

Thornham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2036



**Adopted
Version
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Foreword

Bob Gulliver, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

The Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for everyone in the village to have a real influence on the way Thornham develops over the period up to 2036. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the government in 2011 and may contain policies relating to the development and use of land. When the Plan is brought into effect these policies will have real force as they will form part of the statutory development plan and will therefore be applied in the determination of planning applications.

The Draft Plan has been prepared by a Working Group set up by the Parish Council assisted by a consultant with planning experience and expertise and supported by a government grant.

In preparing it we have tried to ensure that we understand the views of residents and businesses through several stages of consultation with residents, businesses and statutory consultees. In preparing this draft for statutory consultation, we have considered all the feedback we have received and made any necessary changes.

After submitting the Plan and supporting documents to the Borough Council it will then be the subject of an independent examination to check that it complies with national policy and guidance, the strategic policies of the Borough Council and European regulations. If it passes this test it will be the subject of a referendum of all those registered on the electoral roll. If it is supported by over 50% of those who vote in the referendum it will be brought into effect and the policies in the Plan will be important considerations in the determination of planning applications.

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in the preparation of the Plan, and all those who have taken the time to become familiar with it and let us have their views.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act of 2011 in order to give local communities the opportunity to have a greater say in the planning of future development. Local people can create a plan that allows them to develop planning policies that reflect the priorities of their area and have real legal weight. The whole community then decides at a referendum vote whether the local authority should bring the Plan into force.
- 1.2. Once the Plan has been made it will become part of the statutory development plan. This means that its policies must be taken into account in the determination of planning applications and that decisions must be made in accordance with these policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.3. A neighbourhood plan is therefore an important document with real legal force. However, as it forms part of a hierarchy of planning policies there are some limitations on what it can do, and it must therefore be prepared in accordance with the legal requirements and must satisfy what are known as the basic conditions. These are¹:
 - a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the Plan;
 - b) The making of the Plan contributes to sustainable development;
 - c) The making of the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
 - d) The making of the Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations;
 - e) The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 1.4. It must also meet legal requirements contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1991 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

2. Preparation of the Plan

- 2.1. The draft Thornham Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a Working Group set up by the Parish Council consisting of Parish Councillors and volunteers.
- 2.2. The Parish of Thornham was designated as a neighbourhood area on 17 March 2017. The area is shown in Map 1. Since then the Working Group has worked with the community to develop the draft plan. There have been three main opportunities so far for residents and those who work or do business in the area to contribute to and comment on the emerging plan:

¹ Section 8(2) of Schedule 4B inserted into the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act by the Localism Act 2011, to be read in association with Section 38C (5) of the Localism Act 2011.

- A questionnaire circulated to all households and to other interested parties in November 2017; this gave us information about the village and identified the key issues which are important to local people.
- A drop-in session to present the findings of the questionnaire held on 10 February 2018.
- A further drop-in session to present the emerging policies of the Plan on 9 February 2019.
- A full version of the Plan has now been prepared with supporting evidence and this will now be the subject of statutory pre-submission consultation between 2 September and 14 October 2019.

1.7 Map 1: The Neighbourhood Area



- 2.3. Throughout the process of preparing the Plan the working group has liaised closely with planning officers at the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, to ensure that the draft plan is aligned with the Council’s strategic policies and to understand the evidence which will influence the Borough Council’s emerging Local Plan.

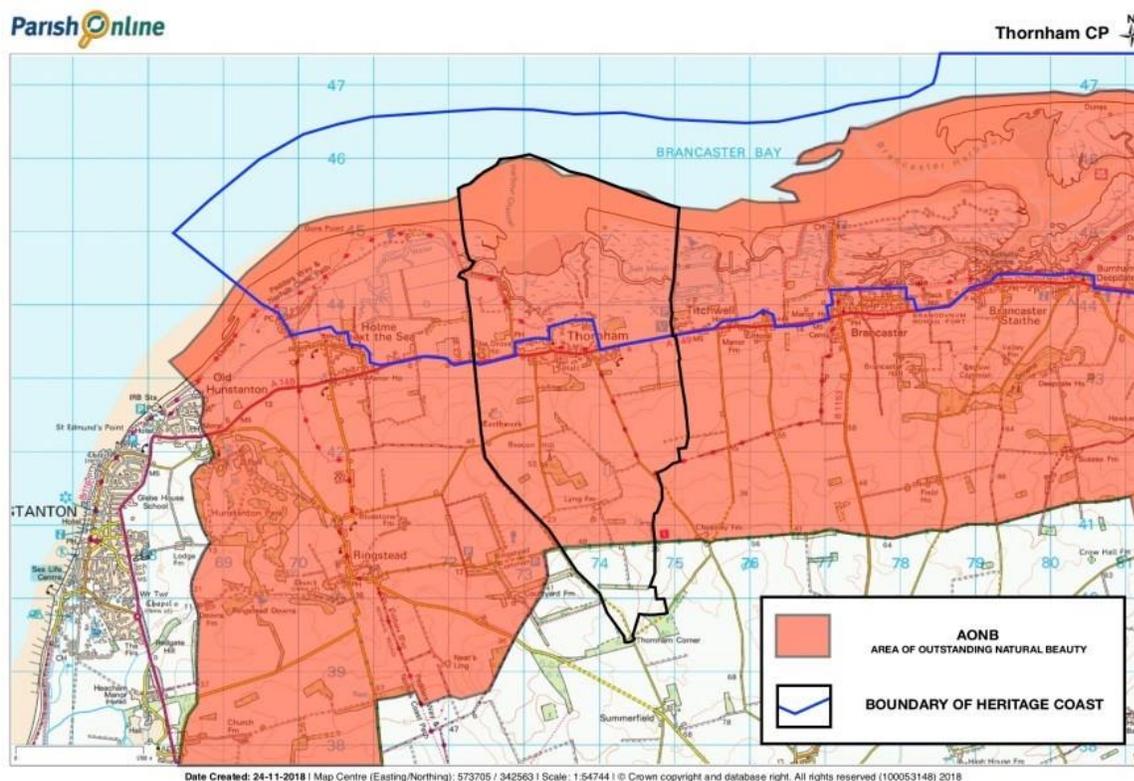
3. A Portrait of Thornham

- 3.1. Thornham is one of several villages in this part of Norfolk which lie on the A149 between the salt marshes bordering the North Sea and the chalk ridge to the south. The village lies about 4 miles from the seaside resort of Hunstanton and 20 miles from King's Lynn.
- 3.2. The village has an essentially linear form along the line of the A149, and its character is defined by the extensive views both into and away from the village from the north and south and the consistent use of clunch (chalk), brick, and red pantiles.



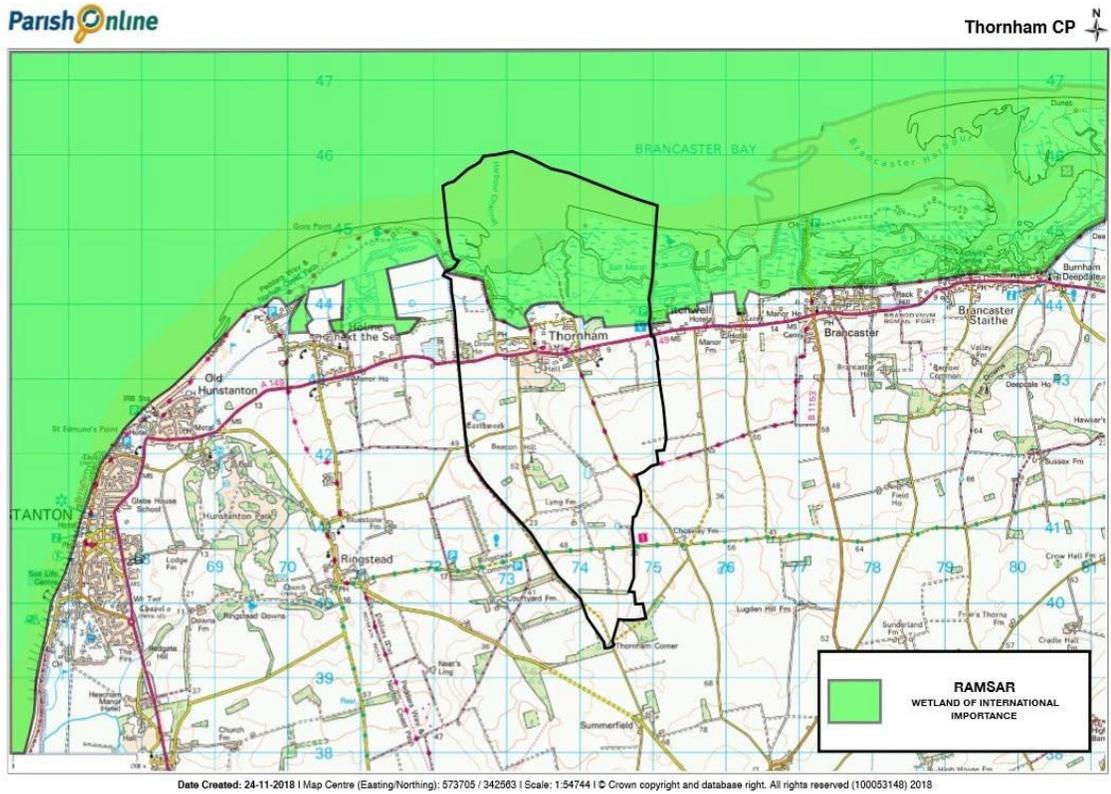
- 3.3. It is also an area of international significance in terms of landscape and environmental conservation. The northern part of the parish forms part of the North Norfolk Heritage Coast and almost all of the parish lies within the North Norfolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1.8 Map 2: North Norfolk Heritage Coast and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

