

THUNDRIDGE



PARISH COUNCIL

THUNDRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2018 – 2033



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Foreword

Foreword by

Steve Bosson (Chair of Thundridge Parish Council when the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted) and Catherine Archer (a member of the Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee, long-term resident and parishioner).

Steve Bosson

Following the long-awaited transition of High Cross to become a Group 2 village with the adoption of the East Herts District Plan, our entire parish is now offered greater protection from speculative development. This Neighbourhood Plan now becomes the parishioner-led legal document against which new development proposals will be measured. This means that the parishioners have helped to influence controlled parish development moving forward. The parish council is indebted to all who have given so generously of their time and skills in the collection of data and the preparation of this important document.

Catherine Archer

My aspirations for the parish over the next 20 years are largely built on the wonderful facilities and riches we already have. We have two village primary schools. In 15 years' time some of these pupils will be involved in deciding the next stages of the development of the village in a new neighbourhood plan. We have many great resources e.g. churches, school playing fields and village halls and I look forward to seeing them shared with the community.

Local people and outsiders to the villages, who enjoy the many rights of way, which are clearly marked and maintained, also appreciate the pubs in the parish. Walkers, many with dogs, horse riders and cyclists all express great appreciation and admiration of the lovely countryside in the parish. This leads to healthy living.



Puller Memorial School

Preface

Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan is the product of more than two years of consultation with the local community, relevant organisations and East Herts District Council, to produce a local plan for local people. It sets out planning policies for Thundridge Parish that will be used to make decisions on planning applications. People who know and love the area have written the policies so that they get the right types of development in the right place.

As the result of engagement with the community, lots of good ideas about how life in the parish could be improved were collated into an Action Plan. This will be delivered by Thundridge Parish Council and other local groups and funding bodies.

A great deal of volunteer time has been enthusiastically given to this project. Guided by their planning consultants, the community has written a co-researched, co-produced plan in the spirit of localism. Thanks go to all contributors to the plan and acknowledgements for photographs include Jane Harris, Richard Hallman, David Blowers and Jacqueline Veater.



Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan Team Meeting

1. Introduction

The Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1 The Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan (referred to as 'the Plan' or 'the Neighbourhood Plan') has been prepared under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. Thundridge Parish Council is the "qualifying body" for the production of the document. Essentially, the Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of the parish. A Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee, set up on 8th August 2016 for the purpose of managing the process and drafting the document for the council's approval, has compiled the Plan on behalf of the parish council.
- 1.2 In the early stages, the formulation of the Plan paid regard to the "saved" policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007. As time has progressed, the primary linkage has been with the emerging East Herts District Plan, which was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 31st March 2017. Following an examination by an independent Inspector in the autumn of 2017, East Herts District Plan was formally adopted by East Herts Council on 23rd October 2018.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has also been checked against government planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) and the advice set out in the on-line Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Within both the national and local frameworks, the Neighbourhood Plan is concerned with the development and use of land in the Neighbourhood Plan Area which comprises most of the Parish of Thundridge. In accordance with national policy, the Plan seeks to promote sustainable development and embraces a range of social, economic, and environmental issues. It provides a vision for the future of the parish, coupled with a range of planning objectives, policies and proposals.

Key Topics of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.4 A wide range of topics are covered in the Plan, including the environment, local character, housing, employment, transport, facilities and services. The detailed choice of issues was very much influenced by the community and reflects the concerns which are important for the area and its residents. Specific planning proposals include designating Local Green Spaces, whilst other policies highlight those sites and areas of the parish which should be protected and enhanced and provide guidance on how applications for development should be considered. Where appropriate, the policies and proposals are depicted on the policies map, which is cross-referenced to this written statement. It is important to stress, however, that this document is concerned primarily with the development and use of land within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Wider community aspirations have been considered in the consultation process, but not all of these can be addressed by land use policies. For this reason, non-land use matters are dealt with in Appendix H, in the form of an Action Plan.

Community Engagement

- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan is founded on pro-active involvement with the local community at all stages during its preparation. As a result of this process of positive engagement, the Plan captures the essence of life in the parish and its community. It seeks to ensure that the quality and vitality of life in the parish continues into the future, whilst not inhibiting local enterprise, innovation and technical and social development. A full account of the Regulation 14 consultation is set out in the Consultation Statement which is submitted with this Plan.

2. The Parish of Thundridge

- 2.1 The current Parish of Thundridge is located in the district of East Hertfordshire, within an extensive rural area to the north of Ware and Hertford. According to the 2011 Census, the population of the parish was 1,406. As can be seen from the map, this is concentrated in the three linear villages of Thundridge, Wadesmill, and High Cross. To the east is the hamlet of Cold Christmas; part of a network of small farming communities across the parish.
- 2.2 The parish is bisected by the valley of the River Rib, which runs in a south westerly direction to join the River Lee (Lea) at Herford. The three main settlements grew up alongside Ermine Street, the old Roman road which connected London to Lincoln and York. This road became an important coaching route in the 18th century, The Great North Road, linking London and Cambridge. Later, it formed the basis of the A10 trunk road, which was replaced by the current dual-carriageway bypass, which runs through the area from south to north. Wadesmill was important as the crossing point over the River Rib – the bridge built in 1826 to carry increasing amounts of traffic is still in use today.

Thundridge

- 2.3 At the southern end of the parish, Thundridge, formerly part of Wadesmill, grew up as a result of its position on the main road, building up its trade with passing travellers and servicing their needs. In mediaeval times, to the east of the current settlement, there was the manor house of Thundridge Bury, with its church, its farm, and associated cottages. In 1811, the mansion was demolished, having been purchased by Daniel Gibbs of Youngsbury. The church of All Hallows and Little St. Mary (also known as Thundridge Old Church) was abandoned in 1854, although the Grade II* derelict tower dating back to the 15th Century remains as an iconic local landscape feature seen from vantage points to the north, south, east and west. It was replaced by the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, which is located in a prominent position on the village skyline.
- 2.4 The centre of the village is now a Conservation Area, with many listed buildings. The main street was bypassed in the 19th century by a new road which led to the bridge over the River Rib at Wadesmill. Within the village, there are a number of facilities and services, including the JMI School, the Village Hall, the Norman Wodson Pavilion and playing areas. At the time of writing, the 'Sow and Pigs', the only surviving public house has re-opened as 'Maltons'. The centre of economic activity within the village is



the small industrial estate located to the east of Thundridge Hill. Hanbury Manor, the luxury hotel and golf course to the south west of the village, is also an important source of local employment.

Wadesmill

2.5

To the north of Thundridge is the adjacent settlement of Wadesmill, which also developed because of its position on the main road. In 1663, the village was the site of the first turnpike gate in England, when the road to Cambridge became a Turnpike Road. It is also famous as the place where Thomas Clarkson, in 1785, resolved to devote his life to the abolition of slavery. This event is commemorated by the stone monument on the west side of the highway on High Cross Hill.



- 2.6 Wadesmill still has two public houses, the 'Feathers', and the 'Anchor', both of which are linked to the village's history as a staging post on the coaching route. Stabling was provided for the additional horses required to assist in the ascent of the hill leading to High Cross. Today, Wadesmill and Thundridge operate as one settlement, sharing facilities and services.

High Cross

- 2.7 High Cross is also associated with the servicing of travellers on the London to Cambridge road. To the east of the road is the Church of St. John the Evangelist, which was originally built in 1845–46. The tower was added later, in 1906. To the north of the church is the Puller Memorial Church of England Primary School, built in 1864. In the centre of the settlement, there is the petrol filling station, which includes a shop and a car workshop. High Cross Village Hall is located a short distance down North Drive. The only remaining public house in the village, the White Horse, was closed in 2017. Business activity is centred on Oakley's, which manufactures and equips horse boxes.



The Rural Area

- 2.8 The Rib valley is an exceptionally unusual example of unbroken activity and occupation for at least two millennia, in a landscape that has remarkably not been disturbed or archeologically investigated and has great historic significance. The overall pattern of development in the parish reflects its origins and history over several millennia. There is evidence within the Rib Valley of: Neolithic finds; Bronze Age barrows; Iron Age hilltop and rare pre-Christian settlements; ancient routes and river crossings; evidence of Roman habitation; Anglo-Saxon place names; medieval and post-medieval sites and finds and well preserved Georgian and Victorian estates. It is this essential rural character that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to conserve and enhance for the benefit of existing and future generations.

- 2.9 The rural area of the parish contains a number of farm holdings, largely devoted to the growing of arable crops with some meadowland. There are also extensive areas of woodland, all of which were formerly coppiced. Most of the farm houses are of ancient origin and are listed buildings. On the eastern edge of the parish is the hamlet of Cold Christmas, which overlooks the valley of the River Rib.
- 2.10 There are a number of large private residential properties which are listed for their historical and architectural interest. The two most prominent country estates in the parish were Poles and Youngsbury.
- 2.11 Records of an estate at Poles date from the sixteenth century, although no records of a house were shown until the late eighteenth century. The original building was replaced by the Hanbury family in the 1880s. In 1913, the estate was bought by a Mr. H King, a diamond merchant from South Africa. Ten years later, the property became a convent and boarding school for girls. It was sold in 1985, and was transformed into the Hanbury Manor luxury hotel, which was opened in 1990.
- 2.12 Early records show that the manor of Youngs existed in 1426. The current house of Youngsbury was built in 1745, together with an ice house and a bath house. Later, from 1769, the property was enlarged with the addition of a stable block. Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was engaged to landscape the grounds. A number of alterations were made to the house in the early nineteenth century, and in the period following the Second World War. The most extensive of these works entailed the removal of the top storey, with the original pitched roof.

