



# Design for the Future

## Thrapston and Surrounding Areas Discussion Paper

August 2004

### Introduction

The Council has to prepare a new development plan, which, subject to new legislation expected in September 2004 will comprise a set of Local Development Documents that form the Local Development Framework. It will replace the adopted Local Plan and set a broad framework for the future of East Northamptonshire and the wider North Northamptonshire area, outlining a strategy for its future development and the conservation of its heritage up to 2021. Initial work is currently underway on a joint Local Development Framework with Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. This discussion paper has been prepared to gauge the community's visions and aims, so key decisions about the future of East Northamptonshire are well informed.

This paper is the seventh and final in a series of area based discussion papers, and concentrates on Thrapston and Surrounding Areas. It focuses on the key issues that have arisen out of previous consultation and from changes to Government Policy. Key issues addressed:

- Priorities for Thrapston and surrounding areas with implications for planning;
- Social, economic and environmental roles and relationships of Thrapston and surrounding areas;
- Where should development be focused;
- What type of development should be permitted;
- Planning Out Crime;
- Maintaining and enhancing green spaces and recreational facilities; and
- Increasing community involvement.

## Background

Thrapston is a traditional rural market town, situated in the centre of East Northamptonshire. The town centre with its many interesting and historical buildings is a conservation area. The town has experienced significant residential and commercial expansion to the east and south east, and more recently large scale housing to the west.



The surrounding rural area is considered diverse in nature with a range of villages differing in size and service base. For the purposes of this discussion paper the area is essentially defined as the parishes of Aldwinckle, Brigstock, Clopton, Denford, Islip, Lowick, Sudborough, Thorpe Achurch, Titchmarsh, Twywell, Wadenhoe, and Woodford. The plan shows the extent of the area covered by this discussion paper.

Some of the key characteristics of the area are:

- The role of Thrapston as a service centre;
- Significant residential growth rates in Thrapston;
- Richness in the character and heritage of the countryside;
- River Nene and Harper's Brook;
- Attractive churches; and
- Diverse nature of the villages.

The current Local Plan allocates land for development. The table below provides an update on the latest position.

LOCATION	POLICY	LAND USE	STATUS
Lazy Acre, Thrapston	TH1-A	Housing	100 houses complete with a further 28 under construction and 11 with outstanding planning permission
Huntingdon Road, Thrapston	TH1-B	Housing	The Council prepared a draft Development Brief for the site in the late 1990s, but it was not progressed due to changes in Government policies relating to the development of greenfield land. Planning applications for development on part of the site, including a new doctor's surgery, have been refused due to the land's greenfield status. A new application for a surgery and housing on the Western part of the site has recently been submitted but no decision has been made yet.

LOCATION	POLICY	LAND USE	STATUS
Midland Road, Thrapston	TH1 - C	Housing	9 houses complete with a further 18 under construction and 18 with outstanding planning permission.
Bridge Street South, Thrapston	TH1 - D	Housing	No progress.
West of Midland Road, Thrapston	TH2 - A	Recreation	Northern part is being laid out as open space/recreation for the TH1-C housing site.
North of former ARC Plant Site, Thrapston	TH2 - B	Recreation	No progress.
South of Market Road, Thrapston	TH3	School	Additional education requirements met through expansion of the existing Primary and Middle schools.
Land adjoining the District Council offices, Thrapston	TH4	Mixed	Community centre completed with planning permission for housing granted on the remainder of the allocated site and brownfield land beyond.
Cattle Market, Thrapston	TH5	Mixed	No progress. Dependent on relocation of Cattle Market.
Cosy Nook, Thrapston	TH6	Car Parking	District Council looking to purchase land for car parking.
Back Lane, Brigstock	BR1-A	Housing	Completed.
Kennel Hill, Brigstock	BR1-B	Housing	Part of the allocated site is subject to a planning application for conversion of barns to dwelling which is pending a decision.
Land in Sudborough Road, Brigstock	BR2	Employment	No progress.
Brigstock Camp	BR3	Mixed	Permission has been granted for three 'country house' style dwellings but has not yet been implemented.
Land south of Mill Road, Woodford	WO1	Housing	Planning permission granted for 50 dwellings.
Land south of Kettering Road, Islip	IS1	Recreation and Commercial	No progress.