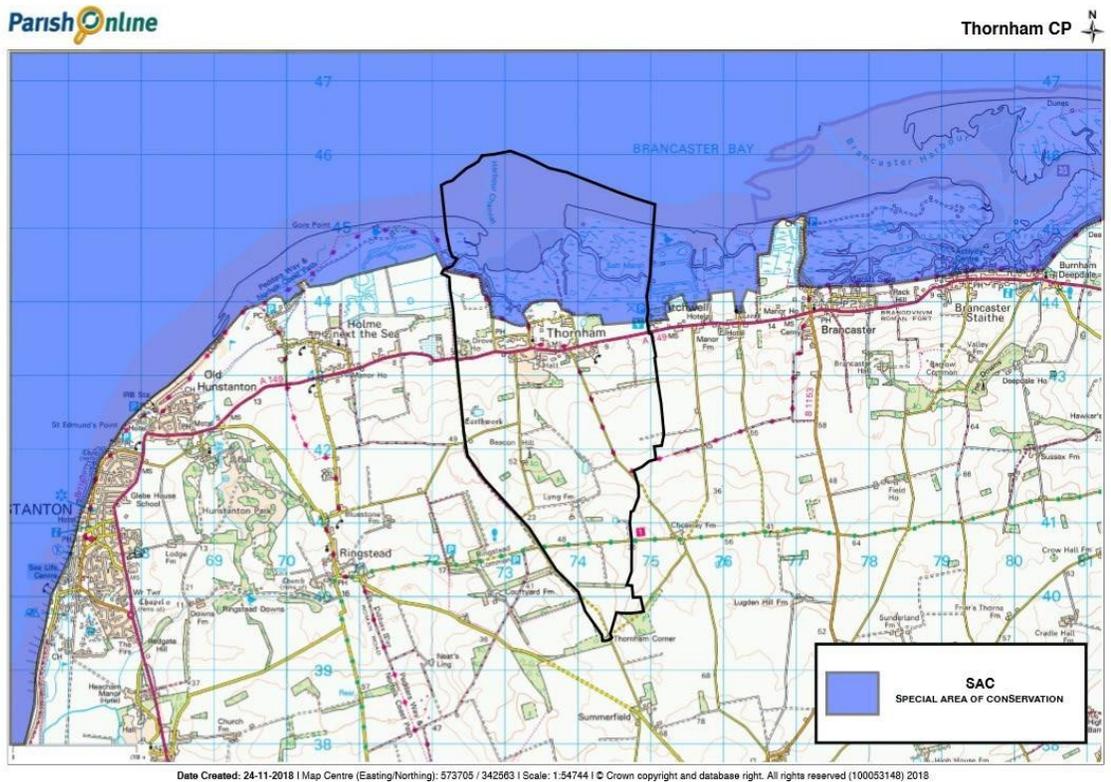


- 3.4. The northern part of the parish also lies within three designations of international significance:
- North Norfolk SSSI Ramsar Site – a wetland of international significance particularly for waterfowl;
 - North Norfolk Special Protection Area under the European Community Birds Directive;
 - North Norfolk Special Area of Conservation – Special Areas of Conservation are sites designated under the European Union Habitats Directive.
- 3.5. Within the parish of Thornham the boundary of all three of these areas is identical.
- 3.6. The North-West of the Parish lies within the Holme Dunes Nature Reserve and the North-East within the Titchwell RSPB Reserve. The Norfolk Coast long distance footpath passes through the parish running along the flood bank to the harbour, into the centre of the village and up Chosely Road to higher ground, following the ridge to the east.

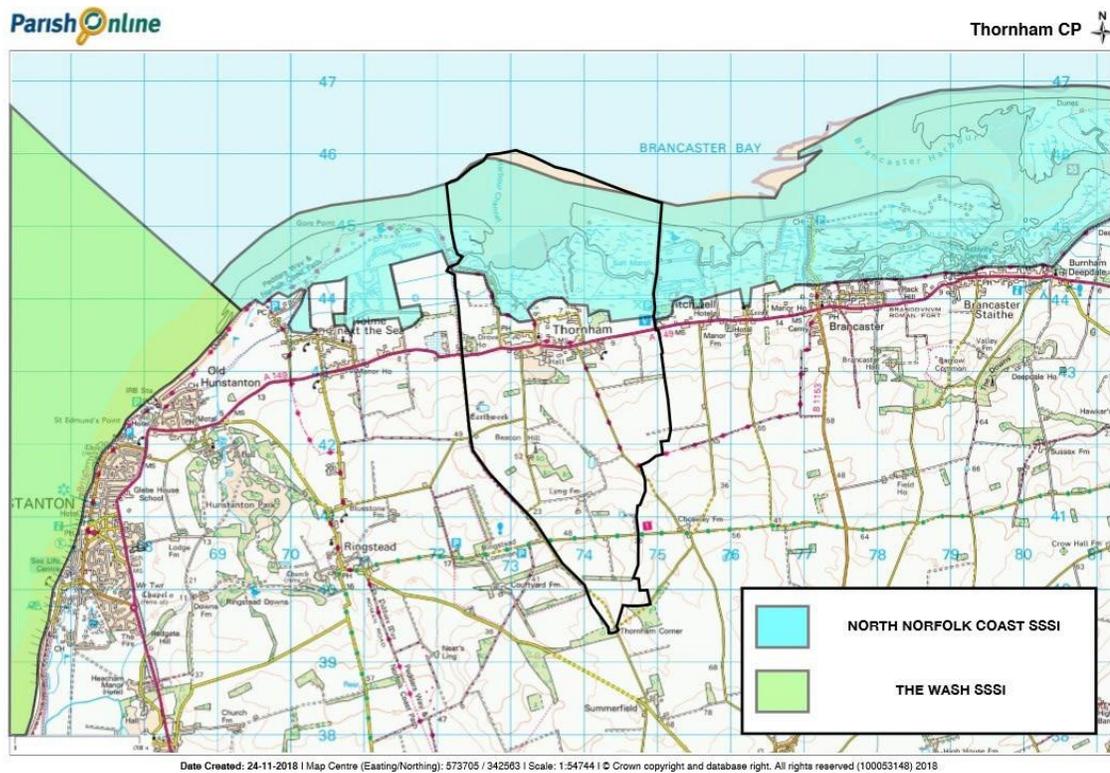
Map 3 Boundary of North Norfolk Ramsar Site



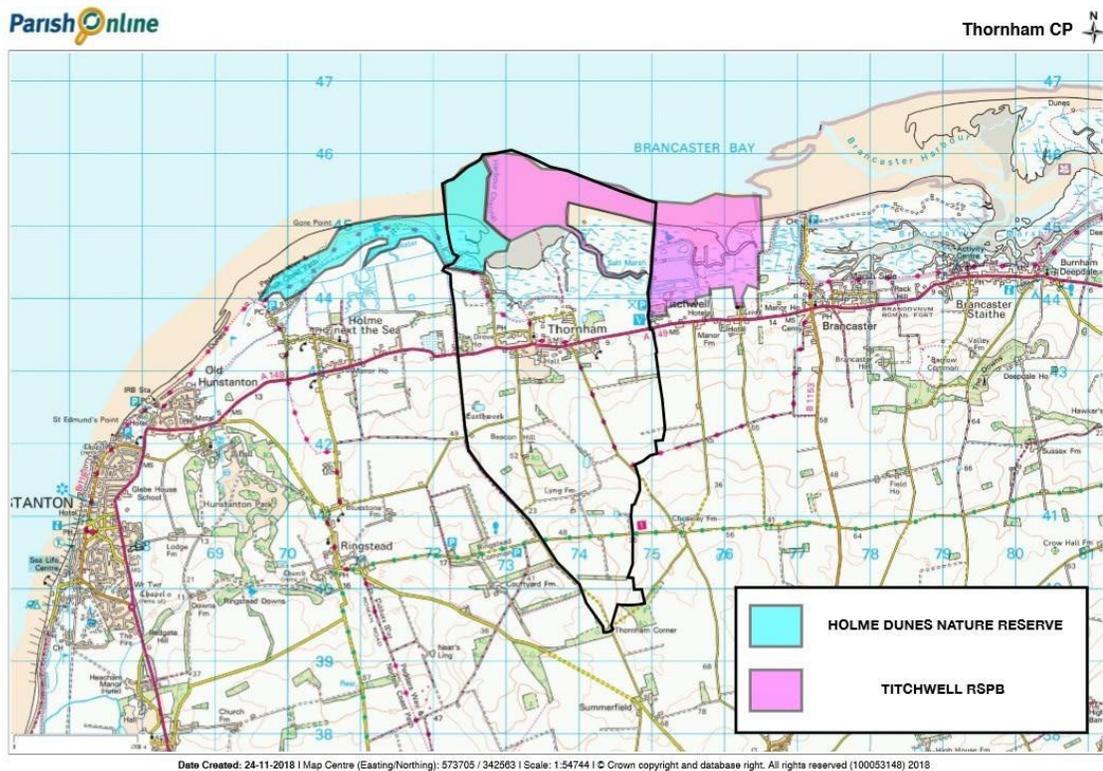
Map 4 Special Area of Conservation



1.9 Map 5 Norfolk Coast and Wash SSSIs



Map 6 Holme Dunes Nature Reserve and Titchwell RSPB Reserve



- 3.7. The northern part of the Parish lies within flood risk zone 3, the areas of greatest flood risk identified by the Environment Agency. This area is shown on Map 7 and coincides closely with the areas of dunes and marshland designated as being of special environmental significance. The risk is from tidal surges and the risk of flooding is likely to increase as a result of sea level rise caused by global warming. The Shoreline Management Plan <http://eacg.org.uk/smp5.asp> outlines the approach of the Environment Agency to the management of the shoreline. Almost all of the built-up area of Thornham lies outside the area of flood risk and development which is subject to flood risk will be controlled by national and local plan policies.

1.10 Map 7: Flood Risk



THORNHAM FLOOD RISK MAP

- 3.8. There is evidence of occupation of part of the chalk ridge to the south of Thornham dating from as early as 2000BC in the Bronze Age² and the rectangular pattern of roads in the heart of the village suggests the likelihood of settlement in Roman times. The present settlement goes back to Anglo Saxon times. In the fifteenth century the village thrived on wealth from the wool trade and in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the role of the village as a port developed and the surviving coal barn dates from this period.
- 3.9. The coming of the railways led to the decline of the port. During the twentieth century, the general increase in mobility led to a decline in the self-sufficiency of the village with a reduction in the range of facilities and services in the village. The school closed in 1985 and

² Thornham Conservation Area Character Statement

children now travel to Brancaster or Hunstanton for primary education and Hunstanton or Wells for secondary education. The only shop is now the Thornham Deli. The village is served by the Coasthopper bus service which runs from Kings Lynn to Hunstanton and then along the coast to Cromer with an hourly service in each direction.

- 3.10. Since the late twentieth century the attractions of the North Norfolk coast have led to a revitalisation of the north coast villages with the rapid increase in the number of second homes and holiday lets. This has led to substantial investment in new and expanded houses and a great increase in the price of houses. The number of visitors has helped to support facilities such as pubs and restaurants. Thornham retains three pub/restaurants, unusual for a fairly small village. The increase in second homes has also in time led to people moving into the village on retirement and playing an active part in community life. This has helped support the provision of a large new village hall which has become a focal point for the community.



- 3.11. Appendix 1 includes a summary of demographic data relating to Thornham derived from the 2011 census. The main features of this are summarised below:

- The age structure in Thornham is significantly older than in the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) and much older than in the country as a whole. 75% of the population is over 45 compared with 50% in the borough and 42% nationally. This emphasis is likely to become more pronounced during the Plan period and over half of the population is likely to be over 65 by 2036.
- 50% of the dwellings in the village have no permanent resident.