Basic Statistics (2011 Census Parish Profile)

- Thundridge has a population of 1,406 people in 578 households.
- Thundridge has an ageing population, with, 20.2% of the population aged 65 or over (compared to 15.4% for East Herts).
- Home ownership is relatively high at 73.9% (compared with 71.9% for East Herts).
- 91.5% of households have access to one or more cars/vans (compared with 87.2% for East Herts).
- 70.8% of the population is economically active (compared with 75.4% for East Herts), of which 15.6% are self-employed (compared with 12.3% for East Herts).

Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 2.13 The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown on Figure 1. This was formally designated by East Herts Council on 5th September 2017. A small area to the south east of the A10 was not included within the Neighbourhood Plan area, because it is part of the area of housing development proposed to the north and east of Ware (see East Herts District Plan Policy WARE2).

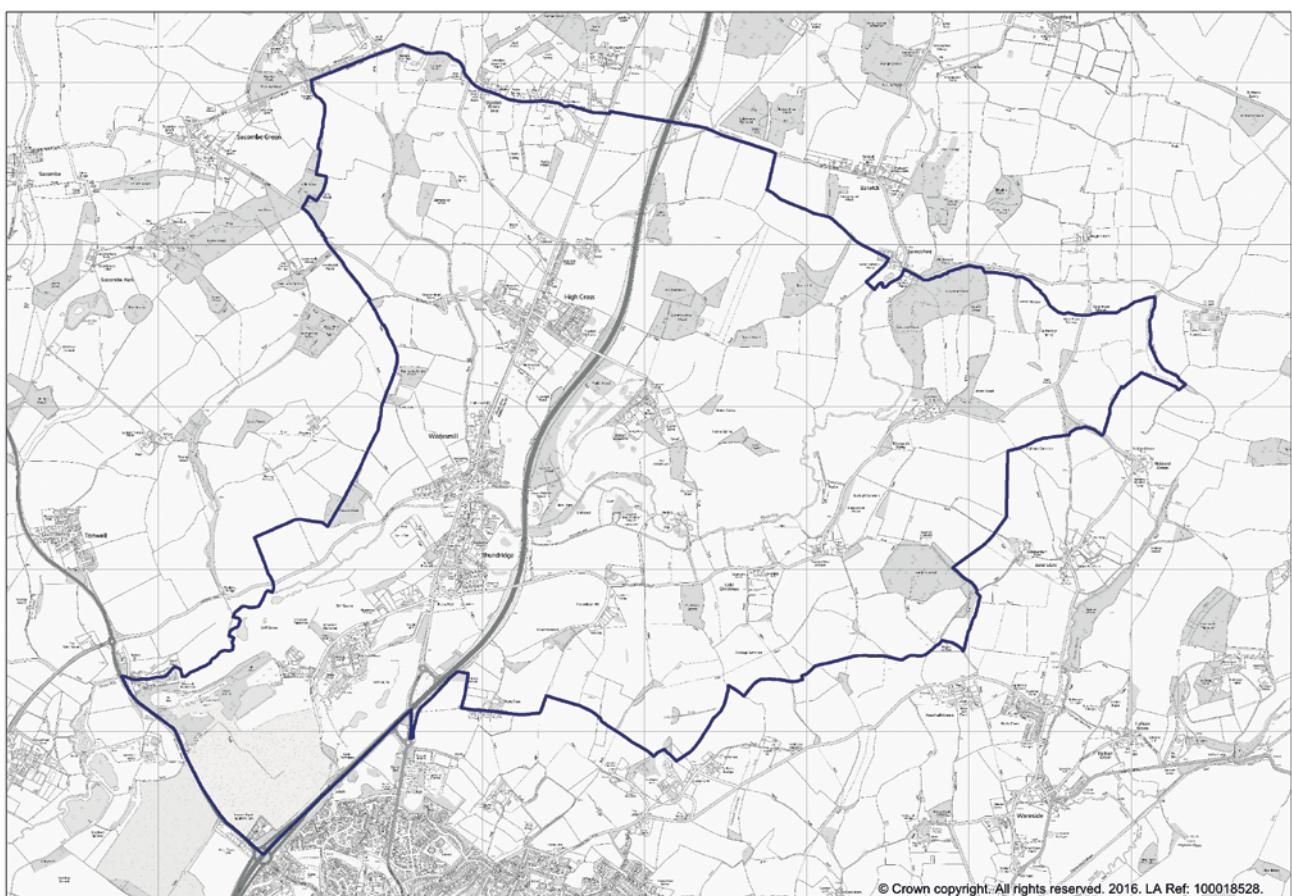
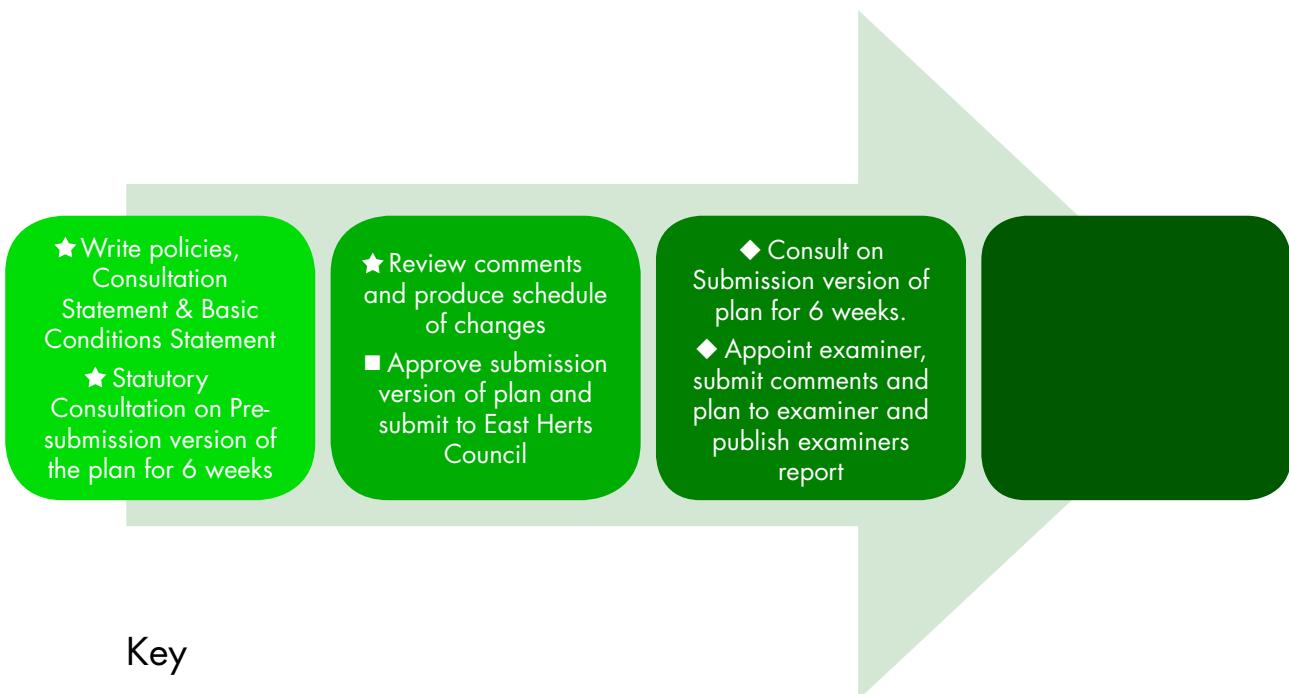


FIGURE 1 - Thundridge Boundary for NP Area Designation

3. Process Summary



Key

- ★ Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee
- Thundridge Parish Council
- ◆ East Herts District Council

FIGURE 2: Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan Process Chart

3.1 The Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan has been assembled in full consultation with the local community. A full description of the process is set out in the Consultation Statement. The stages in the preparation of the Plan are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs, as follows:

- Stage 1: Setting Up
- Stage 2: Public Events, Survey and Consultation I
- Stage 3: Vision and Objectives
- Stage 4: Public Consultation II
- Stage 5: Policy Formulation
- Stage 6: Public Consultation III
- Stage 7: Drafting of the Plan

Stage 1: Setting Up

3.2 At a meeting in May 2016, Thundridge Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Planning consultants were appointed to provide technical advice and assist in the management of the project. Early in the process, on 8th August 2016, an open meeting was held at Standon Green End Farm, at which an Advisory Committee was set up to oversee the preparation of the Plan on behalf of

the parish council. At its initial meeting the Advisory Committee agreed a constitution and formalized a project plan. It also discussed the topics and issues which the Neighbourhood Plan might need to cover. Topic Groups were set up to investigate these issues and to develop the evidence base which would be required to underpin the Plan.

- 3.3 Community engagement and involvement was identified by the Advisory Committee as a key element in the preparation of the Plan. A small Communications Group was formed, with the purpose of informing the public and arranging consultation events. To this end, the parish council website was set up and used to communicate information about Neighbourhood Plan events and provide access to draft documents etc. The 'Village Life' magazine was also used to give regular updates.