As a result of intense residential development across the District, the Council has adopted interim policy which seeks to limit the supply of new sites for housing development and counter the current trend towards town cramming. The policy essentially restricts residential growth to brownfield land to promote a balance between housing, jobs and services. This

approach may be revised in the context of the emerging Milton Keynes and South Midlands strategy which earmarks Northamptonshire as part of one of the four major growth areas for south-east England. However, it is still uncertain how much development will have to be accommodated in East Northamptonshire and a definitive figure is not expected until December 2004.

## Priorities for the Area

Local people, groups and visitors to East Northamptonshire have already had a chance to comment on what they thought were the main land use and development issues as a result of a key issues consultation document published in July 2001. The following priorities were raised:

- Strengthening the role of town centres, fostering urban renaissance;
- Stimulating employment opportunities;
- Improving the environmental and visual quality of the area;
- Maintaining balanced communities and in particular supporting affordable housing;
- Avoid town cramming;
- Improve transport infrastructure;
- Maintaining and enhancing services and facilities; and
- Increasing community involvement.

In addition, the East Northamptonshire Local Strategic Partnership, made up of public, private, voluntary and community organisations in the District launched a draft Community Strategy in 2003. This is available at [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/ppimageupload/image7615.PDF](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/ppimageupload/image7615.PDF) and from the Council offices in Thrapston. The document raises the following community priorities:

- Environment and Infrastructure;
- Health and Housing
- Education and Lifelong learning;
- Community Safety; and
- Economic Development.

The development and land use implications of these priorities needs to be carried forward through the new Local Development Framework.



*1. Do the lists of priorities comprise all the key issues relevant to Thrapston and surrounding areas?*

In terms of Thrapston, consultants were appointed in June 2003 to prepare a Regeneration Masterplan report. Following extensive public consultation, several key areas of general consensus regarding the future development of the town emerged:

- The redevelopment of the Cattle Market site would be supported if a suitable alternative site could be found near the town;
- The demolition of the buildings on the library and sixties shops site would be welcomed, with a strong preference for redevelopment along the lines of the original building demolished in the 1960's;
- An increase in car park provision is greatly needed and would be welcomed as part of a Bull Ring redevelopment. Parking should also form an integral component of any redevelopment of the Cattle Market and library sites;
- Traffic congestion is a major problem and calming measures, crossing points and improved parking would be welcomed;
- New facilities in the town would be welcomed, but there may not be sufficient demand to support major growth;
- The introduction of large areas of housing in the town centre would be unwelcome.



The report will be used by the Council to inform the future of development of Thrapston. A copy of the report is available for inspection from Thrapston library or alternatively contact the Economic Development Team at East Northamptonshire Council on 01832 742244.

*2. Do you agree with the general consensus regarding future development of Thrapston?*



## Spatial Roles and Relationships

An important issue that needs to be examined is the roles and relationships of Thrapston and the wider surrounding area.

Thrapston is highly accessible with good road links providing easy access to surrounding settlements. The A14 and A45/A605 ensure strong links with Kettering, Peterborough, Corby and Northampton which significantly influence employment and travel patterns.

The villages within the area have an important spatial role. A key objective is to identify the links between villages to enable

us to plan and implement sustainable communities. If the new Local Development Framework is to tackle social, economic and environmental issues in a joined up manner, it is important to identify the roles and linkages of the settlements in the area with each other, and the wider area. We need you to tell us where you go to shop, school and work.

*3. How far do you travel to use day to day services and facilities, such as shops, schools, post offices, places of worship, public houses, doctor's surgeries or medical facilities?*



### Corby expansion

An application has been submitted for the expansion of Corby at Priors Hall. Additionally a major expansion of Weldon is planned, although no application has been made yet to Corby Borough Council. The proposed development will potentially impact upon the area, such as significantly increasing road traffic on the A6116. It is

crucial that links with Thrapston and the surrounding villages are integrated within the proposals to ensure their roles are maintained and enhanced.

*4. As Corby develops, what can be done to ensure Thrapston and surrounding villages maintain and enhance their roles?*

## Development Options

### Distribution of Development

The strategy for the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub region identifies Northamptonshire as a growth area which will have to accommodate more homes, jobs and services in a sustainable way.

The main thrust of Government guidance and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands is that new development should be directed towards the main towns, which are well supported by services and facilities. Whilst the Local Development Framework will reflect this, it is considered that given the diversity of the District, there is potential and emerging need for some additional development in the rural areas to help sustain local communities, existing community facilities and to meet local housing needs.

One of the Council's key priorities is to achieve sustainable communities. This is considered possible by bringing together housing with jobs, education, health facilities, shopping, other services and access to public transport.