- The housing stock is characterised by a higher proportion of detached properties than the borough and twice as high a proportion as the country, while the proportion of semi-detached properties is lower and that of terraced houses higher than the borough and lower than the country.
- A higher proportion of houses are occupied by one person than nationally or in the borough and a higher proportion of this are aged 65+
- Only 7% of dwellings have dependent children compared with 23% in the borough and 33% in the country.
- A comparison between house size and occupancy shows that over 60% of households have two or more bedrooms than they notionally need with a further 1% with 1 bedroom more than required. This shows a much higher level of under-occupation than is the case nationally or in the borough

4. Summary of Consultation Findings

4.1. The initial questionnaire circulated in November 2017 was intended to get the views of residents on what they valued about Thornham and how they would like it to develop. The questionnaire and an analysis of the responses that were received can be found on the neighbourhood plan website.³

4.2. Some of the main findings are summarised below:

- The number of responses from second home and mobile home owners was greater than from permanent residents.
- About two thirds of respondents have been connected with Thornham for more than 10 years and almost half for over 20 years.
- Respondents particularly valued the proximity to the sea, the safe and secure environment, peace and tranquillity, opportunities to walk and the green spaces in the village.
- A large proportion also valued the sense of community, the village hall and playing field, the harbour and the church, with significant but more limited support for the deli, the allotments, the hair factory and the TUC field as it is now.
- Most people were satisfied with flood defences, drainage and utility services but significant numbers were less satisfied with the quality of broadband and the mobile phone signal and additional mobile phone masts would be strongly supported.
- Most people attach great importance to the Coasthopper bus service, though only a small proportion use it frequently.

³ <https://thornhamplan.org/the-consultation-process/>

- Opinion was divided on whether new business would be supported in Thornham, with most support for agriculture and small business and most opposition to offices and light industry. Support and opposition were about equal for more tourism related development or retail.
- There was more support for new development to be located within the settlement boundary than outside it, and frontage development or cul de sacs were supported more than new estates.
- There was no clear consensus on the number of new dwellings that should be provided with roughly equal support for “up to 5”. “5-10” and “over 10), but there was a very clear preference for development to be in the form of 1-2 dwellings in a particular location rather than large scale development.
- There was a clear view that there was a need for semi-detached and terraced houses, but not for detached houses and bungalows or flats. Also 2-3 bedroom properties were preferred to four bedroom or one bedroom properties and starter homes and social housing were favoured.
- The use of traditional design using local materials was strongly favoured, as were small to medium sized gardens.

4.3. The response to consultation on the draft policies showed generally strong support for the policies. There were however several specific issues which were raised and have been addressed in the draft plan.

- There should be more emphasis on new housing meeting the needs of the aging population;
- Parking is a particular issue in the village, particularly during holiday periods when the needs of visitors and employees exceed the parking available at the village hall and pubs;
- Some responses felt that there should be more encouragement for tourism, others expressed concern at the number of holiday lets;
- It was felt that policies should make it clear that additions and improvements to village facilities should be supported.

5. Strategic Context and Development in Thornham

5.1. One of the statutory requirements for a neighbourhood plan is “general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan”. The development plan relating to Thornham is:

- The King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011
- The King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Site allocations and Development Management Policies adopted in September 2016

- 5.2. Both these documents set out proposals for development up to 2026. The Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will guide development up to 2036 and this Neighbourhood Plan also has this timescale. While a neighbourhood plan is not required to conform to the policies of an emerging plan, as they are subject to change, it should take account of the evidence which is informing it. The Parish Council has maintained a continuing dialogue with officers of the Borough Council to ensure that the strategic context is understood and that the Plan has regard to it.
- 5.3. Thornham is identified as a Rural Village within the settlement hierarchy defined in Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy. The policy for Rural Villages is:
“Limited minor development will be permitted which meets the needs of settlements and helps to sustain existing services in accordance with Policy CS06 Development in Rural Areas”.
- 5.4. Policy CS06 aims to focus most development in key rural service centres. In Rural Villages it aims to provide for *“more modest levels of development, as detailed in policy CS09 to meet the local needs and maintain the vitality of these communities where this can be achieved in a sustainable manner particularly with regard to accessibility to housing, employment services and markets without detriment to the character of the surrounding area or landscape.”*
- 5.5. Policy CS09 Housing Distribution indicates that in the 34 Rural Villages a total of at least 1280 new dwellings will be provided between 2011 and 2026 including the allocation of new sites to accommodate 215 dwellings.
- 5.6. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) Document states in relation to Thornham that:
“The environmental, heritage and highways constraints limit the potential for development in this village. All sites previously considered received objections from Norfolk County Council (highways authority), Natural England, English Heritage and the Norfolk Coast (AONB) Partnership. Therefore no allocations for development have been made in Thornham.”⁴
- 5.7. The SADMP defines the development boundary and policy DM2 provides for development within the development boundary where it is consistent with other Local Plan policies.
- 5.8. The Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2016-2036 and a draft plan was published for consultation in March 2019. While the Neighbourhood Plan is not required to be in conformity with the emerging plan as it is subject to change, it is appropriate to have regard to the emerging policies, particularly if they point to any change in strategy and to consider the evidence of the need for development.
- 5.9. The consultative draft plan identifies a need for 12,765 dwellings of which 11,080 can be provided on sites already permitted or allocated, leaving a need for allocations to accommodate 1685 dwellings. It proposes allocations of 1376 dwellings and anticipates sites to accommodate a further 543 dwellings being identified in neighbourhood plans.

⁴ Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2016 p 364

However, the strategy is to focus most development in the rural area in the Growth Key Rural Service Centres and the other Key Rural Service Centres and all the sites to be identified through neighbourhood plans are expected to be in these villages. Thornham remains in the category of Rural Village and the Borough Council does not envisage making any allocations in the emerging Local Plan or require any allocations in the neighbourhood plan.⁵ The Borough Council has indicated that there is therefore no indicative requirement for new dwellings in Thornham during the plan period.

- 5.10. It remains open to the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate land for housing development if it is considered necessary or desirable. However, there has been a steady rate of development of individual dwellings or small groups of dwellings on infill sites in the village and there is potential for this to continue. Map 8 and the schedule in Appendix 2 show sites where planning permission has been granted for new or replacement houses since 2011. Up to the beginning of 2020 40 new dwellings had been built, which allowing for dwellings lost to enable these developments provided a net gain of 29 dwellings, an average of 2.9 per year. Planning permissions still not implemented at beginning of 2020 provide for a further 12 dwellings giving a total net increase of 41 since 2011. In view of the steady rate of new development on infill sites, the sensitivity of the environment of Thornham and the lack of support for substantial new development expressed in consultation, the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any specific sites for residential development.

⁵ Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Development Plan Review, Consultation Draft March 2019 section 14.20.

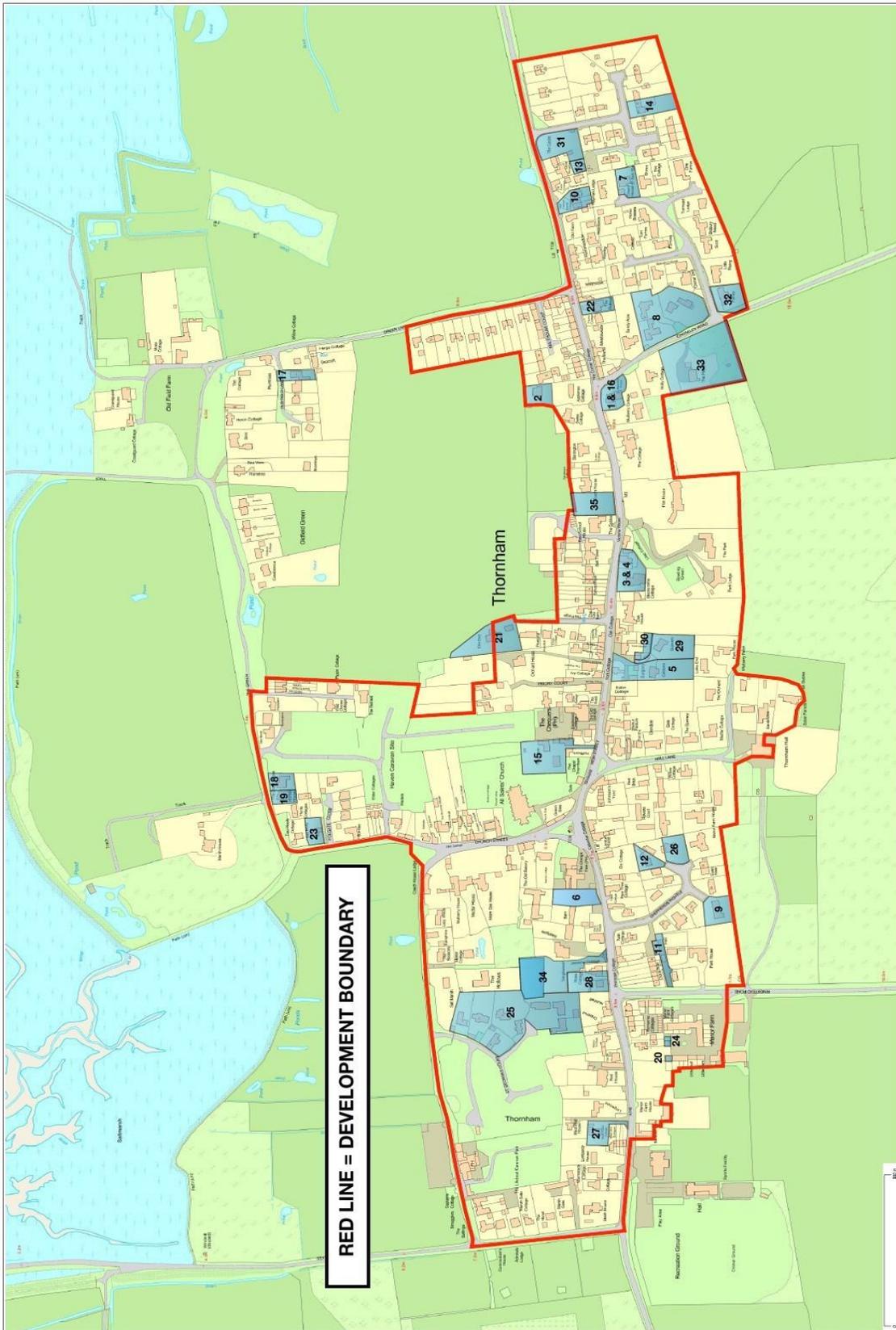
Map 8: Development Boundary

Key:

 Planning permissions Granted in the relevant period assumed to be (2011-2020)

Thornham CP

ParishOnline



RED LINE = DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY

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6. Vision and Objectives

6.1. Vision

The vision for Thornham which has guided the preparation of the Plan has been developed having regard to the views expressed by the community in response to the initial consultation.

Thornham is a special place because of its rural heritage, its coastal location within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the international significance of the surrounding natural environment. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to ensure that Thornham moves towards 2036 by evolution rather than revolution, maintaining its identity and integrity as a village whilst embracing opportunities to improve facilities, village life and the local economy.