Stage 2: Public Events, Survey and Consultation I

- 3.4 During the autumn of 2016, the Topic Groups were involved in collecting data and background information about the parish, as a first step towards the assembly of the evidence base. It was decided that the community would be consulted by means of two public events, coupled to a Neighbourhood Plan Survey. The public events were held early in 2017 at the village halls at High Cross, on Wednesday 22nd February, and Thundridge, on Saturday 25th February.
- 3.5 At these events, local people were informed about the Neighbourhood Plan process and their opportunities to comment. They were also asked to give their opinions on the planning issues which were of most concern to them and asked to respond to the survey which was launched at the events.
- 3.6 The Neighbourhood Plan Survey Form was distributed by volunteers to every household in Thundridge Parish, with a closing date of 3rd April 2017. The results were subsequently analysed and presented to the Advisory Committee and published on the parish council website. By the end of the survey, a return rate of 32% had been achieved.
- 3.7 The comprehensive survey form was set out as a series of structured questions relating to the main issues, which had emerged from the initial work of the topic groups. These concerned housing, business and employment, the environment, facilities and services, and transport and parking. Respondents were also invited to contribute their general views about the parish and matters relating to its planning.
- 3.8 Results from the questionnaire also helped members of the Advisory Committee to supplement survey data with a socio-economic profile of the parish and its residents. A clear message was provided, both from the survey and the events, about residents' concerns. The main issues mentioned were as follows:
- General views about keeping Thundridge, Wadesmill, and High Cross as distinctive communities, set in peaceful countryside
 - A resistance to more housing, but support for specific types of units for local needs
 - A concern about design quality in housing
 - Protection and enhancement of the rural environment, including green spaces, cherished views, wildlife, and the River Rib
 - A need to improve public transport

- Support for local business
- A need to upgrade broadband and mobile phone networks.

Stage 3: Vision and Objectives

- 3.9 The next stage of preparation involved the formulation of a vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. These would be based on the results of the survey and the earlier work of the topic groups. To this end, a workshop was arranged for all members of the Advisory Committee at the 'Feathers' Inn, Wadesmill, on Monday 15th May 2017.
- 3.10 At the workshop, the Advisory Committee discussed and agreed a draft vision for the Neighbourhood Plan, which would be subject to public consultation later in the year. Divided into the respective working groups, members also formulated a set of objectives for each of the topic areas – Housing, Environment and Facilities and Services. There was also a discussion on possible policy options for each of the topics. Gaps in the evidence base were identified. Each Topic Group was tasked with refining the objectives and preparing material for the next round of public consultation, to be held in the autumn of 2017.

Stage 4: Public Consultation II

- 3.11 The results of the work on the topics were presented to the public at an open event at the Thundridge Village Hall on Saturday 11th November 2017. Attendees were invited to comment on the draft vision and objectives, and to express their views on various policy options. Of particular interest was the assessment by the Housing Group of potential housing sites in the parish. This was focused mainly on sites previously evaluated by East Herts Council in the formulation of the District Plan but included other sites which had been proposed by local landowners. There was also considerable interest in the local environment, and many suggestions were made for the protection of open spaces, public viewpoints, and assets of community value.
- 3.12 Members of the public attending the event were asked to provide feedback, either in person or afterwards. Material displayed was also posted on the parish council website, with an invitation to respond by the 28th November 2017.

Stage 5: Policy Formulation

- 3.13 Following the November 2017 consultation, it was anticipated that the Topic Groups would proceed to formulate draft policies on the basis of the public response and the evidence base. Details of this process are set out in the Appendices to this Plan. The work was largely completed by March 2018, but this coincided with the consultation on the East Herts District Plan Main Modifications.
- 3.14 In view of the uncertainty surrounding the Main Modifications and the issue of the final report by the Examination Inspector, Thundridge Parish Council resolved to postpone consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan policies. In early April, two special meetings were arranged between members of the Advisory Committee and the parish council. At these meetings, there was a presentation of the emerging draft policies, and a detailed discussion of the wording. Following these sessions, further work was done, particularly on the housing and environment topic areas, to complete the policies for public consultation.

Stage 6: Public Consultation III

- 3.15 In the following weeks, the content of the District Plan and the Main Modifications became increasingly clear, especially in terms of the policies on housing distribution in the villages. It was therefore decided to hold the next stage of public consultation in July 2018, before the onset of the summer holiday season.
- 3.16 Accordingly, a public event was held at High Cross Village Hall on Sunday 15th July 2018. Details of the draft objectives and policies were displayed for public viewing and comment. A short survey form was also issued at the event and made available on the website. More than 80 people attended the event. The main focus of the discussions and the responses was on housing, local green spaces, and protected views. A full report on the event is included in the Consultation Statement accompanying this Plan.

Stage 7: Drafting the Plan

- 3.17 Reports on the analysis of the public consultation response were presented to the Advisory Committee at its meeting on 6th August 2018. Detailed drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken by the planning consultants. A final draft version was presented to the Advisory Committee on 7th November 2018 and to an Extraordinary Meeting of the parish council on the 17th December 2018. The Pre-submission consultation draft was subject to public consultation during early 2019. Following that consultation, a final draft of the plan was produced for submission to East Herts Council.

Evidence Base Overview

- 3.18 Evidence to support the Plan was gathered continuously throughout the process of preparation from a wide variety of sources. The evidence base for the Plan comprises all outputs from the engagement process outlined above plus the evidence base for East Herts District Plan, Nomis (2011 Census Statistics) and information provided by Hertfordshire County Council, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust/ Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre, The Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England and local businesses.
- 3.19 More detailed information on the evidence base can be found in the relevant chapters of the Plan, in the Consultation Statement and in the Appendices and other supporting documents that accompany the Plan.

4. Vision and Objectives

- 4.1 From the results of the public consultation events, the survey returns and the background studies, a vision for the parish was agreed by the Advisory Committee and the parish council. It was endorsed by the community at the open events held in November 2017 and July 2018. Our vision is to help ensure that Thundridge maintains its historic character, and that any development does not tarnish the lives of the current and future residents. By seeking planning guidance, we have embraced growth, environment preservation and social progress principles in Thundridge.

Vision

The Neighbourhood Plan will guide the future development and evolution of the villages and hamlets of our rural parish over the next 15 years and retain its separation from the town of Ware. It will conserve the traditional and tranquil character of the parish and be inspirational in planning its future and so ensuring an attractive, safe, sociable and sustainable community in which to live and work.



Our rural parish

Objectives

- 4.2 The objectives focused on specific parts of the vision statement and provided the context for the development of the planning policies. These were also displayed for the public at the open events and were widely accepted.
- 4.3 The objectives are to:
- A. **Preserve and enhance the character of the built environment in the villages and recognise the significance of heritage assets including landscapes, conservation areas, listed buildings and other historic features and areas**
 - B. **Maintain important views, green corridors and local wildlife areas and provide extra protection for the most special green spaces for future generations to enjoy**
 - C. **Mitigate against the impact of climate change and promote the use of renewable energy in new development and by encouraging retrofitting of existing properties to reduce the environmental impact of an increasing number of residents in the parish**
 - D. **Develop and expand existing facilities in a sustainable manner, making better use of green spaces and protecting assets of community value**
 - E. **Encourage visitors to the parish's many historically important sites of interest**
 - F. **Maintain existing businesses by providing what they need to stay within the parish**
 - G. **Provide better car parking facilities to reduce the amount of on-street parking throughout Thundridge, Wadesmill and High Cross**
 - H. **Manage the effects of increased traffic through the parish and encourage the provision of sustainable transport**
 - I. **Provide a mix of housing types, including smaller units for older people, and starter homes for young people in accordance with locally defined needs**
 - J. **Ensure that new development is built to a high standard of design which reinforces local distinctiveness and character.**
- 4.4 The objectives were "mapped" against the strategic objectives and policies of the East Herts District Plan. The linkages showed a high level of conformity between the Neighbourhood Plan and the District Plan. A check was also made against the NPPF. These relationships will be monitored and reviewed throughout the plan period and the objectives and policies in this Plan will be adjusted and amended as and when appropriate.

5. Neighbourhood Plan Policies

5.1 This chapter sets out the planning policies for Thundridge for the period 2018-2033; these are in line with the end of the plan period for the East Herts District Plan. The planning policies, together with the reasoned justification for them, are set out below. The policies reflect the main issues, which were raised in consultation, and provide the means by which objectives A to M will be achieved. Appendix C sets out how policy options were mapped to objectives.

Heritage and Conservation

- 5.2 Designated and non-designated heritage assets and their contexts, settings and the landscapes within which they are placed, including conservation areas, scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens make a valuable contribution to the attractiveness of Thundridge Parish as a leisure destination.
- 5.3 The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is the official, up to date, register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England. Thundridge Parish has 82 entries on that list including nine Grade II* listed buildings and a Grade II* listed park. There are also two locally-listed historic parks and gardens, three scheduled monuments and the Thundridge & Wadesmill Conservation Area. Heritage assets are irreplaceable resources which should be conserved and managed for their long-term survival.
- 5.4 Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets should be considered along with their wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits and the positive contribution they make to local character (NPPF paragraph 185). East Herts District Plan contains policies for the conservation and management of heritage assets, but the policies below also stress the importance of the setting of heritage assets in accordance with current guidance from Historic England.



