

## THIRSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FEEDBACK

All residents received the draft Vision Statement and draft Objectives hand delivered to every property in Thirston Parish informing residents of the public consultation sessions.

### THE VISION

It is important that Thirston Parish remains as a group of sustainable, vibrant, linked but distinct rural communities, protecting the rural environment of the Parish. However, the creation of a Strategic Road Network interchange, brought about by the anticipated dualling of the A1 Trunk Road, will create positive and negative opportunities for new residential and commercial development within the Parish. Our Vision, therefore, recognises and integrates that potential whilst conserving and enhancing the rich agricultural, architectural and environmental heritage that the Parish has for the benefit of its current and future residents.

***Our vision for Thirston Parish is that we maintain the rural nature of our diverse small rural communities, recognising the architectural and environmental heritage that we enjoy, whilst embracing change that will enhance the lives of all parishioners.***

### THE OBJECTIVES

To deliver the Vision, five objectives have been developed.

The planning policies included within the Plan have been identified to deliver the Objectives.

#### **Objective 1 – The Natural Environment**

To conserve and enhance the peaceful, beautiful nature of the rural setting of the parish and to enable wildlife to continue to thrive in the open countryside.

#### **Objective 2 - The Built Environment**

To maintain and enhance the many heritage assets of the Parish whilst simultaneously ensuring that any new development conserves and respects the feel of buildings and places across the Parish.

#### **Objective 3 – Vibrant and Thriving Communities**

To build on the strong sense of community across the Parish by retaining and enhancing important community facilities and services;

#### **Objective 4 – The Economy**

To support the existing business developments and welcome new business ventures, recognising the importance of agricultural and tourist/leisure sectors as well as working from home enterprises.

*Potential Change to this Objective: To support established commercial development as well as welcoming new business ventures that aligned themselves with the local infrastructure and environment, recognising the importance of agricultural and tourism as well as working from home enterprises.*

#### **Objective 5 – Movement and Connectivity**

To support improvements to access within and from outside the parish by supporting safe road infrastructure and enhanced digital connectivity.

Consultation sessions took place at the following venues

- Burgham Golf Club on 3 July 3pm til 7pm with 4 residents attending
- Felton Village Hall on 4 July 3pm til 7pm with 11 residents attending
- The Gallery from 5 July to 12 July (drop in) with two residents attending.

In total 14 responses were received. Of the responses 12 were in agreement with the draft objectives. One response disagreed with Objectives 2, 4 and 5 stating “they are all excuses to build more houses/holiday lets. Leave well alone”. One response disagreed with Objective 4 quoting “agree in principle but are concerned with new development linked to the new A1”.

Those in agreement gave the following comments:

Any development to be sympathetic to existing settlements/villages. Numbers to be limited to those that can be supported by local infrastructure. Development meets needs to local community, not random development for “commuters”. Respect outstanding beauty.

Other comments not Objective specific

- More bus stops on old A1 road.
- Fibre optic internet more accessible.
- Traffic calming measures, eg chicane to stop serious speeding through Thirston village
- Some method of slowing down traffic through West Thirston, eg chicane
- As a resident and business owner (in Felton) I need good (ie better than present) broadband. I also need car parking facilities to be look at to give visitors adequate, safe parking without creating a nuisance to local residents.
- The B6345 through Thirston is increasingly used by large, noisy and heavy commercial vehicles – unsuitable for such use as it has blind bends and is narrow. The A1 upgrade may make this worse – my thought is a better road to link the A1 to Amble/Coast.
- I would like action taken to reduce speeding cars and agricultural vehicles on the B6345. It is hardly peaceful at times and positively dangerous. A vital component should be a safe road.
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The draft Vision Statement and Objectives were also sent to the statutory consultees on 21 July with a request to respond within 21 working days. There is no legal requirement to contact consultees at this part of the process but the Working Group felt it would be sensible to inform consultees so they are aware of the Plan and also can have any input at this point. The following were contacted with responses:

- **NCC – Elizabeth Sinnamon and David English** – no response received
- **Coal Authority** – no response received
- **Homes and Communities Agency** – no response received
- **Natural England**  
Natural England does not wish to make comment on the suitability of the proposed plan area or the proposed neighbourhood planning body. (Standard advice letter was attached)
- **The Environment Agency** – no response received
- **Historic England**  
We have reviewed the information you have provided and we do not consider that there is a need for Historic England to be involved in the development of the plan for your area at this

time. However, I offer some initial comments on the information you have provided, followed by several paragraphs of guidance and advice below.