Preliminary work for the Local Development Framework will consider what proportion of new development should be allocated in each town and how much should be directed to other settlements.

### Rural Area

The Council commissioned consultants to assess the potential capacity of the District over the next 20 years. A summary of the report is available to view on the Council's website at <http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/ppimageupload/Image7859.PDF> or from the Council Offices in Thrapston. The assessment broadly



To assist in the appreciation of the possible development options, the following scenarios help illustrate how the District could accommodate the development proposed in the emerging regional strategy, which may be subject to change.

*5. Which of these statements do you agree with most and why?*

- a) Most development should be focused on towns;
- b) The majority of development should be in the towns with some development in the larger villages;
- c) There should be a more even distribution between the towns and villages.

concluded that the District could accommodate more development.

The consultants specifically identified areas to the north of Brigstock between the village and the bypass where there are few environmental constraints and where development might have a positive impact overall.

*6. Do you think that development to the north of Brigstock should be supported? If yes, do you think it should be housing only, or should it comprise a mix of uses?*

Other areas where the consultants felt potential future development could be located include land to the north of Mill Road in Woodford and land south west of Islip between Toll Bar Road and the A6116.



*7. What are your feelings about development in these areas? Is new housing or mixed use development supported and on what conditions?*

### Thrapston

Thrapston is identified in the current Local Plan, as one of the main locations for development in East Northamptonshire. The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy will be a major influence on the role of Thrapston in terms of future growth and prosperity. The draft strategy proposes that development in Thrapston should be geared towards accommodating local needs and enhancing the town centre.

undertook a draft urban potential study which found that 298 houses could be created within Thrapston on sites considered 'likely' to be available for development over the next twenty years.

There are sites within the built up area of Thrapston where there is potential for land use change. During 2002, the Council

The consultant's capacity assessment report found that there are large areas to the south of Thrapston near to the A14 where development could occur.

*8. What are your feelings about development in and around Thrapston? Is new development supported and on what conditions?*



## Aspirational Sites

Arising from previous consultation, a number of individual sites were promoted by landowners and agents as potential development sites in and around Thrapston and the surrounding areas. These include:

Land at the Cattle Market, Thrapston;  
Land between Oundle Road and the A605, Thrapston;  
Land to the East of Midland Road, Thrapston (1);  
Land to the East of Midland Road, Thrapston (2);  
Land to the West of Midland Road, Thrapston;  
Land off Huntington Road, Thrapston;  
Land to the South of the A14, Thrapston;  
Land off Washington Court, Thrapston;  
Land off Lakeside Close, Thrapston;  
Land off Meadow Lane, Thrapston;  
Land to the East of the A605, Thrapston;  
Land between Oakleas Rise and the A14, Thrapston;  
Land to the South of Oakleas Rise to the North of the A14, Thrapston (1);  
Land to the South of Oakleas Rise to the North of the A14, Thrapston (2);  
Land to the North West of Oundle Road, Thrapston (1);  
Land to the North West of Oundle Road, Thrapston (2);  
Land at Sudborough Road, Brigstock;  
Land to the North East of Back Lane and East of Old Dry Lane off Woodyard Close, Brigstock;  
Land to the North East of Brigstock;  
Land to the North East of Back Lane off Woodyard Close, Brigstock;  
Land to the East of Grafton Road, Brigstock;  
Land between Stanion Road and the A6116, Brigstock;  
Land between Liveden Road and the A6116, Brigstock;  
Land between Kennel Hill and the A6116, Brigstock;  
Land to the East of Lowick Road, Aldwinckle;  
Land to the West of Berry Gree Park, Clopton;  
Land at High View Cottage to the East of Front Street, Denford;  
Land at Kingswood to the West of School Lane, Denford;  
Land to the North of Chapel Hill, Islip;  
Land to the rear of 89 Lowick Road, to the North of Green Lane, Islip;  
Land to the South of Kettering Road to the West of Thrapston, Islip;  
Land to the West of the A6116 and North of the A14, Islip;  
Land to the West of Islip Furnaces Industrial Estate, Islip;  
Land to the East of Little Lane, Sudborough;  
Land to the West off Lilford Road, Thorpe Achurch;  
Land at Polopit, Titchmarsh;  
Land at 35 Polopit, Titchmarsh;  
Land to the North East of Lower Street, Twywell;  
Land to the South West of High Street, Twywell;  
Land at Manor House Farm to the West of Addington Road, Woodford;  
Land at Woodwell Cottages, Woodford;  
Land to the South of Mill Road, West of West Street, Woodford;  
Land to the West of Thrapston Road, Woodford (1);  
Land to the West of Thrapston Road, Woodford (2); and  
Land to the rear of High Street, Woodford.