The Neighbourhood Plan will guide planning-related decision-making, giving due weight to the community's vision for the future of the village, requiring any new housing development to be small in scale, incremental, designed to meet the needs of people of all ages, and where possible affordable to permanent residents. The Plan will thus help to maintain and enhance the vitality of the community, whilst protecting the distinctive and sensitive character of the village and its environment.

6.2. Objectives

The objectives which follow have been formulated to indicate how the vision is intended to be realised and the policies which follow have been derived from them.

Housing –

- To provide for new housing development at a similar rate to that in recent years to meet the identified preference for relatively low-cost open-market and affordable housing*
- To meet the needs of the relatively large proportion of elderly people in the village
- For any new housing to be in a form which respects the existing character of the village and avoids large-scale estate development.

Natural environment – To protect the unique and internationally important character of the landscape and habitats of the Parish and to respond positively to the challenge of global warming and the risk of coastal flooding.

Built environment – To protect the architectural heritage and open spaces in the village and ensure that new development contributes positively to the village's character in terms of the existing scale, location, design and layout.

Services – To retain and where possible improve the services and facilities available to the community.

Economy – To recognise sustainable tourism as the mainstay of the local economy and support the establishment of new businesses that are compatible with the sensitive character of the village and its surroundings.

Infrastructure – To ensure that the infrastructure serving the community has the capacity to support those living there and local businesses.

* Affordable housing includes: a) Affordable housing for rent, b) Starter Homes, c) Discounted market sales housing and d) Other affordable routes to home ownership. All these terms are defined in more detail in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Policies

7.1. Design principles for new development

7.1.1. Thornham has a distinctive character, which derives from its location between the coast and the chalk upland to the south and a mix of local building materials associated with this part of Norfolk. Roofs are predominantly red clay pantiles and there are three local stones. “Clunch” is the predominant material and is particularly characteristic of a small group of villages in North-West Norfolk. It is a soft almost white chalk stone. The white buildings with red roofs contribute greatly to local distinctiveness. Flint, either knapped or rounded is also associated with the chalk escarpment but is more widely used in Norfolk with the rounded flint particularly characteristic of coastal villages further east. Carrstone is an iron rich sandstone which lies below the chalk layer and is more predominant to the west and south of Thornham. All three are typically framed by redbrick quoins which provide a unifying feature. The use of these materials, or more modern materials which respect them will reinforce the character of the village.

7.1.2. Most development in Thornham is two-storey, but there are a number of substantial three storey buildings and bungalows. The height of new buildings should reflect both neighbouring buildings and the landscape setting.

7.1.3. The form of development is varied with predominantly linear development along the main road through the village, but there are also several examples of backland development and cul-de sacs.

Policy D1: Design principles for new development

Proposals will be supported where they demonstrate a high design quality. In order to achieve this development should:

- a) use a locally inspired range of materials (such as Clunch, flint or carrstone in association with red brick and red clay pantiles) to reinforce the characteristic colour palette of the village; and**

- b) be guided by the proportions, height and plot orientation of the existing dwellings; and**
- c) use designs that draw upon local character in terms of style to ensure new development enhances the distinctiveness and quality of the Parish as a whole; and**
- d) demonstrate that buildings, landscaping and planting will create well defined streets and attractive green spaces that respond to the existing settlement boundaries and buildings in terms of enclosure and definition of streets and spaces; and**
- e) demonstrate a layout that maximises opportunities to integrate new development with the existing settlement pattern and blend into the wider landscape; and**
- f) Conform to Secured by Design principles; and**
- g) Take advantage of opportunities to improve connectivity within the village for pedestrians and cyclists.**

7.2. Housing

Amount of new housing

- 7.2.1. Paragraph 5.10 demonstrated that there has been a steady and ongoing rate of infill and windfall development providing a net increase of 3-4 dwellings per year. While this may not be maintained throughout the plan period, there is clearly potential for further infill development and the Borough Council has chosen not to define a specific requirement for new housing in Thornham as it is not a chosen growth location and is subject to significant environmental constraints.

The Location of new housing development.

- 7.2.2. The development boundary for Thornham is defined in the Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document adopted by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council in 2016 and is shown on Map 8 on page 19. It has been reviewed and is considered to be appropriate for the neighbourhood plan because there is no need to change or extend it as there is no requirement for land to be allocated for housing development. Thornham lies within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and any extension of the development boundary could result in a harmful impact on the landscape.
- 7.2.3. An additional priority is to maintain the separate identity of Thornham. The village has a linear settlement pattern along the A149 and the villages along the coast are quite closely spaced. Any extension of the development boundary east or west along the main road would erode the gaps of about 1km between Thornham and the Drove Orchards development in the Parish of Holme-Next-The -Sea to the west and Titchwell to the east.
- 7.2.4. Within the development boundary it is important that new development complements the character of the existing village. The village has a fairly spacious character and the gardens of houses are often important to their setting and contribute to the street scene. Thus,

while some infilling involving existing gardens is not precluded, it should not result in a cramped or urbanised form of development. The village is also characterised by small scale incremental development rather than large scale estate development which would be inconsistent with its distinctive character. The response to the questionnaire showed strong support for any residential development to be in developments of 10 dwellings or less.

Policy H1: Housing development within the development boundary

Within the development boundary of Thornham shown on Map 8 proposals for infill development will be supported where:

- a) The proposed development is of a scale, density, layout and design that is compatible with the character and appearance of the part of Thornham in which it would be located and does not result in a cramped or urbanised form of development; and**
- b) It would not cause the loss of, or damage to, any open space which is important to the character of Thornham; and**
- c) Boundary walls, hedges and significant trees that make an important contribution to the character of the village are retained and complemented by appropriate hard and soft landscaping.**
- d) It would have a layout, access and parking provision appropriate to the site and its surroundings; and**
- e) It is in accordance with the other policies in this plan.**

Where one or more of these criteria are not met proposals will only be permitted where the public benefit clearly outweighs the harm.

Housing development outside the development boundary

- 7.2.5. House prices in Thornham are very high, making it very difficult for young people from the village or people working in the area to afford housing. Fully comparable evidence is difficult to find but the following figures clearly demonstrate the extent to which house prices in Thornham are prohibitive for many people:
- Average house price in England January 2019 £244,567 (UK House price index)
 - Average house price in King's Lynn and West Norfolk January 2019 £215,883 (UK House Price index)
 - Average price of houses sold in Thornham in 12 months to March 2019 £515,800 (Zoopla)
- 7.2.6. The scale of new development envisaged within the settlement boundary means that there is no guarantee that affordable housing will be delivered as part of proposals for residential development as new on-site development of affordable housing can only be required on developments of more than 10 dwellings. Even then there can be no guarantee that it will

meet the needs of Thornham as any affordable housing will be allocated in accordance with the Borough Council's allocation policy.

- 7.2.7. If there is a clearly identified need in Thornham, the provision of some affordable housing on sites adjacent to the settlement boundary where permission would otherwise not be granted may well be justified. The need would have to be demonstrated at the time, possibly through a local housing needs survey and there is the potential for the Parish Council to work with a housing association to identify need and bring forward a suitable development. The Borough Council may request that any local needs study should include the neighbouring parishes of Titchwell and Chosely which are unlikely to be able to support such a development on their own. On exception site developments such as this it is possible to ensure that people with a local connection will receive priority in the allocation of the dwellings.
- 7.2.8 The form of dwellings would be determined by the needs assessment, but it is anticipated that there is a particular need for housing which would enable those who work in the village in the services which support the local economy to work in the village and for housing to accommodate the needs of the large and increasing proportion of elderly people.
- 7.2.9 Any development outside the settlement boundary has the potential to have a harmful impact on the AONB and the heritage coast. In order to minimise this any development should not exceed 15 dwellings. This limit has been chosen on the basis of discussions with the Borough Council and is considered to be a reasonable balance between being large enough to accommodate identified local need and not so large that it represents a major extension to the village. Although it exceeds the definition of major development in the NPPF⁶, the NPPF also offers some discretion to decision makers as to what constitutes major development in an AONB⁷. This scale of development is large enough to make a significant contribution to the supply of affordable housing, without having a major landscape impact.
- 7.2.10 Also in accordance with the guidance in the NPPF⁸ a small element of market housing would be considered within the developments envisaged in Policy H2 where it is necessary to make the development viable. This has the potential to provide a wider choice of tenure to meet the needs of the elderly and younger working age people. The market limit is set at a maximum of 25% of the total number of dwellings, rounded down to the nearest dwelling, to ensure that exception sites fulfil their primary purpose of providing affordable housing. Any market housing would only be permitted where it was demonstrated to be necessary to make the development viable.

⁶ NPPF Glossary page 68 and paragraphs 172 and 173

⁷ NPPF paragraph 172 footnote 55

⁸ NPPF paragraph 77

Policy H2: Rural Exception Sites

Outside the development boundary new development will only be permitted in accordance with national and Local Plan policies for development in the countryside. Small-scale developments that provide affordable social rented and/or shared-ownership housing, and which include a proportion of market homes where essential to the delivery of affordable units without grant funding, will be supported where the development meets all the following criteria:

- a) The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary;**
- b) The need for the development has been clearly demonstrated by a local assessment of housing need;**
- c) The houses provided are predominantly 1-2 bedroom, with a mix designed to meet the needs of younger working age people, or be capable of meeting the needs of elderly people or being adapted to do so;**
- d) The development would not be intrusive or detract from the distinctive qualities of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- e) The development would not erode the gap between Thornham and the neighbouring settlements of Holme-Next-The Sea and Titchwell;**
- f) The development would not be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring residents;**
- g) The development is compatible with the character and appearance of the part of Thornham in which it is located;**
- h) The development is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.**

To ensure that priority in the allocation of these dwellings will be given to people who can demonstrate a local connection, planning permissions for rural exception sites will be subject to a planning obligation that will require that dwellings are allocated in accordance with the following priorities:

- 1. Existing residents of Thornham who have lived in the village for more than 12 months;**
- 2. Past residents of Thornham who have lived in the village for a minimum period of 5 years and who moved away within the last 3 years because no suitable accommodation was available;**
- 3. People who need to live in Thornham because of their permanent employment or offer of permanent employment;**
- 4. People who are not resident in Thornham who need to live near family members resident in the village;**
- 5. Existing residents of the neighbouring villages of Holme-next-the-Sea, Titchwell, Chosely and Ringstead;**
- 6. Existing residents of the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who have lived in the Borough for a period of 5 years or more.**