Comments on the draft vision and objectives are as follows:

“Architectural and environmental heritage” would be better expressed as “historic environment and natural heritage”. The term “architectural” would not refer to aspects of the historic environment which are not built, such as buried archaeology, landscapes, areas and places, all of which could be important to your parish. You would not want to inadvertently downgrade your plan’s attention to aspects of our past that your community does cherish.

In Objective 2, “maintain” is better expressed as “conserve” (just as with Objective 1) as this covers a wide range of management actions which might be needed for the historic environment, including maintenance. “Feel” might be better expressed as “character”. The words “enhance”, “heritage assets” and “places” are very welcome, and you might also consider including the word “landscapes” as so much of your parish is open countryside.

The other word that I would advise using in Objective 2 is “significance” as this concept underpins all historic environment planning, including in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is the significance of heritage assets we conserve, not necessarily the assets themselves. Assets might change but what makes them special - their significance - should be protected or enhanced. If change does harm significance then we seek justification or mitigation. So I suggest inserting “the significance of” between “enhance” and “the many...” at the start of the sentence.

There are a number of designated heritage assets in the neighbourhood area. It is important that your plan properly identifies any heritage assets in your area, and that the plan includes a positive strategy to safeguard what contributes to their significance. This will ensure they can be enjoyed by future generations, and make sure the plan is in line with the requirements national planning policy.

- **Network Rail** – no response received
- **Highways England** – no response received
- **NHS Northumberland** – no response received
- **Avonline** – no response received
- **BT** – no response received
- **Briskona** – no response received
- **CTIL** – no response received
- **EE** – no response received
- **Three** – no response received
- **Virgin Media** – no response received
- **Wildcard Networks** – no response received
- **Arqiva** – no response received
- **Openreach** – no response received
- **Northern Powergrid** – no response received
- **National Grid** – no response received
- **Northern Gas Network** – no response received
- **Northumbrian Water**

Firstly thank you for consulting Northumbrian Water at this initial stage of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Thirston Parish. We would like to take this opportunity to advise of some possible inclusions which we feel would be important additions and should be seriously considered within the final plan.

### **Sustainable Development**

We fully support and encourage sustainable development within all communities and feel that this should be at the centre of the plan for Thirston. Meeting the needs of the present without compromising those in the future will fit in well across all of the proposed objectives. We feel a minor change to the wording of the vision to include reference to sustainable development would be a more suitable option as follows:

***Our vision for Thirston Parish is that we maintain the rural nature of our diverse small rural communities, recognising the architectural and environmental heritage that we enjoy, whilst embracing change through sustainable development that will enhance the lives of all parishioners both now and in the future.***

Considering the sustainable redevelopment of brownfield sites can improve any existing flood risk by reducing surface water discharge to sewers and this is something we would encourage to be linked to objective 2 and the Built Environment.

### **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)**

We would encourage serious consideration to be given towards SuDs ponds and for Sustainable drainage to be incorporated into policies within the plan. We feel this would fit well within both Objectives 1 and 2. Linked to Objective 2 we believe it is critical to ensure that any development proposals separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, with SuDs being the preferred option. It is our opinion that sustainable drainage systems should only be excluded in exceptional circumstances, and that there should be a requirement to provide robust evidence to demonstrate the reasons that SuDS cannot be incorporated. Following on from this, SuDs link very well with the Natural Environment (Objective 1) as they can also improve water quality and benefit wildlife.

### **Green Infrastructure**

For consideration and as a link to Objective 1 we would encourage reference to be made to Green Infrastructure. This links exceptionally well to Sustainable Drainage and the two can go hand in hand, with Green infrastructure having the option to provide benefits in the form of improved water quality and reduced flood risk, whilst continuing to deliver biodiversity enhancement and amenity value to the parish.

In addition to the points above we would also like to mention, in relation to Objective 4, we wholly support economic growth and encourage any sustainable inward investment into Thirston.

We hope you find these comments helpful and we look forward to seeing more of the Neighbourhood Plan as it continues to emerge.

- **Marine Management Organisation**

Thank you for including the MMO in your recent consultation submission. The MMO will review your document and respond to you directly should a bespoke response be required. If you do not receive a bespoke response from us within your deadline, please consider the following information as the MMO's formal response. (Standard advice letter was attached)

- **Felton Parish Council** – no response
- **Acklington PC** – no response
- **Longframlington PC** – do not wish to be consulted as no connection with Thirston
- **Longhorsley PC** – no response
- **The Theatres Trust** – no response
- **Sustrans** – no response
- **National Farmers Union** – Standard response in support of thinking about farmers.