POLICY THE1 - DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

I. Proposals for development which have an impact on designated heritage assets in the parish, including:

- All listed buildings
- Thundridgebury moated enclosure and associated remains of Thundridgebury House, St Mary and All Saints' Church and graveyard, and moated mound south of Rennesley Garden Wood and Youngsbury Roman barrows scheduled monuments
- Poles Park garden [Hanbury Manor] Grade II and Youngsbury Park Grade II*

should take account of the historic fabric, the significance of the asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. Proposals should conserve or where appropriate enhance the asset and its setting.

II. A statement setting out any adverse impacts on the asset and its setting, along with any proposed mitigation measures will be required.

- 5.5 Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan extends around the village centres and includes a part of Youngsbury Park.

POLICY THE2 - CONSERVATION AREAS

In accordance with policies in the East Herts District Plan and the guidance in the Thundridge & Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016 or any updated document, the character or appearance of the Thundridge & Wadesmill Conservation Area and its setting will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

- 5.6 Throughout the preparation of the Plan, the importance of the heritage of the parish was raised repeatedly. Heritage assets of local significance but which are not listed (non-designated heritage assets) can be compiled in a Local Heritage List. Such assets are being identified through East Herts Council's ongoing monitoring as well as through conservation area appraisals. The parish council asked East Herts Council to consider the designation of High Cross village centre as a conservation area. In order to support this request, a report investigating the merits of High Cross as a conservation area was prepared by the Built Environment Advisory and Management Service (BEAMS) in August 2018. The assessment highlights the number and quality of listed buildings in High Cross and reflects on its long history on a principal national thoroughfare, and the patronage of the lord of the manor. More information regarding the High Cross conservation area proposal can be found in the Action Plan (Appendix H).
- 5.7 Historic England also recognises that the identification of buildings and sites during the preparation of neighbourhood plans can merit inclusion on a local list in their Advice

Note on Local Heritage Listing. Through public engagement on the Plan a list of non-designated heritage assets was drawn up. In the residents survey the community were asked which of a list of parish landmarks contributed to the character and identity of the parish and if there were any other sites in the parish that should be protected from development. The grave of Arthur Martin-Leake was indicated by 63% of respondents to contribute to the character of the parish. Other residents suggested the Meridian Post in Cold Christmas as an additional asset.

- 5.8 A final list of six non-designated heritage assets including both of the above plus the Cattle Creep in Thundridge, two sets of family burial vaults and the Post Mill Mound. These are specifically mentioned in policy THE3 below and are in addition to the items noted in the Thundridge & Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. These include: dwellings in Ermine Street; Thundridge Village School; Thundridge Village Store; Trinity Barn near Rennesley Farm; and a selection of railings, gates and walls plus the K6 telephone kiosk and war memorial.
- 5.9 A short description of each of these assets is as follows:
- The Cattle Creep, Thundridge, once used to move cattle under the A10, now used by the children of Thundridge primary school to reach their playing field in safety
 - The Post Mill Mound Thundridge, near the Pit and not far from the Windmill public house (now closed). The Post Mill was pulled down in 1870 just leaving the mound
 - The Puller family vaults in St John's Church Yard High Cross and the Hanbury family vaults in St Mary's Church Yard Thundridge. These two families helped to shape much of the history of both villages and have left their legacy, still seen today
 - The Grave of Arthur Martin-Leake is to be found in a quiet corner of St John's Church, High Cross. He was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) in the Boer War and another in the Great War (WW1) which gave the Bar, as two VCs are not given. His connection with High Cross was because he spent his childhood at the family home of Marshalls where he died in 1953 aged 79. A plaque commemorating his achievements is to be found by the lych-gate of the church
 - A Meridian post is directly opposite Cold Christmas cottages. There was a Meridian post placed in the year 1984, wherever the Greenwich Meridian line crossed a public highway in England.

POLICY THE3 - NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

I. The following non-designated heritage assets have been identified in the Thundridge Parish:

- The Cattle Creep (Thundridge)
- The Post Mill Mound (Thundridge)
- The Hanbury family vaults (St Mary's Churchyard – Thundridge)
- The Puller family vaults (St John's Churchyard – High Cross)
- The Grave of Arthur Martin-Leake (St John's Churchyard – High Cross)
- The Meridian Post (Cold Christmas)

II. Development proposals, which affect the above non-listed heritage assets and other non-designated heritage assets, will take into account the significance of the heritage asset to enable a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Important Views

- 5.10 The parish lies within three character areas identified in the East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2007 (Supplementary Planning Document). These are areas 73, 75 and 90, the Lower and Middle Rib Valleys and the High Cross Plateau. The river valley is described as an undulating narrow valley and as a remote and tranquil area with widespread public footpaths. The ease of accessibility adds to the enjoyment of the countryside by residents and visitors including those with mobility chairs and push chairs and increases the importance of maintaining its landscape character and extensive public views.
- 5.11 Most of the important views identified in the Plan relate to the Rib Valley and its tributary valley, The Bourne. Development proposals impacting these views must ensure that key features of the views can continue to be enjoyed including distant buildings and landscape features, river valleys, sensitive village edges and rural approaches to the villages. These views should be protected for current and future generations to enjoy.
- 5.12 A total of 75% of respondents to the Residents Survey thought that the preservation of local views was important to their quality of life. A list of important views within the parish was identified prior to the Residents Survey and respondents were asked to tick the three that were most important to them. Views around Youngsbury (74% of respondents rated these views in their top three) and along the Rib Valley were the most popular. Other important views were from Rennesley Wood, from Cold Christmas and across Glebe Field in High Cross. Many other views were identified through public consultation. A final list of eleven important views is set out in Policy THE4.

POLICY THE4 - IMPORTANT VIEWS

I. Eleven important views are identified on the Policies Map and are listed as follows:

- VIEW 1: North east across Hanbury Manor Golf Course from Footpath 23
- VIEW 2: Thundridge Cricket Ground, Rib Valley and Wade's Wood
- VIEW 3: View of Thundridge Old Church from Ducketts Wood
- VIEW 4: View of Thundridge Old Church in the Rib Valley from Old Church Lane Bridleway 24
- VIEW 5: Villages of Thundridge and Wadesmill viewed from the Hertfordshire Way behind Rennesley Farm
- VIEW 6: Wadesmill and Thundridge Villages from Cambridge Road
- VIEW 7: West towards The River Rib and Thundridge Old Church
- VIEW 8: From Youngsbury to South and West
- VIEW 9: East toward St John's Church and Puller Memorial School, High Cross
- VIEW 10: St John's Church and The Rectory across Glebe Field, from North Drive, High Cross.
- VIEW 11: Tylers Wood East to South

A detailed description and indicative photographs of the above views are available below.

II. New development within the identified views listed above and indicated on the Policies Map must ensure that key features of the view can continue to be enjoyed including distant buildings, areas of landscape and the juxtaposition of village edges and countryside. Development proposals must, where appropriate, include an assessment of the impact that development will have on these key views.

VIEW 1 - North East across Hanbury Golf Course from Footpath 23



This view highlights the picturesque Rib Valley running parallel to Anchor lane, with Wades Wood in the distance. This is a popular walking route and an important corridor for wildlife. No buildings are visible from this angle, marking the view as an important local rural landscape.

VIEW 2 - Thundridge Cricket Ground, Rib Valley and Wades Wood



This view is an important part of the setting of Thundridge Old Church. The original village of Thundridge was a kilometre or so east of its present position. All that remains of the old settlement is the ruined C15th tower of the old church and what is left of a C17th moated manor house called Thundridge Bury. The church was known as 'All Hallows and Little Saint Mary' and was demolished in 1853, to be replaced by the new church of St. Mary, in what is now Thundridge village.

Any new buildings or structures should ensure that the historic view of Thundridge Old Church is not disrupted.

VIEW 3 - View of Thundridge Old Church from Ducketts Wood



This view is from a high point in Ducketts Wood, east north east over the A10 towards Thundridge Old Church. The new bypass is completely invisible, being in a cutting at this point.

No structures of built development should impinge on the view of the church from the edge of Thundridge village.

VIEW 4 - View of Thundridge Old Church in the Rib Valley from Old Church Lane Bridleway 24



This view is an important part of the setting of Thundridge Old Church. The original village of Thundridge was a kilometre or so east of its present position. All that remains of the old settlement is the ruined C15th tower of the old church and what is left of a C17th moated manor house called Thundridge Bury. The church was known as 'All Hallows and Little Saint Mary' and was demolished in 1853, to be replaced by the new church of St. Mary, in what is now Thundridge village.

Any new buildings or structures should ensure that the historic view of Thundridge Old Church is not disrupted.

VIEW 5 - Villages of Thundridge and Wadesmill viewed from the Hertfordshire Way behind Rennesley Farm



The Hertfordshire Way long distance footpath crosses through the parish, and the view taken from this point, the junction of Bridleway 35 and Footpath 37, is one of the best views of the villages of Thundridge and Wadesmill. St Mary's Church and the period cottages of Ermine Street are key features of the view, which should continue to be enjoyed, along with the woodlands and agricultural land forming a rural fringe around the villages.

Any new development in the villages should respect the scale and height of the existing built form to preserve this valued view.

VIEW 6 - Wadesmill and Thundridge Villages from Cambridge Road



This view is looking south from the Clarkson Memorial with The Feathers Inn in the foreground, a 17th century coaching inn, and the Victorian parish church of St Mary's at the top of the hill. These two key buildings must remain part of the view enjoyed by local people and visitors on the public highway. Both buildings add character to the landscape and have historical value.