It is appreciated that site locations given are often vague. This is the result of the descriptions submitted to us by agents and landowners. The sites are mapped and available for inspection at the Council offices in Thrapston, the library in Thrapston and Town Council offices. The listed sites will be assessed against sustainability and locational criteria over the next few months.

*9. As yet we have not identified any new sites to be allocated for development. At this stage, we are asking for your views on the above sites or where (in broad terms) you think additional development should be provided?*

## Brigstock Camp

Brigstock Camp Action Group has submitted the following comments relating to the Brigstock Camp site (These views are not necessarily those of the District Council).

As a starting point we have carried out a Village Survey to find out the views of the community on any development for Brigstock Camp. Given the sensitive planning designations currently applied to this site. This exercise involved us distributing a questionnaire and the findings are as follows:

### Summary

- The survey was carried out in June 2004
- 550 Questionnaires we distributed
- Questions asked were:

- (1) Do you want the Brigstock Camp site be developed YES or NO
- (2) If YES, what development would you like to see?
- (3) If NO, why not?
- (4) Any other comments

### Result

- 121 responses
- 62 against development
- 60 for development

Those that were for development did so in fear of developments that they did not wish to see such as Care Principles Secure Hospital Unit which would greatly affect the valuable landscape by High Security fencing and night time lighting. There is also a great fear that any development will add considerable traffic to the already busy fast A6116 traffic.

The majority of all the votes would prefer to see the Brigstock Camp site to remain in Greenbelt/Agriculture/Forestry.

In most of the suggested uses 'the needs of the community' was clearly expressed.

### Suggested uses



*10. What uses would you prefer to see on the Brigstock Camp site?*

## Settlement Hierarchy

An assessment of the availability of services and transport in the rural area will help to determine the distribution of development between villages. This will

inform preparation of the Local Development Framework to ensure those settlements that are most sustainable to meet the needs and the views of the local community towards future development are identified.

### Settlement service and facilities (as at July 2003)

Villages	Services and facilities							
	Convenience store	Post office	Community hall	Doctors/ dentists	Primary school	Rural business	Public house	Hourly bus
Aldwinckle	✓		✓			✓		
Brigstock	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Clopton						✓		
Denford			✓			✓	✓	
Islip	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Lowick			✓			✓	✓	
Slipton						✓	✓	
Sudborough		✓	✓			✓	✓	
Thorpe Achurch						✓		
Thorpe Waterville						✓	✓	
Titchmarsh			✓		✓	✓	✓	
Twywell						✓	✓	
Wadenhoe	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Woodford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	



It is considered many of the settlements listed above are lacking in key community facilities and services, such as a daily public transport service, a shop or a post office.

The villages of Brigstock and Woodford have a larger service base and could be considered as sustainable locations for further rural development. Emerging regional guidance advises that outside urban areas, most new development should be focussed towards local service centres which are settlements that function as a service base for the rural hinterland providing some local

services and a reasonable level of access to neighbouring villages. This role needs to be maintained through the retention of their basic services and facilities and by promoting environmental quality.

An important issue that can now be examined is which villages are considered to be local service centres and could be a priority to accommodate future development.

*11. Do other villages in the area look to Brigstock and Woodford as local service centres?*

*12. Are there any other settlements in the area which could be recognised as local service centres?*

Current Local Plan policies allow for a small amount of infill housing within the existing built up area of the villages. Allowing new housing in places where there are few if any services and facilities means that people need to travel, often considerable distances by car for basic day to day services.

*13. Are settlements with few services unsustainable locations for even the most limited of new development, or would a lack of any new development have an impact on village life and existing local services?*