- 7.2.11. There is a substantial mismatch between the size of dwellings in Thornham and the size of households. In 2011 85% of households in Thornham consisted of one or two people, compared with 64% in England as a whole. At the same time whereas 74% of houses had three or more bedrooms, compared with 60% in England as a whole.⁹ It is evident that the housing stock is under-occupied in comparison with the national picture.
- 7.2.12. Table 5 of Appendix 1 shows that 60% of households occupy dwellings with two or more bedrooms more than they need and over 90% of households have one or more bedrooms more than they need. These are exceptionally high figures by comparison with the country as a whole. Taken with the age structure of the village shown in Table 1 of Appendix 1, showing that 38% of the population is over 65 compared with 23% for the borough and only 16% in England as a whole, suggest that there is substantial potential need for smaller accommodation to facilitate downsizing for elderly people.
- 7.2.13. The results of the Parish questionnaire reflected this mismatch. While they do not show support for large scale development, the only categories where the numbers favouring at least some new development exceeded those who did not want any were two and three-bedroom houses and bungalows, social rented housing, shared ownership housing and starter homes. In terms of the form of development there was greatest support for the provision of semi-detached or terraced properties and bungalows.
- 7.2.14. There was also support in the consultation on draft policies for small scale housing suitable for the elderly. This is backed up by the age structure of the population and population forecasts. Table 1 of Appendix 1 shows that the proportion of the population that is elderly in Thornham is higher than in the Borough and much higher than the national figure and Appendix 1b looks more closely at the trend towards an older age structure. Moreover, the most elderly age groups are forecast to increase most rapidly. Forecasts are only available at District level but in BCKLWN the following increase are forecast between 2013 and 2036:
- 75-84 53.7%
 - 85-89 98.9%
 - 90+ 141.7%
- 7.2.15. Applying these increases to the 2011 population of Thornham can only give an indicative picture and the rates of increase may be even greater in Thornham given the already elderly structure of the population. However if these rates are applied to Thornham they suggest the following that well over 50% of the population of the village will be over 65 by 2036 compared to 37% in 2011.
- 7.2.16. It is inevitable that some of these more elderly people will be frail and with needs for adaptations to dwellings to enable them to live independently and therefore any new houses should take account of the needs of the elderly. While it is not possible for neighbourhood plans to require specific space and mobility standards, recent changes to Planning Practice Guidance draw attention to the need to provide housing to meet the needs of the elderly. This is particularly important in communities where those in older age groups are over-represented to the extent they are in Thornham. Developers are therefore

⁹ 2011 Census

encouraged to build houses to the M2 – “Accessible Housing” - standard or M3 – “Wheelchair Housing” of the 2015 Building Regulations. There was also support in the consultation on draft policies for small scale housing suitable for the elderly.

7.2.17. While there is a clear need to provide for the housing needs of the aging population there is also a need to attempt to make it easier for young people who wish to work in the village to live there. The public houses and the deli employ significant numbers of young people who may well have to travel some distance to get to the village because the predominance of relatively large houses coupled with high house prices at present make it very difficult for those on relatively low incomes to find housing in the village. Meeting this need within the village would contribute to its long-term sustainability as a community. This need should influence the size of houses in any development under Policy H2, but should also be taken into account in any infill development within the development boundary.

7.2.18. The evidence therefore clearly indicates a strong case for any new housing development to consist primarily of 2-3 bedroom dwellings and for new housing to take particular account of the need for housing suitable for the elderly and younger people of working age because of:

- The existing mismatch between the predominance of small households and large dwellings in Thornham;
- The elderly age structure which indicates a need for property to enable people to downsize into smaller properties;
- The need to make it easier for younger working age people to live in the village;
- The tendency in recent years for relatively small dwellings to be replaced by or converted to large dwellings;
- The strong preference for more smaller houses expressed in consultation.

7.2.19. The policies of the Plan cover the period up to 2036 and while the assessment above reflects the current analysis it is important that any more up to date evidence of the need for housing is taken into account.

Policy H3: Size of dwellings

New housing developments that consist primarily of 2-3 bedroom dwellings and that take particular account of the need for housing the elderly and younger people of working age will be supported.

Holiday homes and holiday lets

7.2.20. Census data shows that in 2011 51% of the dwellings in Thornham had no permanent residents and were therefore either vacant or used as second homes or holiday lets (Appendix 1 Table 2). This clearly has a profound effect on the character of the village in that it limits the number of permanent residents and the demand for facilities such as

schools or shops. However, at the same time it generates substantial economic activity in that second homes and holiday lets bring visitors who support local services such as pubs and restaurants and create further employment in such activities as, cleaning and letting.

- 7.2.21. The results of the questionnaire showed a very strong view that there is not a need for more second homes or holiday lets in the village. However, there is little power to control the number of second homes and holiday lets as the change of use of an existing dwelling to these uses is not subject to planning control. Although there is concern about the number of second homes, many existing residents were previously second homeowners. It is not unusual in many villages along the north coast of Norfolk, for people to acquire second homes during their working life, spend an increasing amount of time in them as they move towards retirement and often become permanent residents in due course. These people often become active in community life.
- 7.2.22. The relationship between second homes, holiday lets and the character and function of the village is thus complex and there are clearly benefits as well as disadvantages which flow from the number of these properties. Nevertheless, it is evident that with over 50% of properties without a permanent resident, and the number is more likely to have increased than decreased since 2011, there is a risk that the proportion of homes that are not permanently occupied will have a harmful effect on the character of the village.
- 7.2.23. The working party has given careful consideration to the possibility of introducing a policy which would require that all new dwellings are occupied by permanent residents. Such a policy was first introduced in the neighbourhood plan for St Ives in Cornwall where the proportion of second home is only about 25%, but where the scale of new development envisaged is significantly larger than in Thornham. Similar policies have since been introduced in other places, some of which are villages of a similar size to Thornham (eg Crantock in Cornwall). More locally such policies are proposed in neighbourhood plans yet to be adopted in Sedgeford and Snettisham. As the scale of new development envisaged in Thornham is limited, such a policy could only have a marginal effect. The policy would not apply to existing development and it is unclear whether the effect on the price of new housing would be sufficient to make it affordable but it could ensure that any new development is available to meet the needs of potential permanent residents, and the requirement for permanent occupation could be transferred to subsequent owners.
- 7.2.24. However, the effects of such a policy will only become clear over time. While the St Ives policy has survived legal challenges, the longer- term consequences of such policies are not yet known. There could be consequences for the local housing market. While it could result in some houses being provided at a lower cost, concerns over the saleability of such dwellings may deter the provision of any new houses because of the more limited market for them. There are many scenarios which could affect the implications of such a policy, and it could have unintended consequences. For example, A house may have been purchased with the intention that it will be permanently occupied. The occupier may then have a change of circumstances whereby they cannot live in it permanently, such as a requirement to work away for a period. They may not wish to sell but would be unable to comply with the occupancy requirements.

- 7.2.25. There were different views within the working party on the desirability of a policy to prevent new houses being used as second homes or holiday lets in Thornham but the majority view was against the introduction of such a policy and it was concluded on balance that the effects of the policies in St Ives and other places should be monitored.

Replacement dwellings

- 7.2.26. In recent years several of the new houses in Thornham have taken the form of replacement dwellings. Many of the outstanding permissions also involve the demolition of an existing property and its replacement by a much larger dwelling or more than one dwelling. In principle there is no objection to this form of development and where a small cottage is replaced, some increase in floorspace to meet modern living standards is to be expected. However, if relatively small dwellings are replaced by very large ones the stock of smaller dwellings will be further eroded. It is also important that replacement dwellings do not give rise to an overcrowded or urbanised street scene which would detract from the character of the village. The character of Thornham, particularly in the heart of the village is that there is a juxtaposition of fairly small cottages and much larger dwellings.

The replacement of small dwellings with larger ones is likely to erode the spaces between dwellings and undermine the essential character of the village. While some increase in the floorspace of replacement dwellings is likely to be necessary to provide living space which meets current standards, the policy is intended to prevent the replacement of small dwellings by larger ones on a speculative basis. Very large replacement dwellings will reduce the stock of smaller dwellings and while each case will need to be considered on its merits, a replacement dwelling that has a floorspace more than about 40% bigger than the original dwelling would represent a dwelling of a different scale. This figure will be used as a guide to the appropriateness of the proposal.

Policy H4 Replacement dwellings

Within the development boundary the loss of small dwellings will only be supported where the replacement dwelling is designed to be appropriate to the character of its site and surroundings, especially in terms of its proportions on site, the gap between frontages and the criteria in policies D1 and H1.

Extensions to existing dwellings

- 7.2.27. The justification for policy H5 relates both to the quality of the built environment and to the evidence of housing need. Thornham benefits from a relatively spacious pattern of development and very few dwellings have a plot coverage, taken together with existing outbuildings of more than 40%. The spaces between dwellings also help to retain the important relationship with the surrounding countryside. The expansion of existing

dwelling could undermine this and over time lead to a more intense and urban character. This would undermine local distinctiveness and the important relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside. It is therefore important to ensure that new extensions are in proportion to the size of the original dwelling and do not excessively erode the spaces between dwellings.

- 7.2.28. There is also a strong case for limiting the scale of extensions to existing dwellings because of the evidence that there is already an over-representation of larger dwellings in relation to the size of households. The progressive expansion of existing dwellings would tend to further skew the housing mix towards larger dwellings and reduce the already limited availability of relatively small dwellings. The policy represents a balance between the understandable desire of residents to expand their homes to meet their needs, which may include adaptation to meet the needs of the elderly, and the desirability of ensuring that a supply of relatively small dwellings is retained.

Policy H5: Residential extensions

Extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted where they:

- **Respect the character of the original dwelling and neighbouring development; and**
- **Do not reduce the gaps between existing dwellings in a way which leads to a cramped appearance or undermines the rural character of the village; and**
- **Are subordinate to the original dwelling taking into account any existing outbuildings and garages**

7.3. Business, employment and tourism

Existing and New Businesses

- 7.3.1. Most businesses in Thornham are related to agriculture, tourism or local services, building and maintenance. There are three public houses: The Lifeboat, the Orange Tree and The Chequers. All of these are important to the local economy in providing employment and attracting business from outside the village as well as providing a facility for local residents. The Thornham Deli is the only shop in the village and has a café with the facilities to eat inside or outside. It has a relatively small car park and at busy times customers make use of the adjoining village hall car park. Policy EMP 1 is designed to facilitate appropriate development to maintain the viability of these businesses and the establishment of new businesses within the development boundary which are compatible with the character of the village. Proposals for business development outside the development boundary will be determined in accordance with the part of Core Strategy Policy CS10 relating to business exception sites, or a successor policy in the emerging Local Plan.