Any new development or alteration to the buildings pictured should preserve or enhance the historic character and appearance of this view in the Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area.

VIEW 7 - West towards the River Rib and Thundridge Old Church



The view from Footpath 33, linking the Harcamlow Way long distance path with the village of Thundridge, provides views of a diverse range of landscape features, including the Arboretum of Youngsbury, and the tranquil valley of the River Rib (in the middle ground). This view, which looks towards VIEW 4, should remain a rural approach to the village around the Thundridge Old Church.

VIEW 8 - From Youngsbury to South and West



Here the beauty of the undulating farm land bordering the Youngsbury Estate Arboretum and the Rib valley can be appreciated from the bridleway which forms part of the Harcamlow way, a long distance footpath and linking Harlow to Cambridge.

From Youngsbury Arboretum, this view takes in a large swathe of the historic features and rural character of the Rib valley, from right to left: Sawtrees Wood, Sawtrees Farm, Richmond Field, Hollytrees, Mountains, Meadow View Cottages Buckney wood, Ashridge Common, Cold Christmas Cottages, Swangles and finally the recently planted Jubilee Wood. The horizon is not disrupted by built development.

VIEW 9 - East toward St John's Church and Puller Memorial School, High Cross



This view is taken from Marshalls Lane looking east towards High Cross. In the distance, in the centre of the view, are the two most important features of High Cross; St Johns Church circa 1845 and the Puller Memorial School circa 1864.

Any new development should respect the sightlines to the church and school in order to retain this long-distance view of the village.

VIEW 10 - St John's Church and the Rectory across Glebe Field from North Drive, High Cross



The view captures the listed church and The Rectory in their idyllic setting of mature trees. The vista gives North Drive an air of tranquillity in the centre of the village and is an important element which captures the essence of a country village.

VIEW 11 - Tylers Wood East to South



From Tylers Hill Wood there is an uninterrupted view around more than an entire quarter of the compass from almost North East to past South. On the left is the Southern end of Sawtrees Wood of hornbeam coppice, late medieval Sawtrees Farm, Richmond Field and Burleigh Common containing bronze age round barrows, following round to Buckney Wood and finally Ashridge to the South at the right. Any development must maintain or enhance this rural view.

Local Green Spaces

- 5.13 The NPPF allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them through designating land as Local Green Space (LGS) in neighbourhood plans. They must be local in character; close to the community they serve and hold a special and particular local significance. Local significance can be determined based on beauty, history, recreational value, tranquillity, or richness in wildlife.
- 5.14 LGS are protected from development in accordance with the national policy for Green Belts. They should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. East Herts District Plan identifies LGS in the form of 'green fingers' in Hertford and Bishops Stortford but has allowed local communities to identify the green spaces that mean the most to them through neighbourhood plans.
- 5.15 Respondents to the residents survey valued the many open and green spaces in the parish and called for extra protection for these areas. A total of 81.9% of respondents strongly agreed that green spaces were important to them and 86% rated open and green spaces their second most popular choice in answer to what they most valued about living in the parish. Although no specific green spaces were mentioned in the survey, support for particular sites was canvassed at subsequent exhibitions. At the final exhibition of policies in July 2018 the most popular sites were Glebe Field in High Cross, The Allotments in Thundridge and Jean's Orchard in Thundridge.
- 5.16 A number of potential green spaces were identified by the Environment Group and assessed to ascertain whether they met the prescribed criteria in the NPPF. That assessment is presented in a spreadsheet (Appendix G).

- 5.17 Of the sites considered in the assessment seven LGS have been designated. These are located both within the boundaries of the villages and beyond the built-up area, both in the Green Belt and in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. They range from small intimate spaces to linear sites and open fields. Each designated LGS is featured below with a photograph and description of the space.

POLICY THE5 - LOCAL GREEN SPACES

I. A number of areas within the parish have been identified as Local Green Space (LGS). These are shown on the Policies Map, described in further detail in Appendix G and are listed below:

- LGS 1: The Pit
- LGS 2: Allotments (Thundridge)
- LGS 3: Jean's Orchard
- LGS 4: Rennesley Gardens and Castle
- LGS 5: The Green, North Drive
- LGS 6: The Bourne
- LGS 7: Football Field and Sutes Meadow

II. New development will only be allowed in designated Local Green Spaces where it is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and policy CFLR2 of the East Herts District Plan.

LGS 1 - The Pit



The Pit is an area of grassland and wild flowers, which measures about 0.44 hectares and is situated centrally in Thundridge Village. It is also the location of the remaining mound of the Thundridge Post Windmill, demolished in the 1870s. Today, this green space is extensively used for dog walking and is open for other recreational uses.

LGS 2 - The Allotments, Thundridge



The Allotments is a 1.35 hectare green space located in the Rib Valley, surrounded by farmland, woodland and allotments, with views of the village and the church to the east, which provides areas of cultivation. There are 48 individual allotments on the site. 73% of the plot holders are from the parish and assist each other with ideas and watering whilst on holiday. Fresh picked vegetables are left out for anyone to take/exchange. The Allotments is the only such facility in the parish, which performs an important social function. The site is recognized as a component of an ecological network with potential of ecological protection. Access to the site is made via an unmade track known as The Common opposite the Village Hall.

LGS 3 - Jean's Orchard



Jean's Orchard is a 0.17 hectare area of grassed open space situated at the northern end of Thundridge village and adjacent to the River Rib. It includes an ancient orchard with old fruit trees and thus, contributes positively to the rural setting of the parish. As a result of the area being undisturbed/not cultivated, a range of wildlife regularly passes through and many wild flowers have freely grown on site. In the Herts Ecological Network Maps 201708_012, the site is colour coded in green and purple, meaning that the entirety of the site is a valuable component of the ecological network and that part of the site is a habitat listed within S41 of the NERC Act. This green space was featured in 'Village Life' Magazine and has been awarded the Herts CPRE Environment Award for contribution to rural living (October 2018) in recognition of its achievements in bringing together the community socially and planting heritage varieties of Hertfordshire fruit trees. Thundridge Community Orchard Trust manages the site.

LGS 4 - Rennesley Gardens and Castle



Rennesley Gardens and Castle is a 3.66 hectare green space located to the west of the parish characterized by a Motte and Bailey. It affords views across the parish and overlooks Wadesmill and Thundridge. It is an area of historical significance as it was once the site of a moated castle and is one of the most interesting moated mounts in Hertfordshire. The green space is a habitat for fallow deer, muntjac and rabbits and is listed within S41 of the NERC Act. There are two public rights of way which converge at Rennesley Gardens making it easily accessible.

LGS 5 - The Green North Drive



The Green North Drive is a 0.11 hectares green space, part of the original estate design. It is the only play area for residents within the housing development. Although it is a small site, it is locally important.

LGS 6 -The Bourne



The Bourne is a 5.77 hectare steep-sided wooded valley, situated in the north west of the parish, with ancient trees and wild flowers which was formed by glacial runoffs. The Bourne is dry for most of the year but fills in the autumn and winter with run-off from surrounding fields. The area is a habitat for badgers, woodpeckers, buzzards and red kites as well as smaller birds and animals and is listed within S41 of the NERC Act, and as such should be protected from development (Source: Herts Ecological Mapping). This Local Green Space also has some historical significance, as Iron Age earthworks are present on site. There is a public right of way that runs along the entire length of the site.

LGS 7 - Football Field and Sutes Meadow



The Football Field and Sutes Meadow site is a 1.66 hectares of meadow land, located between the A10 and the Bourne, in the north west of the parish. The meadow contains ancient pollarded oaks and wild flowers and is recognized as being part a valuable component of the parish ecological network, with potential for ecological protection (Source: Herts Ecological Mapping). A public right of way crosses the site.

Protected Recreational Open Space

- 5.18 Access to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of local communities. The NPPF paragraph 97 says that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless the space is surplus to requirements or replaced by something better.
- 5.19 There are two particularly important open spaces used for recreation in Thundridge; the Football/Cricket Field and Norman Wodson Sports Field. Both of these are allocated as Open Space, for Sport and Recreation in East Herts District Plan (Policy CFLR1). They are so important for the local community as spaces for formal recreation and games that they are mentioned in the policy below as Protected Recreational Open Spaces.
- 5.20 Policy THE6 also identifies three small play spaces, which are not covered in the District Plan policy. They are Dellfield play space and the two areas at Arthur Martin-Leake Way in High Cross. These well-designed spaces cater for smaller children and include play equipment. A selection of photographs of the different types of space in the parish is shown below.

POLICY THE6 - PROTECTED RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACES

I. Four sites identified on the Policies Map, described in Appendix A and listed below are allocated as Protected Recreation Open Space (PROS):

PROS 1: Norman Wodson Sports Field, Thundridge

PROS 2: The Football/Cricket Field, Thundridge

PROS 3: Dellfield, Wadesmill

PROS 4: Two play spaces in Arthur Martin-Leake Way (4a & 4b), High Cross.

II. Development that would result in the loss of all or part of any of these spaces will not be permitted unless they are replaced with better facilities that are as accessible to the residents of the parish as the current recreational open spaces.

PROS 1 - Norman Wodson Sports Field, Thundridge

A multi-use sports and recreation area.