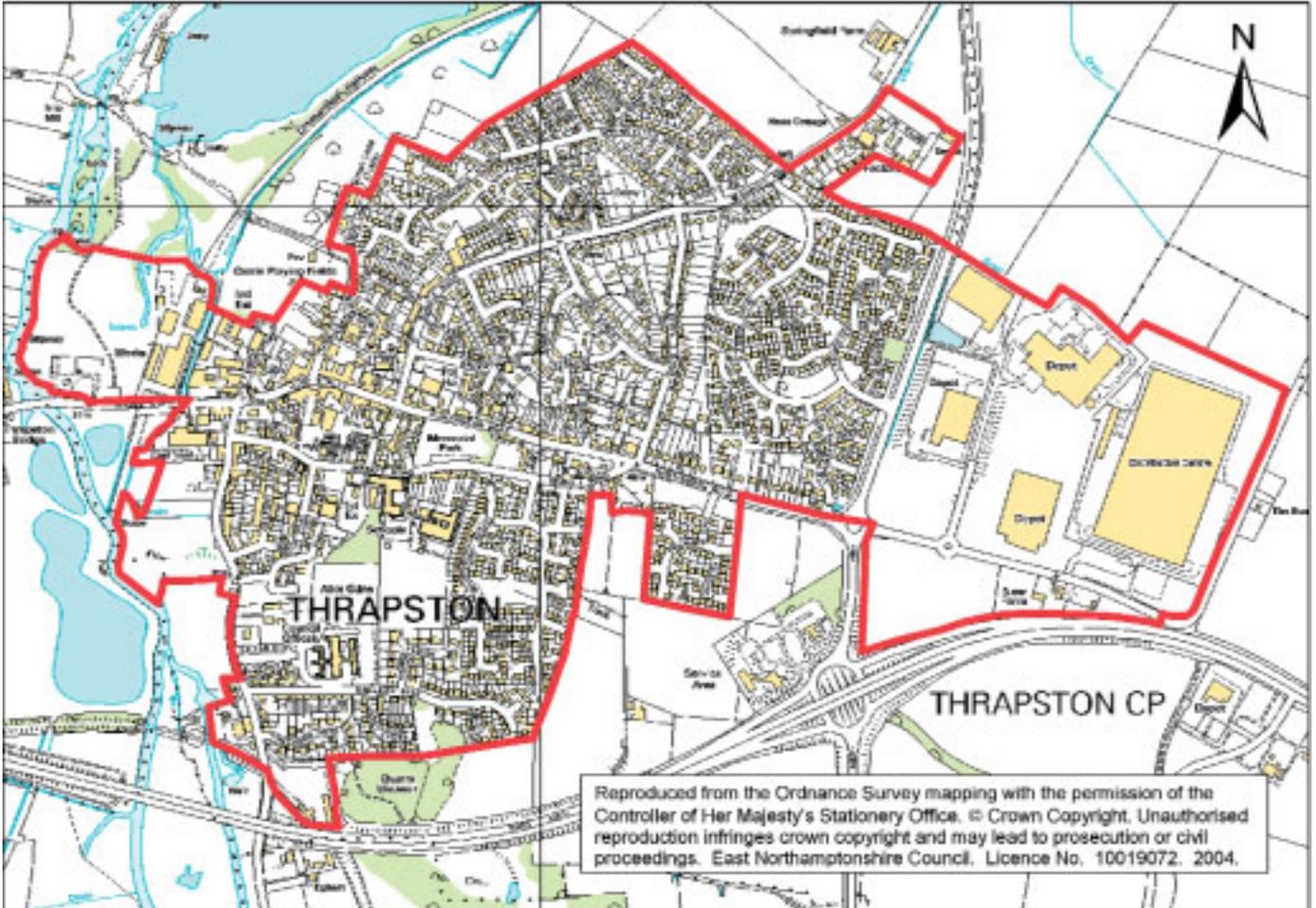


## Settlement Boundaries

The main purpose of an urban boundary is to ensure that development proposals outside the boundary are considered lower in locational priority than sites within. The Government says that as much new development as possible should be within the boundary, preferably on sites that have been built on previously. It advises that sites on the edge of the boundary should be considered next. This is so people can live near, jobs and services, and to protect greenfield land. In the open countryside, development would be strictly limited to agricultural buildings and other uses appropriate to the rural area.

The current Local Plan does not define an urban boundary for Thrapston. The Council published a draft urban potential study in 2002, which defined the study area as the main built up part of the town. The boundary is shown below. It generally follows property lines and excludes open areas of land and peripheral buildings and structures.

### Map showing the main built up area of Thrapston



*14. Do you think that the main built up area of the town should be defined as the urban boundary, If not, how should it be defined?*

*15. What uses do you consider are appropriate in the open countryside around Thrapston?*

In terms of villages, the current Local Plan uses a written definition of village boundaries to decide where open countryside policies apply and where policies relating to the built up area are applicable.

Previous consultation has shown strong support for the inclusion of village boundaries in the new replacement Local Plan, with some respondents requesting tight boundaries and others flexible.

The Council has prepared a consultation document that illustrates the existing built up area of villages as defined in the existing Local Plan. The consultation period has now ended and comments are being carefully analysed before changes are made and the document is adopted by the Council.