Policy EMP 1 Existing and new businesses

Development necessary for the maintenance or expansion of existing businesses, or the establishment of new businesses will be permitted within or adjacent to the development boundary where it:

- a) Does not result in a scale of development or an intensity of use that is incompatible with the site and its surroundings; and**
- b) Is not prominent or intrusive in the AONB;**
- c) Is consistent in appearance with the character of any existing buildings on the site and those in the immediate neighbourhood; and**
- d) Will not result in unacceptable harm in terms of noise and disturbance, odours or emissions to the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring or nearby dwellings; and**
- e) There is adequate off-street parking for employees, customers, deliveries and any vehicles associated with the business and the additional traffic generated is not harmful to road safety or the free flow of traffic.**

Home working

7.3.2. Working from home is an increasingly popular and sustainable mode of working. Digital technology permits worldwide communication providing high speed broadband is available and allows people to work from home and travel much less than if they travel to work daily. In locations such as Thornham, which is a very attractive location, but fairly remote from business centres, this is particularly valuable and means that houses acquired as second homes are likely to be lived in for a greater proportion of the year. Census evidence contained in Table 11 of Appendix 1 indicates that in 2011 just over 30% of those in employment worked mainly from home, almost three times the proportion nationally and in the borough as a whole. In many cases planning permission is unlikely to be needed to work from home as the use of an office within the home is ancillary to the use as dwelling. However, extensions to dwellings to facilitate home working, small workshops or studios may be necessary. In some instances working from home may generate traffic from customers or deliveries and planning permission for a change to a mixed residential and business use may be required.

Policy EMP 2: Working from home

Development required to facilitate working from home will be supported when:

- a) It is consistent with the character of the dwelling in terms of form and character; and**
- b) It does not result in overcrowding of the site; and**
- c) It is not harmful to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings; and**
- d) There is adequate access and on-site parking to accommodate any traffic movements generated by the business without harm to road safety.**

Agriculture

7.3.3. While most agriculture in Thornham is arable, intensive farming in the form of intensive chicken rearing is not unusual in Norfolk and there have been recent developments of this sort in nearby parishes. The open character of the landscape around Thornham means that such activities could have a significant harmful effect, on the landscape of the AONB. There is also a risk of the smell associated with such uses causing harm to the living conditions of the residents of nearby houses.

Policy EMP 3: Intensive agricultural units

Development proposals for the erection of buildings to accommodate intensive livestock or poultry production or intensive packaging facilities will only be permitted where they can clearly demonstrate that:

- a) they will not be intrusive in the landscape of the AONB; and**
- b) they will not result in harm to the living conditions of local residents as a result of smell, noise or risks to highway safety; and**
- c) They will not result in harm to the Ramsar site, Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area.**

Tourism

7.3.4. Most of the economic activity in Thornham relates to agriculture and tourism. In the case of tourism there is a delicate balance between the benefits of tourism, in the form of employment creation, income generation and the viability of services for local people on one hand, and the sensitivity of the natural and built environment which makes the area attractive to tourists. There are two static caravan sites in Thornham which are popular and well used. Many of the caravan owners have been coming to Thornham for several years and get involved in the life of the village.

7.3.5. The Neighbourhood Plan supports development which will help to maintain or increase the number of visitors to the area, providing it can demonstrate that it will not cause harm to the landscape, the important habitats which are recognised through the designation of much of the northern part of the parish as European Sites or lead to highway congestion or harm to road safety.

Policy EMP 4: Tourism related development

Development proposals which will provide new or expanded accommodation, facilities or attractions for visitors will be required to demonstrate that:

- a) They sympathetic to the distinctive character of Thornham and the Area of Outstanding Natural beauty;**
- b) They are not intrusive in the landscape or fail to conserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area;**
- c) They are not within the internationally important Ramsar site, Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area, and will not result in significant adverse effects as a result of increased visitor pressure. Proposals which are likely to divert visitor pressure away from these areas are particularly welcome.**
- d) They will not generate a level of traffic within the village that would cause unacceptable congestion, access to them does not result in a serious risk to road safety and they make adequate provision for off street parking to meet**

Tourism related parking

7.3.6. Tourism related activity results in a complex and inter-related set of needs for car parking in Thornham. The Orange Tree and Chequers public houses near the centre of the village generate demand for parking for both customers and employees which exceeds the capacity of their car parks at busy times. The Thornham Deli has its own small car park but this is inadequate at busy times. Thornham Village Hall has a substantial car parking area which is used by overflow parking from the Deli, but there is potential for conflict between this and the use of the Village Hall itself. In addition, there is demand for parking for users of the Norfolk Coastal Long Distance Footpath which passes through Thornham. The only access to Thornham Harbour is along Staithe Lane. This is a single track narrow road which is also a popular walking route connecting to the Norfolk Coastal Path. There is some parking provision at Thornham Harbour, but there are no other visitor facilities or beach and much of the traffic that goes down the lane is simply investigating what is there and having got to the staithe simply turns round and comes back. In summer months the amount of traffic doing this can be substantial and it greatly detracts from the experience of pedestrians using the road.

7.3.7. At present these conflicting demands are manageable at most times, but the demand for parking seems to be continuously increasing and is likely to result in excessive parking on the road and a lack of spaces elsewhere before long. This is an issue which will need to be investigated in more detail by the Parish Council in consultation with the businesses and organisations which are generating the demand. Clearly the provision of additional parking could well raise environmental issues in terms of visual impact and highway safety concerns associated with access to the A149. However, it could also reduce dangerous and unsightly on street parking and reduce pedestrian/ vehicular conflict along Staithe Lane.

Policy EMP 5: New parking provision

The provision of additional car parking space close to the A149 will be supported where:

- a) it is suitably located to meet the demand for parking related to tourism; and**
- b) it enhances access to village facilities; and**
- c) it does not draw additional traffic through the village; and**
- d) access arrangements to the A149 and facilities for pedestrians meet the requirements of the highways authority; and**
- e) it is appropriately landscaped to minimise any harmful impact on the AONB and the Conservation Area.**

7.4 Community facilities

7.4.1. Thornham is a small village but, partly because of the importance of tourism in the area, has good facilities for a village of its size. There are three public houses: The Lifeboat, The Orange Tree and The Chequers, and the Thornham Deli is a specialist food shop and café. Also, the Village Hall is a modern well-equipped and well-used facility with a large playing field and tennis courts next to it. There is no longer a school or a post office in the village.¹⁰

7.4.2. It is important for the vitality of the village that these facilities are retained and where possible improved. New community facilities would also be welcomed. The Thornham Village Hall and Recreation Ground lie outside the development boundary. They are very important facilities for the village and also offer the potential for the provision for improved facilities in the future. The Thornham Village Hall Committee has several aspirations for the future and, while for financial or other reasons it may not be possible to realise all of them, it would be consistent with the Vision and Objectives of the Plan for such improvements to be possible providing that they do not have harmful environmental effects. Possible facilities include a cricket pavilion, a second tennis court, a basketball court and improved parking provision.

¹⁰ The scale of maps 9,10 and 11 does not correspond to the ratio scale shown on them as the size of the maps has been adjusted to fit the page.

Map 9 Community Facilities



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Policy C1 - Community Facilities

◆ Community facilities



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Policy C1: New and existing community facilities

Proposals for the establishment of new community facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, which may include new or improved facilities at the recreation ground and village hall will be supported where:

- a) The facilities enhance the quality of life of local residents including children, people with disabilities and the elderly;
- b) The proposal is appropriate in its location, scale and design and that it would not be detrimental to the character of the landscape of the AONB or the built environment of the village;
- c) The amenities of neighbouring residents will not be adversely affected by the nature of the use, noise or traffic generated;
- d) There will not be an unacceptable impact on the local road network in terms of highway safety or the free flow of traffic;

- e) **The proposal includes appropriate car parking facilities to ensure that the proposal does not result in a substantial increase in on-street parking.**

Development proposals which would result in the loss of all or part of any of the facilities listed below and shown on Map 9 will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) **the operation of the facility is no longer viable or necessary or**
- b) **the use will be replaced by another use which is a valuable community facility: or**
- c) **a replacement facility of equal size and quality will be provided in an accessible location:**
 - 1. **Thornham Village Hall**
 - 2. **The playing fields and tennis courts**
 - 3. **The Thornham Deli**
 - 4. **The Lifeboat Inn**
 - 5. **The Orange Tree Public House**
 - 6. **The Chequers Public House**
 - 7. **All Saints Church**
 - 8. **The former Hair Factory**

7.5 Important views and Local Green Spaces

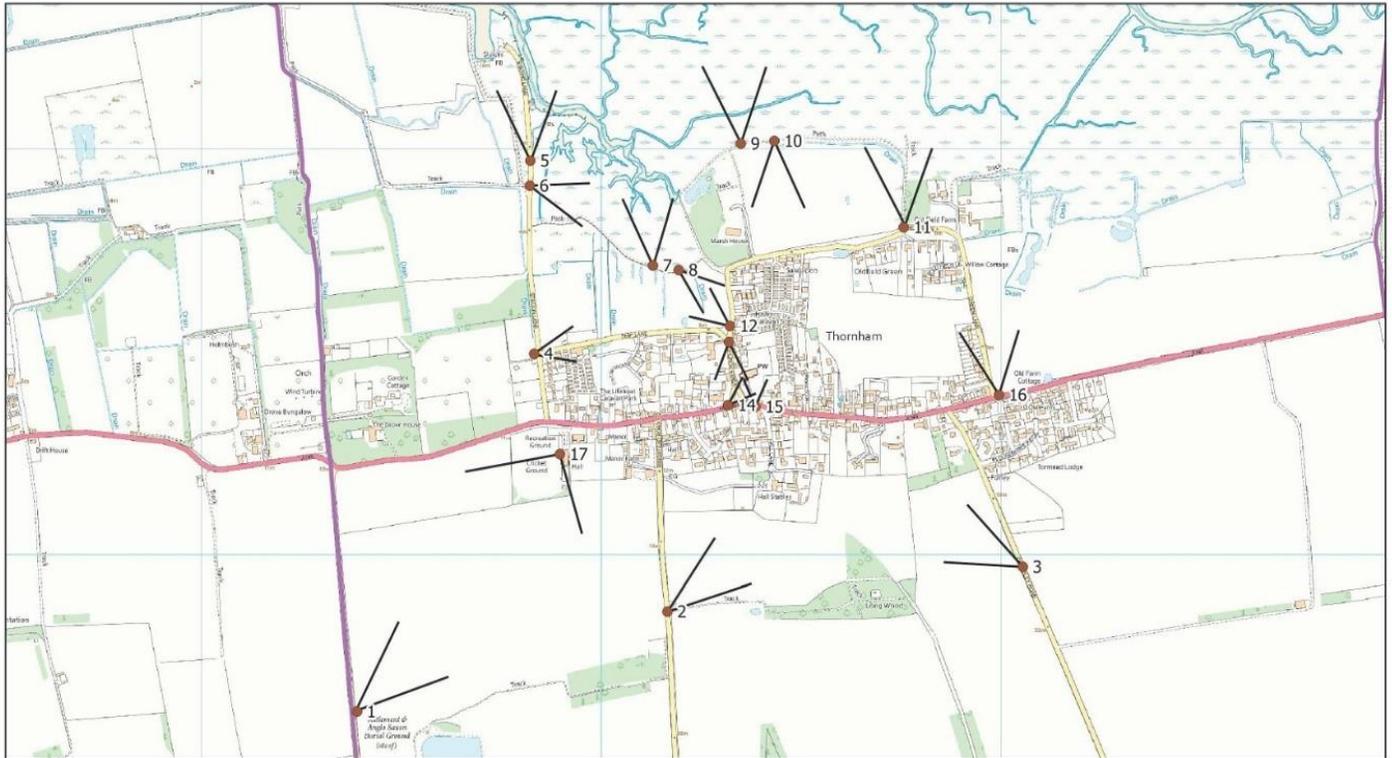
Views

- 7.5.1. The landscape around Thornham is an essential part of its character. Situated between extensive salt marshes and dunes leading to the sea to the north and rising chalk downland to the south, Thornham has much in common with other villages along the North Norfolk Coast. The extensive views over the village from the higher land and from the village across the marshland to the sea are part of what makes the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) special. The essential characteristics of the (AONB) are summarised in the extract from its Management Plan at Appendix 3. Development proposals should be prepared with reference to the detailed AONB Landscape Character Assessment <http://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/partnership/integrated-landscape-character/370> and
- 7.5.2. There are also a number of important views within the village. Some of these capture essential characteristics of the built environment and others offer views between buildings and along streets to the countryside beyond, capturing the important relationship between the village and its surroundings. All these views are described and illustrated in Appendix 4.
- 7.5.3. It is important that any new development in the village takes account of these views. The location, scale proportions and materials of any development will need to be carefully designed to ensure that any impact is positive or at least neutral.