PROS 2 - The Football / Cricket Field, Thundridge



PROS 3 - Playspace, Dellfield, Wadesmill



PROS 4 - Two Play Spaces (4A & 4B), Arthur Martin-Leake Way, High Cross



Enhancing Biodiversity

- 5.21 According to national planning guidance, policies to protect and enhance valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity relative to their statutory status or identified quality should be included in development plans. National planning practice guidance says that plans should be concerned not only with designated areas, but also with other areas and sites of conservation value identified by local partnerships such as the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.
- 5.22 The NPPF states that, to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats, including locally-designated sites of importance for biodiversity, e.g. local wildlife sites, and wildlife corridors. Policies should also promote their conservation, restoration and enhancement.
- 5.23 The importance of conserving all wildlife habitats in order to genuinely enhance biodiversity is recognised in East Herts District Plan, which includes policies for local and non-designated sites (policies NE1, NE2, and NE3). In the residents survey, 73% of respondents were recorded as valuing local wildlife. In order to highlight the areas covered by Local Wildlife Site designations and other important wildlife areas, Policy THE7 lists the most important local sites and features in the parish.



Importance of conserving and enhancing biodiversity

POLICY THE7 - CONSERVE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

I. Development should conserve and enhance biodiversity and deliver net biodiversity gains (in accordance with the current best practice Biodiversity Impact Calculator). The nature conservation value of wildlife sites, and other significant habitats including the River Rib will be protected from any harmful impacts of development, in accordance with their status. In particular, the following designated local wildlife sites, as shown on the Policies Map and detailed in Appendix D, will be protected and managed:

- Sandpit Wood
- Dilly Wood
- Wade's Wood
- Buckney Wood
- Round Wood
- Sawtrees Wood & New Plantation
- Youngsbury Park Icehouse
- The Bourne
- Gardiners' Spring Wood
- Great Southe Wood & Ash Plantation
- Sutes Wood
- Home Farm
- Poles Lane Area
- Thundridge House Area
- Great Barwick Manor Area.

II. In addition, the areas of Ancient Woodland known as Steere Wood, near Sawtrees Farm, Sawtrees Wood, Buckney Wood, Wade's Wood, Round Wood and Sutes Wood, and the list of 18 Veteran Trees identified in the HERC database will also be protected from any harmful impacts of development.

III. Other areas of the parish coloured green on the Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping contain habitats listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act. Development, which would cause significant harm to these areas, should either be refused, or the mitigation hierarchy applied. If permission is granted for development conditions or planning obligations the secure appropriate management regimes will be sought.

Green Corridors

- 5.24 East Herts District Plan (policy NE4) seeks to establish a network of green infrastructure across the District, in accordance with the Council's East Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan. This recognises that green corridors have many benefits including making connections between wildlife sites and providing attractive walking routes, such as the established long-distance footpaths the Hertfordshire Way (east to west) and the Harcamlow Way (north to south). It is also used for leisure pursuits such as cycling, bird watching, fishing, and photography. As a green corridor, the value of the River Rib Valley was emphasised by the local community in consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. In the residents survey, 77.93% of residents believed that the River Rib should be protected, as it contributes towards the character and identity of the parish. The Bourne was also mentioned as an important green asset and is a designated Local Wildlife Site.

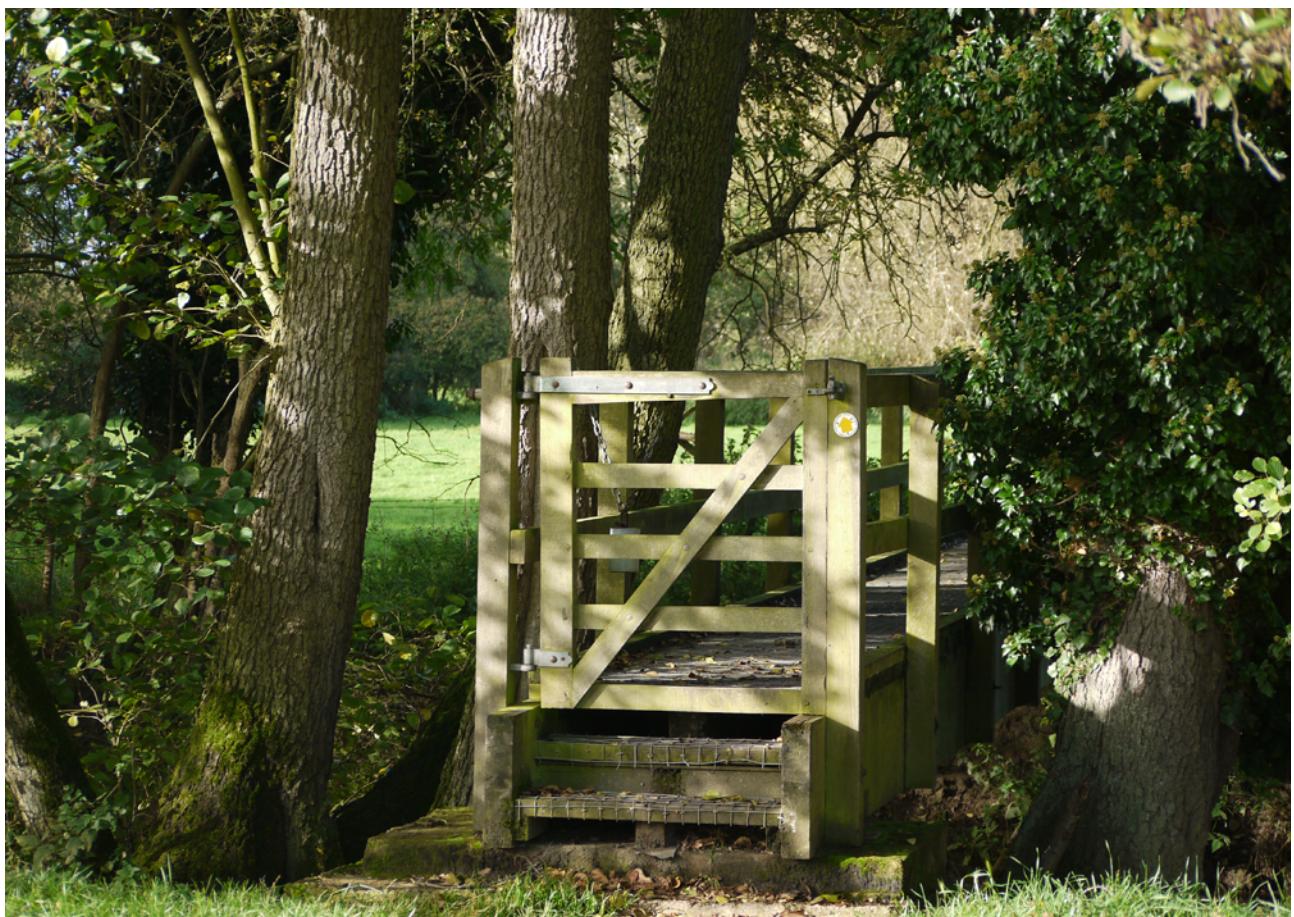
- 5.25 Parts of the Plan area include Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b, associated with the floodplain of the River Rib and its tributaries. Development in these areas should be avoided where possible and no development should take place in Flood Zone 3b, unless it is compatible with the purpose of safely storing floodwater or essential development.

POLICY THE8 - GREEN CORRIDORS AND THE RIVER RIB

I. Green corridors should provide permeability for wildlife and people. In accordance with the East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan, the green corridors in the parish, which provide networks of biodiversity and public access, will be protected from the impact of harmful development, managed and where possible enhanced to create increased public access.

II. The two most significant green corridors in the parish are The Bourne and the River Rib corridor:

- The River Rib is a chalk stream, vulnerable to both low flow problems and to flooding as well as silting up and pollution. The Rib Valley contains one of only 200 chalk rivers known globally and a habitat 'recognised as a priority habitat for protection under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan'. The Rib catchment is the only known UK site for the rare sedge Carex cespitosa and has been described as 'Hertfordshire's rainforests'. From the point where the river turns to flow westwards, towards Thundridge and Wadesmill, Bridleway 24 and then Footpath 22 follow the river valley. Any development that negatively impacts public access to the river will be refused. Any development scheme adjacent to the River Rib should be designed with a naturalised buffer zone of at least 10m from the top of the bank in order to protect and enhance the conservation value of the watercourse and ensure access for flood defence maintenance.
- The Bourne is dry for most of the year but fills in the autumn and winter with run-off from surrounding fields. Bridleway 42 and Footpath 40 run the length of The Bourne. Any development that negatively impacts public access along The Bourne will be refused.



Accessibility and Green Corridors

Sustainable Energy

- 5.26 The NPPF paragraph 152 encourages local planning authorities to support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.
- 5.27 East Herts District Plan also promotes development that includes sources of renewable or low carbon energy (East District Plan policy CC3).
- 5.28 In a rural parish such as Thundridge, other considerations such as the impact on landscape and heritage assets must also be taken into account. A total of 34.5% of residents responding to the residents survey were in favour of domestic scale generation of solar energy. Community-based and domestic scale sustainable energy schemes are supported by the parish council.

POLICY THE9 - SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Small scale domestic renewable energy schemes and community-based renewable energy initiatives will be supported; in particular, schemes to provide solar power on a domestic scale and ground source heat pumps, where they accord with other policies in the development plan.