## Type of Development

Not only is location an important factor in delivering sustainable development but also the type of development.

### Infrastructure

To support the new houses and jobs promoted in emerging regional strategy growth area proposals, the provision of new infrastructure is critical. Substantial funding will be made available for infrastructure projects to support the growth proposals.

Thrapston and the surrounding villages have seen significant housing growth over recent years but this has not been matched with sufficient infrastructure provision. For example, Thrapston middle school are over capacity and space at the existing medical surgery in Midland Road, Thrapston is limited.

*16. What problems do you think there are with the social and physical infrastructure in the area?*

*17. What are the main infrastructure improvements that will need to be delivered alongside any future new development in the area?*

The area, in particular Thrapston, Denford and Islip, is regularly affected by flooding. Flood risk cannot be eliminated, but it can be reduced. A study has been commissioned by the Council to provide a detailed and realistic picture of flood risk in the District. This will enable the Council to plan safely for the future by making sure that new developments are built only where the level of flood risk is acceptable. In addition, the Environment Agency is undertaking flood alleviation works on the River Nene between Islip and Thrapston to reduce flooding risk.



## Employment

One of the roles of the Local Development Framework is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of land in suitable locations to meet the future needs of new or expanding business.

The current Local Plan allows the conversion of employment buildings for residential use. This may not be very sustainable in the long

run, as opportunities for local jobs are lost. To prevent their loss to other uses, we may need to take specific measures to protect them.

*18. Do you consider that existing employment sites should be retained for employment use with a presumption against development for alternative uses?*

## Housing

Thrapston has seen 627 new houses completed over the past 8 years, and 344 further units having outstanding planning permission at April 2004.

*19. In terms of housing, how would you like to see Thrapston develop, over the next fifteen years?*

Of the villages, Brigstock, Islip and Woodford have experienced the highest levels of residential growth. At April 2004 the position was;

Settlement	Houses built since June 1996	Outstanding Planning Permissions for new housing
Brigstock	49	22
Islip	24	24
Woodford	26	69

*20. In terms of housing, how would you like to see Brigstock, Woodford and Islip develop, over the next fifteen years?*

Furthermore, the current Local Plan generally promotes the development of infill sites within most settlements. Many respondents to previous consultation expressed concern that such development has undermined the character and appearance of areas and introduced an excessive number of new access points in previously quiet residential roads.

*21. Should the new Local Development Framework seek to prohibit or limit infill development in villages and Thrapston?*

Over provision of car parking spaces in housing developments encourages use of the motor car and leaves less space for buildings and landscaping, which can make development appear cramped and overdeveloped with over dominance of parked cars. Government guidance seeks to ensure an average residential car parking provision of no more than 1.5 spaces per dwelling. There are

opportunities to apply exceptions. Examples may include areas where there are road safety or amenity implications that cannot be resolved by controls or enforcement, or remote rural areas where public transport is limited. The Council is aware of some support for greater flexibility towards parking provision.

*22. What exceptional circumstances do you think justify a flexible approach to parking standards?*

*23. Do you consider that parking standards should be applied differently in rural areas compared to the towns, if so, how?*

Maintaining balanced communities and in particular supporting affordable housing was identified as a priority through previous consultation. Planning has an important role in negotiating affordable housing provided that clear evidence of a need is demonstrated. A housing needs survey commissioned and adopted by the Council in 1999 showed a need for affordable housing units in Thrapston and surrounding areas. The Council has commissioned Outside Research to update this study to cover the period until 2016 but it is probable that a similar level of need will be identified.

*24. How best can affordable housing be provided? Ideas for possible innovation are sought.*

In the villages, the current Local Plan requires housing developments of more than ten dwellings or residential sites of more than 0.4 hectares to provide 30% of the total number of dwellings as affordable housing. However, most housing developments in the rural area are on smaller sites than ten dwellings. An alternative



approach suggested through previous consultation is that there should be an affordable housing requirement of at least 20% on sites of more than four units, rising to 30% for more than ten dwellings.

The Government has stated, as part of the Rural White Paper published in 2000, that:

*“...there is no reason why, in small villages if there is evidence of need and subject to financial viability, they should not seek to match every new market house with an affordable home.”*

The proposed changes to national planning guidance on housing indicate that, in rural areas, sites could be allocated solely for affordable housing.