Policy L1: Important views

All new developments should take account of the AONB Landscape Character Assessment and East Marine Plan Policy SOC3 in relation to their impact on the views identified on Map 10¹¹.

Map 10 Thornham important views



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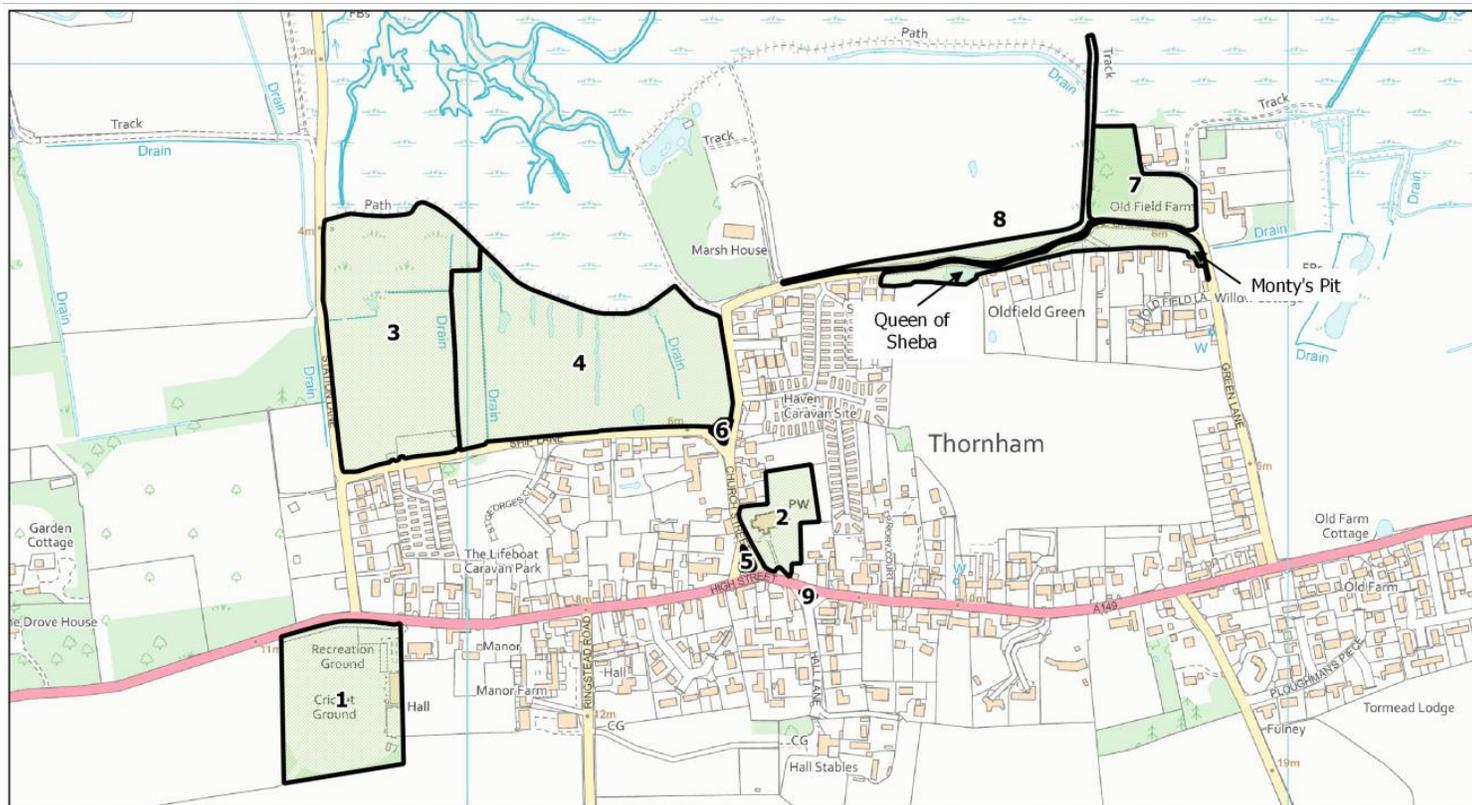
Local Green Spaces

- 7.5.4. Within the village the amount of green space is quite limited, because of the fairly compact form of development. However, there are a number of spaces that make a special contribution to the character of the village. Some of these are important because of their significance to the landscape, heritage and setting of the village, others as a recreational amenity and some for their biodiversity interest. The designation of these spaces as Local Green Spaces will offer strong protection of these spaces, which is capable of enduring beyond the life of this plan. All of these

¹¹ Map 10 is also available to view in Appendix 4 to a larger scale.

spaces are close to the village, within easy walking distance and have special qualities which make them defining parts of the character of the village. None of them are extensive areas of land. Appendix 5 contains a photograph of each of the spaces and describes why they are “demonstrably special” as required by the by the NPPF.

Map 11 Thornham Local Green Spaces



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Thornham Green Space



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Policy L2: Local Green Spaces

The green spaces listed below, shown on Map 11 and identified in Appendix 5 are designated as Local Green Spaces. Where development will only be permitted in very special circumstances:

1. The Playing Field
2. The churchyard
3. Meadow to the east of Staithe Lane
4. Meadows north of Ship Lane
5. Small green between Church Street and High Street

6. **Small green at the junction of Ship Lane and Church Street**
7. **Thornham Green and Oldfield Green and the ponds hedges and ditches along The Green north and south of the lane.**
8. **Shore Road from the junction with The Green at the southern end to the high water mark at northern end.**
9. **The small green at the junction of Hall Lane and High Street.**

Dark Skies

- 7.5.5. The protection of dark skies is a key element of the Vision of the Norfolk Coast Partnership for the AONB. "by 2036 ...the area will still be essentially unspoilt with a strong feeling of remoteness, peace and tranquillity, with wide skylscapes, seasclapes and dark night skies that show the richness and detail of constellations."
- 7.5.6. The NPPF also notes how good design can help to "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation".
- 7.5.7. Map 12 shows two separate clusters of relatively bright light close to the centre of the village in a predominantly dark area.
- 7.5.8. Although in many cases external lighting is permitted development, it is possible to influence external lighting associated with new development and the evidence of the benefits of sensitive lighting may influence the choices of others.

Policy L3: Dark skies

Development proposals where any external lighting is designed to minimise the extent of any light pollution that could be harmful to the dark skies which characterise this part of Norfolk will be supported, subject to conformity with other development plan policies

Map 12: Extract from CPRE Dark Skies Map



Heritage assets

- 7.6.1. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a comprehensive framework for the consideration of proposals which would affect heritage assets. It sets an approach which clearly balances the significance of any harm to a heritage asset against the benefits of any development. There is no need for the Neighbourhood Plan to add to this policy.
- 7.6.2. The Thornham Conservation Area was designated in 1988. The Borough Council prepared a Conservation Area Character Statement, (Appendix 6) but this only ever had draft status and was never adopted in policy. There is an opportunity in the neighbourhood plan to apply some of the analysis and guidance in the Character Statement to planning policy for the Conservation Area.
- 7.6.3. The Conservation Area in Thornham covers an unusually large proportion of the village. The map of the Conservation Area in the Conservation Area Character Statement shows that in addition to the many listed buildings over 90 other buildings in the Conservation Area are considered to be “important”. This, at the time the Statement was prepared amounted to 64% of the non-listed buildings, an unusually high proportion which demonstrates the high quality of the built environment within the Conservation Area and the importance of maintaining it. The listed buildings and the conservation area boundary are shown on Map and identified below. They are described in the Conservation Area Character Statement.

Grade 1

Church of All Saints – Church Street

Grade II*

Thornham Hall– Hall Lane

Grade II

- The Red House – High Street north
- Outbuilding north-west of Red House –
- High Street north
- Chestnut Cottage – High Street north Dairy Farmhouse – High Street north
- The Orange Tree – High Street north Telephone kiosk – Junction of High Street and Church Street
- The White House – Church Street east
- Methodist Chapel – High Street north
- Cottage west of Old Coach House – High Street northThe Chequers – High Street north
- County Primary School – High Street north
- Thornham Cottage and Ilex House – High Street south
- Eaton Cottage and cottage attached to west – High Street south
- Baytree Cottage - High Street south
- Stockhill House – High Street south
- Peartree Cottage and Trees Cottage – High Street south
- Primrose Cottage – High Street south