Community Value and Facilities

- 5.29 The Localism Act 2011 gave local people the opportunity to identify buildings and land that they felt was of particular value to their local community and apply for them to be listed as Assets of Community Value through the Community Right to Bid (in accordance with the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Where possible, Thundridge Parish Council will nominate those assets that were identified and supported through the Neighbourhood Plan engagement process. Nominations will be made to East Herts District Council. These will be listed as assets if they further social wellbeing (by facilitating social interaction) or social interests (cultural, recreational or sporting interests) of the local community.
- 5.30 Once listed as an asset, the community has the opportunity to buy or acquire an interest in the asset if it were being sold.
- 5.31 A short description and photograph of the buildings and land that were identified through the Neighbourhood Plan process can be each asset together with evidence of its use can be found in Appendix E.

POLICY THFS1 - ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

All Assets of Community Value listed by East Herts Council or facilities identified as a community asset above, will be retained in community use unless they are:

- (a) No longer needed or
- (b) No longer viable or
- (c) To be replaced by equivalent or better facilities as part of a development proposal.

- 5.32 Accessible local outdoor and indoor sports and leisure facilities are important features in the parish. These include the Norman Wodson Field and Pavilion. Improvement/expansion of these facilities will be supported provided that they serve a local need.

POLICY THFS2 - IMPROVEMENTS TO COMMUNITY AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Proposals to improve, expand, or provide new community and recreation facilities will be supported provided that:

- (a) they fulfil the needs of existing and future residents of the parish; and
- (b) any adverse impacts would not outweigh the benefits.

Businesses and Infrastructure

- 5.33 A survey of current businesses was carried out to ascertain how businesses operating in the parish felt about their location and the existing support facilities. The results of the survey can be found in the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement. The business survey only included businesses with premises, although many people now work from home.
- 5.34 Residents greatly appreciate Thundridge Village Stores and if this asset was to close in the future, the continuation of a commercial use in these premises would be supported. When residents were consulted on which community assets they valued, the White Horse pub in High Cross had already closed. The future of the building is uncertain. The preference would be for the pub to reopen as it was a valued community business, but a commercial use that provided employment in the village would be supported. Both Thundridge Village Stores and the White Horse pub should remain as commercial premises, if at all possible.
- 5.35 Parking was an issue for some businesses, in particular in Thundridge Business Park where parking overflows on to the C183 (Ermine Street). Businesses were interested in being more sustainable and facilities that help them with this aim will be supported.
- 5.36 Evidence of people working from home was picked up in the residents survey. The most popular requests from respondents, to improve their experience of working in the parish, were for improved mobile reception (52%) and faster broadband (57%). Policy THFS6 Infrastructure improvements promotes the development of such infrastructure improvements.

POLICY THFS3 - EXISTING BUSINESSES

Proposals to support the retention of existing businesses will be considered favourably provided that they do not conflict with other policies in the development plan. Such proposals may include the provision of off-street parking for customers, covered and secure cycle parking facilities for employees and sustainable energy schemes.

- 5.37 The outstanding number (69%) of respondents supporting the formation of new farming and agricultural businesses ties in with the overriding wish to keep the parish rural. Although 43% of respondents to the survey would support additional shops, the one specific type of shop that was mentioned was a shop selling local produce.
- 5.38 Encouraging appropriate economic growth in the rural economy is recognised as important in the NPPF. East Herts District Plan Policy ED2 supports sustainable economic growth in rural areas. This Plan identifies the expansion of existing employment sites, new build live/work units and new uses in existing farm complexes as options that will be supported. The latter of these can have the dual purpose of ensuring the viability of existing agricultural enterprises by allowing diversification.

POLICY THFS4 - NEW OR EXPANSION OF BUSINESS SPACE

Applications for new business space will be supported provided that they are:

- (a) on an existing employment site within a village boundary where the infrastructure is sufficient to support expansion without adversely impacting on the surrounding area or its residents (e.g. no car parking overspill and in accordance with Policy ED1 of the East Herts District Plan) or
- (b) part of a new housing development providing live/work units or
- (c) in an existing farm complex, provided that it is:
 1. of a scale and type appropriate to the operation of the farm and its rural setting; and
 2. is either an ancillary agricultural use or the development supports the viability of the farm business or
- (d) A conversion of an existing rural building or well-designed new building in an appropriate location for the type of business concerned.

- 5.39 Responses to the survey showed that of those completing the question about employment (203 respondents), 17% worked from home. The 2011 census figure showed only 6% of 16-64 year olds worked from home. Either the census is not an efficient way of capturing this information or there has been a marked increase in home working in the last six years. For whatever reason, working from home is popular in Thundridge.
- 5.40 Working from home, including small conversions, extensions and changes of use to facilitate home working will be supported provided they are sensitively designed and executed.

POLICY THFS5 - HOME WORKING

Proposals to allow change of use of part of a dwelling, ancillary extensions, conversion of outbuildings or small freestanding buildings, within the residential curtilage of existing development to support home working will be supported provided that all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- (a) If the proposal includes the loss of garage space sufficient off-road parking is retained comparative to the number of bedrooms (see parking policy)
- (b) The use of the proposed development is primarily for occupants of the dwelling
- (c) There are no adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbours
- (d) All materials and the height, scale, massing and location of the development do not detract from the quality and character of other buildings on the site or its setting.

POLICY THFS6 - INFRASTRUCTURE

Provision of new infrastructure, such as high-speed broadband and mobile networks, to service existing and new businesses will be supported provided that:

- (a) Infrastructure is fully integrated into the design of future development proposals
- (b) Where new masts or structures are required, they should be sympathetic to their surroundings.

Sustainable Transport

- 5.41 The aim to encourage sustainable transport initiatives is stated in Objective H and measures to achieve this are included in the Action Plan at Appendix H. However, the villages suffer from on-street parking overflowing from residential developments and generated around community facilities. Parking for community facilities was raised during engagement on the plan. This was particularly in relation to the difficulties of parking at Thundridge Village Hall. Parking for the school in Thundridge also creates problems for local residents. The commitment to consider options to relieve parking issues in Thundridge will be pursued through the Action Plan in Appendix H.
- 5.42 For a policy on Sustainable Transport to be successful, it must be made clear to a developer, that the transport issues for the villages must be assessed and bespoke solutions found. Guidelines on thresholds for transport statements/assessments and travel plans are vague. The NPPF paragraph 111, suggests that developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan and a transport statement or assessment should accompany a planning application. A relatively small development would be capable of generating a significant level of movement in the context of a rural village. Proposals to mitigate the impact of additional movements should be submitted with a development proposal.

THFS7 - SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

- I. All proposals for development in the village must provide a traffic assessment, this assessment should be proportional to the scale of the development proposed. It should include an assessment of the potential impact of increased traffic on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion and any measures designed to mitigate such impacts.
- II. Proposals to increase off-street car-parking provision for employment and leisure use to relieve traffic congestion and increase sustainable transport provision will be supported in principle as long as they comply with other policies in the development plan.
- II. Contributions will be sought to achieve these improvements through S106 agreements, or other funding mechanisms.

Housing Needs

- 5.43 Village policies are contained in Chapter 10 of the District Plan. In Policy VILL2, High Cross, and Thundridge and Wadesmill area classified as Group 2 villages. In Thundridge and Wadesmill, which are “over-washed” by the Green Belt, the scope for development is limited. In High Cross, which is a Group 2 Village, development would normally be limited to areas within the defined village boundary. The District Plan, in policy VILL2, states that, in addition to limited infill development, small-scale development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted. A full assessment of potential housing sites was carried out in the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan (see Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2033 Site Assessment Process Background Document). Following the Independent Examination of the Neighbourhood Plan, no housing site allocations have been included.
- 5.44 A key objective of the adopted East Herts District Plan seeks to ensure that all new housing is accessible and meets the needs and aspirations of local communities. The parish council endorses this policy aim and has given careful consideration to the issue of housing needs expressed by local residents in consultation and in survey results.
- 5.45 The District Plan (Chapter 14) sets out the aspirations of East Herts Council for the supply of housing of various types. There are policies relating to the type, mix, and density of new housing and the provision of affordable housing. Overall requirements are informed mainly by the latest West Essex and East Herts Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the East Herts Housing and Health Strategy, as well as population and household statistics. The SHMA sets out criteria for housing tenure and size mix. These are elaborated in District Plan policy HOU1 which requires “an appropriate mix of housing tenures, types and sizes” in proposed developments of five or more gross additional dwellings.
- 5.46 The parish council supports the general thrust of policy HOU1 with regards to housing mix. Figures from the District Plan evidence base show that the average age of the population in Thundridge Parish is increasing; this is probably because many existing residents wish to remain in the area for the long term. More than 33% of the residents replying to the survey question on down-sizing said that they would be interested in downsizing over the next 15 years. In addition, 29% said that they would be interested in moving to accommodation which would support their future care needs.

Opportunities for elderly households to down-size, however, are extremely limited in the current housing market.

- 5.47 At the same time, there are limited opportunities for younger people to obtain suitable local accommodation, either to rent or to buy. The problems are exacerbated by a shrinking number of houses on the market. Both primary schools need young families living locally in order to keep their numbers at a sustainable level. A stable population is also required in order to sustain local businesses, public houses, and other facilities and services. In these circumstances, a suitable mix of housing types and tenures is essential.