*25. What percentage of affordable housing on rural sites is an achievable target?*

*26. Should the provision of new housing in some villages be restricted to that required for affordable housing, and if so, to which villages should this apply?*

## Town Centre

Thrapston town centre provides for local needs but must compete with neighbouring towns and both Northampton and Peterborough, which are regional shopping destinations. The main challenge facing Thrapston is maintaining its vitality and viability in the face of these external pressures. One way to address this pressure is to make the town centre more attractive to businesses, visitors and residents.



One of the most important aspects of maintaining and enhancing a healthy town centre is its image. The centre must be attractive to look at and spend time in. There may be a need to redevelop certain areas of the town centre in order to provide quality accommodation and encourage investment.

The Thrapston Regeneration Masterplan identified priority areas within the town centre where new development would benefit the appeal of the town. These include;

- The Cattle Market Site;
- The Bowling Club Site;
- The Library Area;
- Chancery Lane/Bull Ring Area;
- Land between the parish church and the High Street; and
- Land near the junction of Oundle Road and High Street.

*27. Are there any other areas in the town centre which should be identified as priority areas?*

The Cattle Market is a key town centre site which offers scope for a range of activities and opportunity to enhance the viability and viability of the town. Redevelopment of this site is supported locally provided that an alternative site is found near the town for the existing cattle market.

*“On behalf of the owners of Thrapston Cattle Market, we support the principle of its redevelopment for a commercial mixed use scheme incorporating a primary retail element and with a limited amount of residential development, as a means of securing the relocation of the cattle market to an out of town location. The redevelopment of the existing cattle market site off Market Road should be linked to an allocation for an alternative site, and a number of possible sites are currently under consideration within East Northamptonshire District.”*

Andrew Middleditch of  
Henry H Bletsoe and Sons



*28. Can you identify any sites within or adjacent to the town where the cattle market could be relocated, if so, where?*

*29. What uses would you like to see on the Cattle Market?*

The Chancery Lane / Bull ring site has the potential to be redeveloped or improved over the next 15 years, for the enhancement of the town centre.

*30. What type of uses do you consider suitable for the Chancery Lane and Bull ring area over the next 15 years?*

The Council have recently commissioned consultants to look at the potential roles and relationships of town centres across the North Northamptonshire area (Corby, East

Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough). This found that there is unlikely to be a single, predominant centre within North Northants in the future. Instead the towns need to co-ordinate development to provide a network of complementary centres. This will ensure that individual towns operate for the benefit of North Northants as a whole and enable people's needs to be met at the local level. The report recommended that the future strategic direction of Thrapston should be regeneration with an emphasis on improving the quality and range of retail, evening economy and cultural choice.

*31. What do you see as the role of Thrapston in the context of the wider region?*

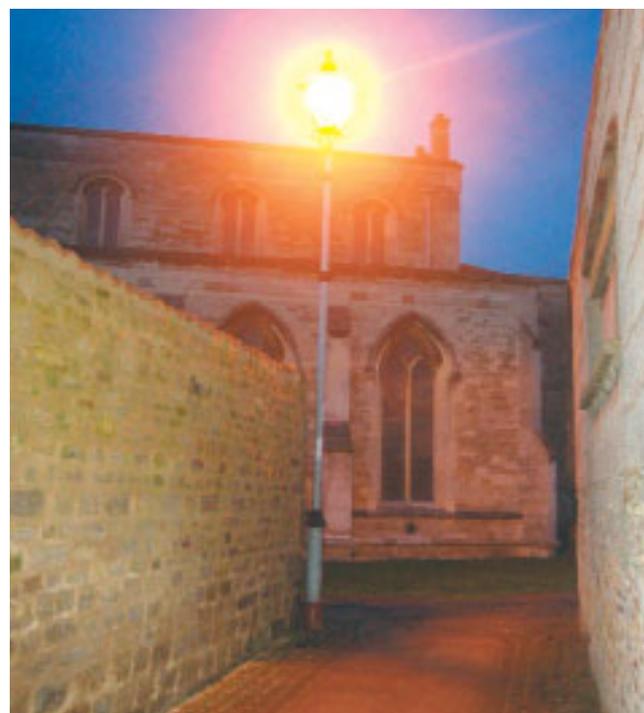
*32. What improvements in the quality and range of leisure, cultural and shopping choice do you think are necessary in Thrapston?*

## Planning Out Crime

A safe community is the key to quality of life, but fear of crime and disorder makes life miserable for many people. The Council has produced a Crime and Disorder Strategy to help by working in a partnership approach to reduce the level and impact of crime and disorder. A copy is available at [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/ppimageupload/Image7510.PDF](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/ppimageupload/Image7510.PDF) or from the Council Offices in Thrapston.