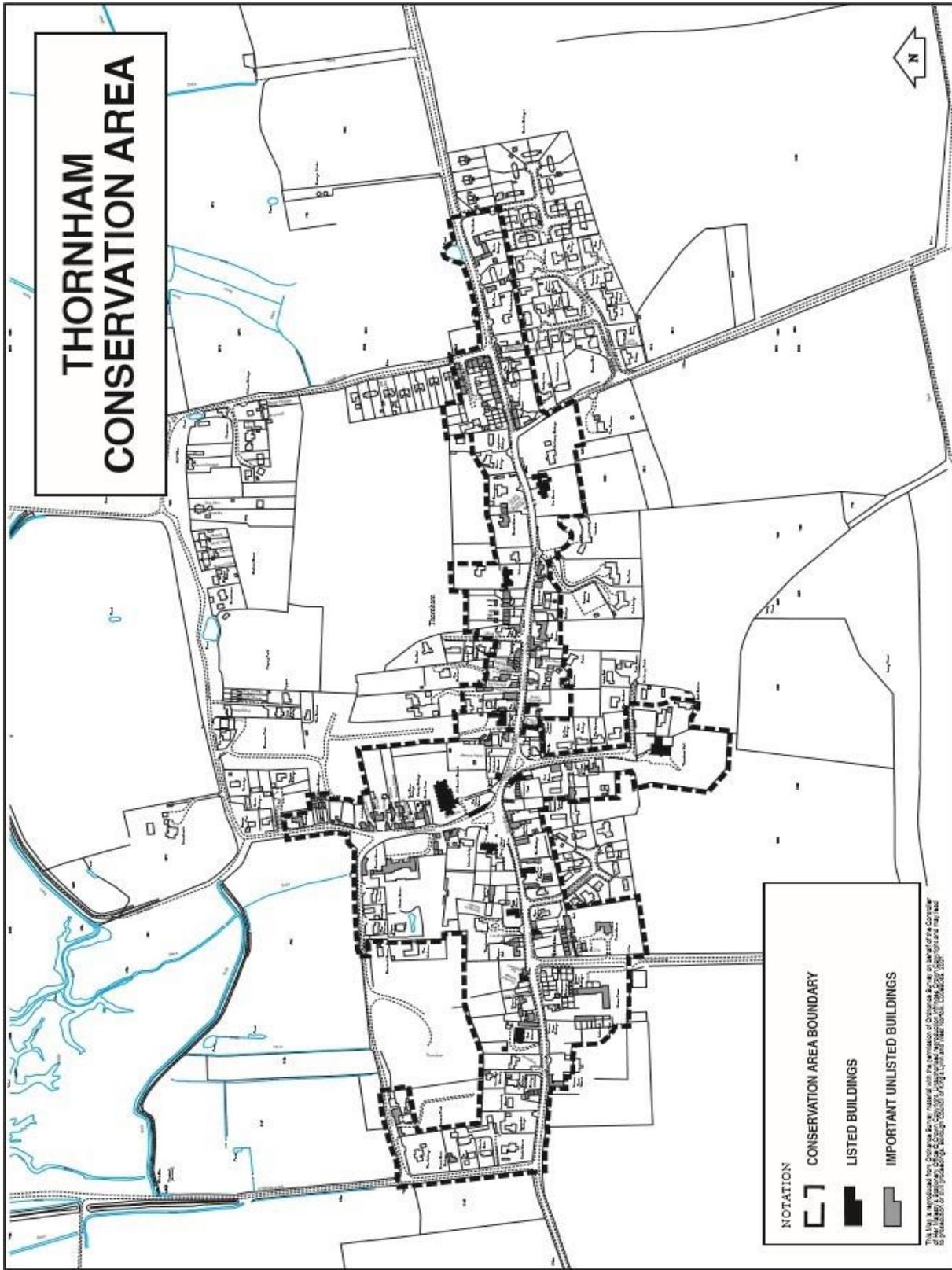
7.6.4. The character of the conservation area derives from the interaction of several factors. The linear form of Thornham, within which the gentle bends of the High Street provide a street scene of interest, is a dominant feature. Buildings along the High Street vary in scale and form. Some buildings are set back from the road, others are close to it, some buildings are aligned with the road while others are gable end to it. This variety creates interest but there is an overall coherence to which the palette of materials contributes. The prevalence of clunch with brick details and red pantiled roofs is a unifying feature but more occasional use of carrstone and flint complement the overall character. The Conservation Area Character Statement also points to the contribution of walls on the road frontages as connecting features that reinforce the distinctive character.

7.6.5. In addition to the listed buildings and other buildings identified as important in the Conservation area there are a number of other buildings and structures which are of

historic interest and contribute to the distinctive character of Thornham. While these cannot enjoy the same level of protection as listed buildings, the plan encourages new development to take account of them. The balance to be drawn between any effect on these buildings and the benefits of any proposals cannot attach as much weight to these assets as is attached to listed buildings because they do not have this status. However, they do make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and the village as a whole and their loss should be avoided where possible. The location of Items A-M is shown on Map 13 and photographs of them all are shown in Appendix 7.



Map 13 Conservation Area Listed Buildings and buildings of historic interest

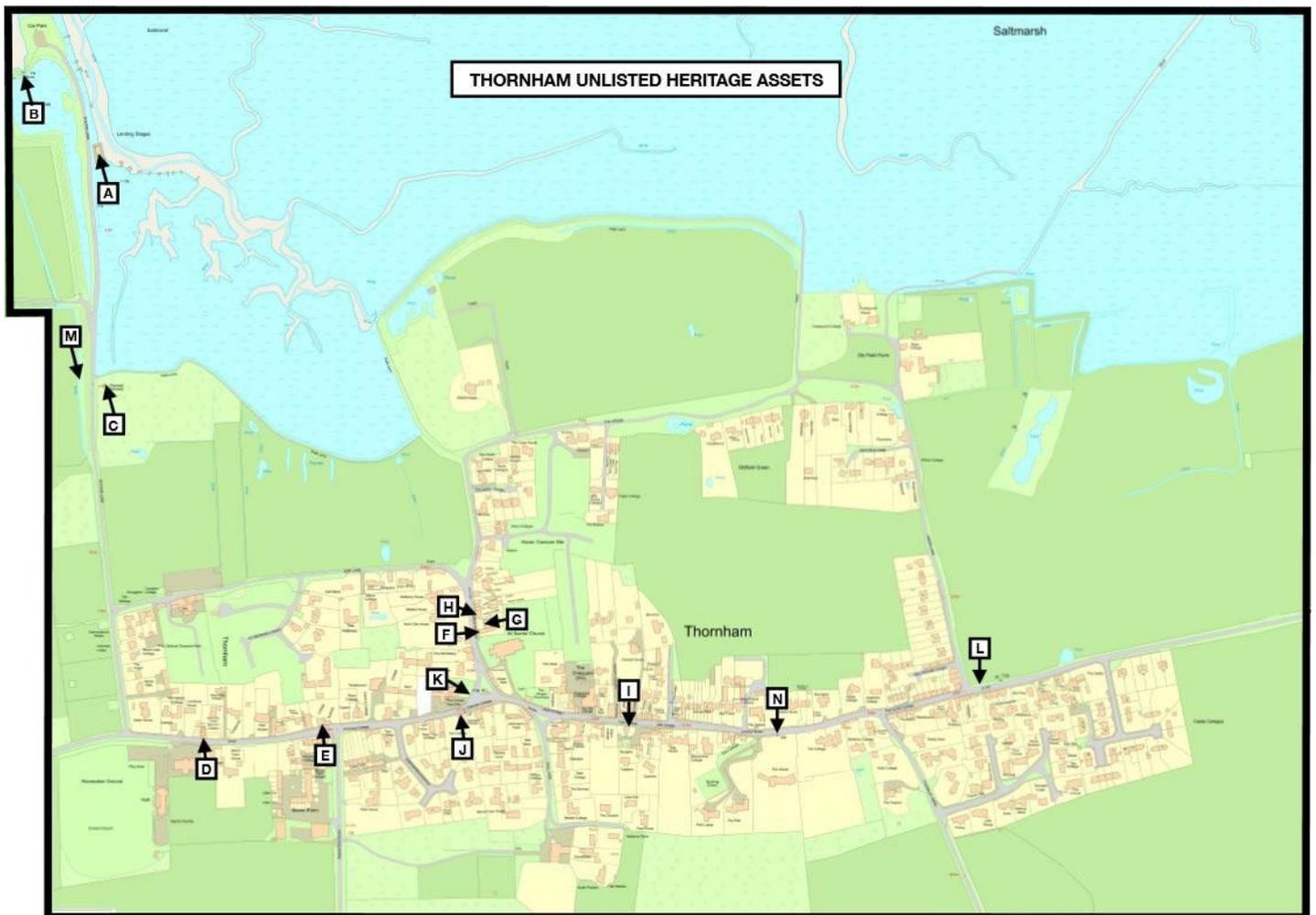


Policy HA1 Development affecting the Conservation Area

All new developments within, or affecting the setting of the Thornham Conservation Area, that demonstrate the following will be supported:

- a) That the materials used are compatible with the character of the area. The use of clunch, carrstone, brick detailing and pantiles are particularly encouraged.
- b) That, wherever possible traditional stone and brick walls on road frontages are retained and any new boundary treatments maintain the continuity of the street scene.

Map 14 Thornham: Unlisted buildings and features of historic interest



Policy HA2 Unlisted buildings and features of historic interest

All development proposals shall have regard to the undesignated heritage assets listed and identified on Map 14:

A The coal barn at the old harbour

B The sluice gates, the old granary and the harbour and its structures

C The old windmill on Staithe Lane

D Plaque dated 1851 on West End Cottages

E Plaque dated 1756 on Chestnut cottage

F Plaque dated 1797 on Church View

G Plaque dated 1682 on Hope Cottage

H Plaque dated 1698 on Chalen Cottage

I Plaque dated 1755 plaque on York Cottage

J The old post box in the wall of Dix Cottage

K The King's Head Sign (ex Thornham Ironworks) outside The Orange Tree

L Phone box near Green Lane

M The Plug Pits

N The milestone

Development that would result in the loss of or harm to the character of these buildings will only be supported where the benefits clearly outweigh the harm.

Renewable energy

- 7.7.1. Government guidance offers strong support for the development of renewable energy, but in the case of wind farms mitigates this by indicating that they should only be permitted in locations allocated in Local or Neighbourhood Plans when any concerns raised by the local community have been addressed and the proposal therefore has the support of the community.¹² This does not apply to solar farms, though guidance does emphasise the need to ensure that they are not intrusive in the landscape. The sensitive nature of the landscape surrounding the village and in particular the open nature of the landscape of the AONB means that large scale solar farms may well be harmful to the character of the AONB and should only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that they can be effectively screened.

¹² Planning Practice Guidance Reference Id 5-033-150618

Policy EN1: Solar energy farms

Solar energy farms will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that they will not be prominent in views across the AONB or screening which is sensitive to the character of the AONB can be provided.

Footpaths

- 7.8.1. Thornham is a popular location for walking. The Norfolk Coastal Path passes right through the parish, approaching from Holme-next-the-Sea to the west along the dunes and the flood bank, turning south into the village along Church Street, along High Street and leaving to the south along Chosely Road before turning east along higher ground to the South of Titchwell. There are other footpaths from the A149 north to the coast on the western boundary of the parish and northwards over the marches from the Green. The improvement of pedestrian routes within the village or to the south and the provision of a footpath between Thornham and Holme-next-the-Sea would be supported. The sensitivity of the environment to the north of the village means that the encouragement of additional pedestrian routes within the areas Designated as RAMSAR, Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) could be harmful.

Policy P1: Pedestrian routes

Development which would facilitate pedestrian movement within the village, access to the countryside to the south of the village and/or a footpath between Thornham and Holme-next-the-Sea will be supported.