas - many repeated several times. It is interesting to note that by the end of the afternoon session and by the end of the evening session many people commented that they had no new ideas to add to the lists. This is taken as an indication that the exercise had succeeded in flushing out all the major ideas and opportunities.

Stage 2 - working in four groups, each group was asked to identify its top five priorities from the ideas they had identified. These ideas included those generated during the drop in session in the afternoon. This resulted in possible priority areas being identified.

Stage 3 - each person was asked to identify their top two priorities and mark them with a sticker. The numbers by the side of each of the priority areas below show the number of votes received by each priority area.

#### **Making better use of the river and lakes - 21**

- Tourism development
- River walks
- Parks and open spaces around lakes
- Nature trail
- Build road/track to gravel pit
- Develop the riverside area for community use
- Make use of river/lake assets for boating/ornithology
- Develop a marina with restaurant and shops by the river
- Better access to river area
- Improved signage and information

#### **Parking - 14**

- Improve off-street car parking
- Restrict high street parking
- Clearer signage
- Enforcement of parking restrictions
- Parking restrictions on Chancery Lane
- Stop roadside parking on verges
- More car parking near the schools
- Develop cattle market for car parking
- Improve disabled parking
- Improve safety of cars exiting from Bullring car park

#### **More facilities for young people - 12**

- Meeting place for youths
- Modern coffee bar
- Internet cafe
- Skateboard park
- Drop in centre
- Play areas for children
- Involve young people in management of meeting places

- Video shop
- Stationery/school supplies shop
- A skate park near the tennis courts

#### **Improve the shopping experience - 7**

- Improve high street buildings
- Better library hours
- Better tourist information
- Demolish 60's shops
- Improve the market
- Move the market
- Retain market town feel
- Improve the pavements
- Improve disabled access
- Get shops to open and close at same times
- Pedestrianise the High St
- More shops – shoe shop –
- Redevelop library/fire station area
- Develop a farmers' market for Thrapston
- Better public toilet opening times – Sunday morning

#### **Improve public transport - 4**

- Buses to Oundle
- Buses that connect with hospital opening times
- Regular bus service including weekends and evenings
- Make travel voucher system easier for all including taxi firms
- Better timetable information
- Buses through Lazy Acre estate
- Introduce a local bus shuttle
- More bus stops

#### **Appearance of the town - 2**

- Clean/tidy up the entrances to the town
- Plant bulbs at entrances to town
- Clean up the mess in Bridge St
- More litter bins
- More dog litter bins – near Nine Arches Bridge
- Murals on Gable ends
- Improve the area off Green Lane

#### **Other areas of interest to the community**

The ideas below were not identified as priority areas but appeared as ideas for action.

##### Leisure

- Make a walking feature of the railway viaduct
- Meadow Lane park – cut briars from paths and provide dog litter bins
- More seating at churchyard, Oundle Road
- More lighting in the churchyard
- Develop railway line for walking
- Build a Gym
- Reasonable prices for the new sports centre – not an annual fee
- Improve the castle fields playing area

##### Cultural

- Develop “The Plaza centre” for community use

- Concerts at the plaza centre
- Facilities for artists to show work
- Provide help for local organisations such as the town band, choral society, TADS etc.

#### Tourism and heritage

- Open a tourist information centre
- Re-build historic town pump
- Promote the “George Washington” connection
- Open a small museum

#### Development

- More school places
- More manufacturing
- Double housing development

#### General

- Improve ICT availability
- Bring in Broadband
- Speed ramps on High St
- Restrict HGVs on High St
- CCTV
- Annual community forum
- Better lighting and road layout at access to Lazy Acre
- NHS Dentist
- Deal with the issue of travellers – remove from gravel pits
- Improved toilets
- Lighting from Islip to Thrapston

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

The results from the consultation appear to give a good correlation with the problems identified in the earlier consultation, held in February 2002.

We have two recommendations of how to use the priorities and actions identified by the community:

- It would be useful to analyse the priorities to determine which of the actions can be carried out in the short term and which will need longer term planning and fund raising. Experience shows that a fast response on some short-term actions help to build the confidence of the community in the consultation process.
- It is recommended that the steering group analyses the priorities to determine which can be done within the circle of control of the local authorities and which will need to be progressed through partnership arrangements with other agencies or commercial interests.