The Council considers that planning out crime and designing in community safety should be a core principle in planning any new development. Planning and design for the safety and security of people and properties should be realised and optimised as an element of sustainable communities.

*33. Do you think there are any crime hotspots in your area? If so, where?*



*34. How do you think we can plan out crime in new and existing developments?*



The Council places great importance on providing a mix of leisure and recreational facilities in accessible locations for the residents of the district. This is reinforced by the fact that the Council currently has a Leisure Strategy out for consultation, a copy is available at [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/ppimageupload/Image7884.DOC](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/ppimageupload/Image7884.DOC) or a hard copy from the Council Offices. Leisure services are not statutory services, but the Government places leisure high on the national agenda as a tool for helping to create a better quality of life.

Green spaces in the District are important in terms of providing local residents with places to sit, walk and take part in numerous recreational activities. Responses to previous consultation expressed concern that directing development towards the towns will threaten valuable green spaces and lead to town cramming. The Council is undertaking a district wide study to assess open space provision and needs. The results of this study will feed into the Local Development Framework process. They will help to provide justification for seeking open

space provision as part of new housing developments, and for the protection of existing open spaces.

*35. Are there any parts of Thrapston and the villages that you consider do not have enough areas of public open space?*

The current Local Plan requires developers of large residential schemes of over 15 dwellings to provide recreational open space, or make a financial contribution towards the upgrading of an existing recreational area nearby. Government thinking now suggests that the planning system could be changed so that smaller developments and other developments such as offices could make a contribution.

*36. What existing recreational facilities need improving and what improvements would you like to see?*

*37. Should the Council seek a financial contribution from all housing developments, not just from those of 15 dwellings or more?*

38. *Would you like to see the Council seeking contributions from other forms of development, if so, which types?*

It is vital that local people are able to visit the countryside. The Council seeks to ensure that residents are able to enjoy the health benefits associated with access to greenspace in the countryside. Good examples locally are Fermyn Woods (Brigstock) Country Park and Titchmarsh Local Nature Reserve. The Council seeks to ensure that residents are able to enjoy the health benefits associated with access to greenspace in the countryside. The current Local Plan includes strict controls over development in the countryside.

39. *Can you suggest any areas in the town which would benefit from better access to the countryside?*

Thrapston contains a reasonable range of leisure and recreational facilities with the recently completed Nene Centre, tennis courts, bowling green and cricket, football and sports clubs.

40. *Does Thrapston have sufficient leisure and recreational facilities? If not, what is missing and how could existing facilities be improved?*



## Increasing Community Involvement

Effective public participation will be at the heart of preparing the new planning framework for East Northamptonshire. Consultation with the public and interested parties will be carried out at key stages in preparing the new plan to ensure that public participation is promoted. The Council is obliged to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement to set out how we intend to engage the local community.

Through the Statement of Community Involvement, we need to consider innovative ideas for public consultation to ensure that all sections of the community participate in the planning of the District.

*41. Can you suggest any method of public participation that would facilitate wider community involvement in the planning process, particularly harder to reach groups such as young people, ethnic minorities, the elderly and mobility impaired groups?*

At the very local level, the Framework could be informed by Parish Plans prepared by



local communities. The Parish Plan concept was recently introduced as part of The Countryside Agency's initiative, and the Agency provides funding assistance. Parish plans are community led plans which enable local people to identify the social, economic and environmental issues affecting their quality of life and determine how it could be improved.

*42. Views are sought from interested parties who would consider producing Parish Plans for their area or village.*

## Your View

We would like to hear your views on the questions posed. You can send comments by FREEPOST to:

Strategy and Policy Directorate  
Planning Policy  
FREEPOST NH2352  
East Northamptonshire Council  
East Northamptonshire House  
Cedar Drive  
Thrapston  
Northamptonshire  
NN14 4LZ

Alternatively you can e-mail to:  
[localplan@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Please visit our chat room facility to stimulate debate and exchange views at [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/forum/](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/forum/)

You should note that all responses will be made available to the public. The comments and details of all respondents will be recorded on the Council's Local Development Framework database.

Your comments and views are not required by any formal date but it would be helpful if your comments could reach us by October 2004 in order to inform the preparation of Local Development Documents expected to be published during 2005.

If you require any assistance or would like to discuss any issues raised in this document, please feel free to speak to one of our planners within the Planning Policy Section on (01832) 742142 or 742221.