POLICY THH1 - HOUSING MIX

In the Parish of Thundridge, there will be a mix of housing tenures, types, and sizes in accordance with current and future local housing need and housing market assessments. Priority will be given to the following types of housing:

- Starter homes and smaller dwellings for private purchase
- Affordable housing for rent or shared ownership
- Smaller units, including bungalows, for older residents to down-size.

- 5.48 It is clear from the East Herts District Plan, from the supporting SHMA, and from public consultation on this Plan, that there is a need for housing which is affordable. In its glossary, the NPPF has a detailed definition of affordable housing which embraces "housing for sale or for rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)".
- 5.49 For East Hertfordshire, the 2015 SHMA identified an affordable housing requirement of 32% of total housing provision. In order to deliver this degree of housing need, policy HOU3 of the District Plan requires the following:
- (a) up to 35% affordable housing on sites proposing 11 to 14 gross additional dwellings
 - (b) up to 40% affordable housing on sites proposing 15 or more gross additional dwellings, or 0.5 hectares or more in size.
- 5.50 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that affordable housing contributions should not be sought from sites proposing development of ten units or less and where the dwellings would have a combined internal floor space of 1,000 square metres or less. Policy HOU3 is therefore likely to have limited application in the Parish of Thundridge. Nevertheless, there is clear support in the community for more affordable housing.
- 5.51 The results of the residents survey showed that 85.8% of residents valued the current rural character of the area, and 82.2% said that they would like Thundridge to remain rural in 25 years' time. At the same time, however, many expressed the view that some exceptions to policy were required to cater for local housing needs. The East Herts District Plan also acknowledges this issue and provides, in policy HOU4, for the provision of local needs housing on small sites in the rural area outside the boundaries of the villages.

POLICY THH2 - RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

I. District Plan Policy HOU4 will be applied to homes on Rural Exception Sites. Properties will be allocated via the East Herts Council Housing Needs Register according to the following criteria:

- (a) Applicants who have been ordinarily resident in the Parish of Thundridge for the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application for the affordable housing unit or have at any time previously resided in the parish for at least five years, or
- (b) Close family of existing parish residents who have been resident in the parish for a period of at least five years prior to the date of the letting application and currently reside in the parish. (NB: "Close Family" means the following categories of blood or formally-adopted relatives: parent; adult child or adult sibling.)"
- (c) "Persons working for at least 16 hours per week for an employer in the parish and have been continuously so employed for at least one year during the period immediately prior to the proposed letting date of the Affordable Unit.".

II. In the event that there are no eligible nominations from the parish, then nominations from rural parishes falling within three miles radius of the Application Site will be next considered. In the event that there are no eligible nominations from the rural parishes, then each time any Affordable Units become available, nominations form those in greatest need from within the District of East Hertfordshire will be acceptable.

POLICY THH3 - STATIC CARAVANS

Additional pitches for static caravans will be supported provided that all the following criteria are satisfied:

- (a) the density of development includes provision of private garden space for each pitch
- (b) the number of caravan pitches represents proportional growth of the village in which the site is located
- (c) sustainable travel options are available in the site location
- (d) occupation of the caravans is tied to families already in the parish

Design of Development

- 5.52 Chapter 12 of the NPPF seeks to achieve high-quality places through good design. The East Herts District Plan also recognizes the importance of design quality, which helps to protect and enhance local character. Detailed criteria are set out in Chapter 17 and Policy DES1 of the District Plan. From the results of the residents survey, it is clear that local people feel strongly that new housing should be constructed in sympathy with the historic environment. In total, 67.6% of respondents were in favour of housing designs which were in sympathy with housing in close vicinity, whereas 63% supported designs in line with local character generally.
- 5.53 The District Plan also supports the principles of sustainable design in new developments, setting out the Council's approach to planning applications, Design Codes, Design Reviews, as well as its aims to protect local character and amenity (see Policies DES1 and DES3). This positive attitude to good design is fully supported by the parish council. Where a proposed development potentially conflicts with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, such as impacting on views or the setting of historic buildings, developers must show that the design of the scheme seeks to minimise its impact.
- 5.54 The design of a development built in 2017/2018 in High Cross has resulted in a detrimental impact on the character of the village and loss of amenity for adjacent occupiers, by allowing significantly increased densities and building heights. Properties of 2.5 storeys should have the appearance of a 2 storey house or ground levels should be lowered to reduce the overbearing appearance of properties with higher ridge heights than surrounding development.

POLICY THH4 - DESIGN CRITERIA

The scale and design of new development will reflect the traditional character of the built environment in the Parish of Thundridge. The following guidelines will apply:

- (a) All new development should respect the historic and distinctive design vernacular of the parish and its local setting including traditional design features, and where appropriate, as set out in the Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and any successor document
- (b) Building materials should be in harmony with existing properties
- (c) New buildings should respect neighbouring roof heights, profiles and pitches, the characteristic spaces between buildings the historic building lines and the overall density of development in the villages
- (d) Any infilling should not reduce significantly the garden areas which are essential to the setting of character properties
- (e) Replacement, alterations or extensions to historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings in the parish should be sensitive to their distinctive character, fabric and form.

Parking Facilities

- 5.55 The residents survey included a section on vehicle parking, which appeared to be a lesser problem than in many other parts of East Hertfordshire. Nevertheless, a total of 55.2% of respondents parked their cars on the streets. At the same time, 71.4% agreed that cars should be parked off-street, within plot boundaries. In respect of new developments, 85.8% called for sufficient off-street parking in all new proposals.
- 5.56 Current car parking standards for East Hertfordshire are contained in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Vehicle Parking in New Development. The standards in the SPD, however, are more applicable to urban areas, rather than villages and rural locations. In Thundridge Parish, car ownership levels are high and public transport access and usage is low. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to apply the level of parking provision which is most appropriate to the characteristics of travel patterns in the parish.

POLICY THH5 - VEHICLE PARKING IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

- I. In all proposals for residential development, adequate off-street car parking should be provided. The following local standards will be applied:
- (a) For developments of one, two, or three bedrooms, two parking spaces per dwelling will be required within the dwelling site or on land tied to the site
 - (b) For developments of four bedrooms, three parking spaces per dwelling will be required within the site or on land tied to the site
 - (c) For sheltered housing units, including housing for older people, a minimum of one off-street car parking space per dwelling will be required, together with one space per warden, and a ratio of one visitor parking space per four units
 - (d) For any future planning permissions, there should be a presumption against the change of use of garages and parking areas for alternative uses within the curtilage of a dwelling, if insufficient space remains for the parking of cars.

Climate Change and Sustainable Energy

- 5.57 Hertfordshire County Council leads a partnership of Hertfordshire Local Authorities including East Herts Council with the aim of promoting, facilitating, and recognising high quality sustainably designed development. The partnership provides a Sustainable Design Toolkit and runs an expert independent design review panel. There is also an awards scheme.
- 5.58 The East Herts District Plan contains policies to adapt to, and to mitigate, the effects of climate change (policies CC1 and CC2). Thundridge Parish Council supports these policies; the parish council promotes the use of sustainable design principles in the

construction of new homes in the parish, to mitigate the impact of climate change. Policy THE9 highlights to all developers the benefits of sustainable design and encourages them to follow sustainable design principles.

POLICY THH6 - CLIMATE CHANGE

In order to reduce energy use, innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon homes that demonstrate the sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels will be supported. These may include self-build projects, earth sheltered buildings or houses built to Passivhaus standards.

6. Implementation

Introduction

- 6.1 In terms of its delivery, the Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented mainly by the consideration and determination of planning applications by East Herts Council. Any major developments and associated infrastructure will be achieved principally by agreements between the local planning authority, developers, and infrastructure providers.
- 6.2 There are a number of non-statutory (non-land use) proposals which have emerged during the preparation of this document. The local community in response to surveys and consultation events has suggested most of these. Where these are realistic and deliverable, they have been included in an Action Plan (in Appendix H), which has been endorsed by the parish council. This gives a comprehensive view of community aspirations in the Parish of Thundridge. It is expected that the items listed in the Action Plan will be achieved by guiding both public and private sector investments for the benefit of the community. This may be through S106 agreements, a future CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) for East Herts, or other funding mechanisms.

Development Management

- 6.3 Development proposals in the plan period will be delivered by landowners and developers thorough the submission of planning applications to East Herts Council, and the subsequent carrying out of development. Most planning permissions will include a set of planning conditions or be subject to Section 106 Planning Obligations. These will ensure that the appropriate building types and designs are achieved, having regard to the policies in this plan. In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, great care has been taken to ensure that these policies and proposals are appropriate to the local area and are achievable.
- 6.4 Whilst East Herts Council will be responsible for the formal process of development management, the parish council will also use the Neighbourhood Plan to frame their responses to planning applications. They will work closely with the local planning authority to monitor the progress of developments coming forward, by involvement in pre-application meetings with prospective developers and by monitoring the discharge of conditions and planning agreements.

Monitoring and Review

- 6.5 It is noted that East Herts Council will be producing an Authority Monitoring Report, to chart progress on the delivery of the District Plan. An early review of the District Plan is anticipated, certainly within a period of five years. The parish Council will monitor the impact of any amendments to the District Plan, or a change in national policy dictating that neighbourhood plans must be reviewed, and will review the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly.