



Thorp Arch Housing Market and Needs Assessment



25th May 2016

Introduction

Thorp Arch is a small affluent village and civil parish near Wetherby set on the River Wharfe between the villages of Walton and Boston Spa. Close to Thorp Arch village are the Thorp Arch Trading Estate, Wealstun Prison, and the British Library.

According to the 2011 Census the population of Thorp Arch is 1591. However, the total includes 813 persons who reside at Wealstun Prison, therefore the usual resident population of Thorp Arch is 778. In 2001 the population of Thorp Arch was 1123, (including 504 in Wealstun Prison) therefore the usual resident population of Thorp Arch was 619. The usual resident population has increased 20% between 2001 and 2011. For the purposes of this report, the statistics related to Wealstun Prison are excluded.

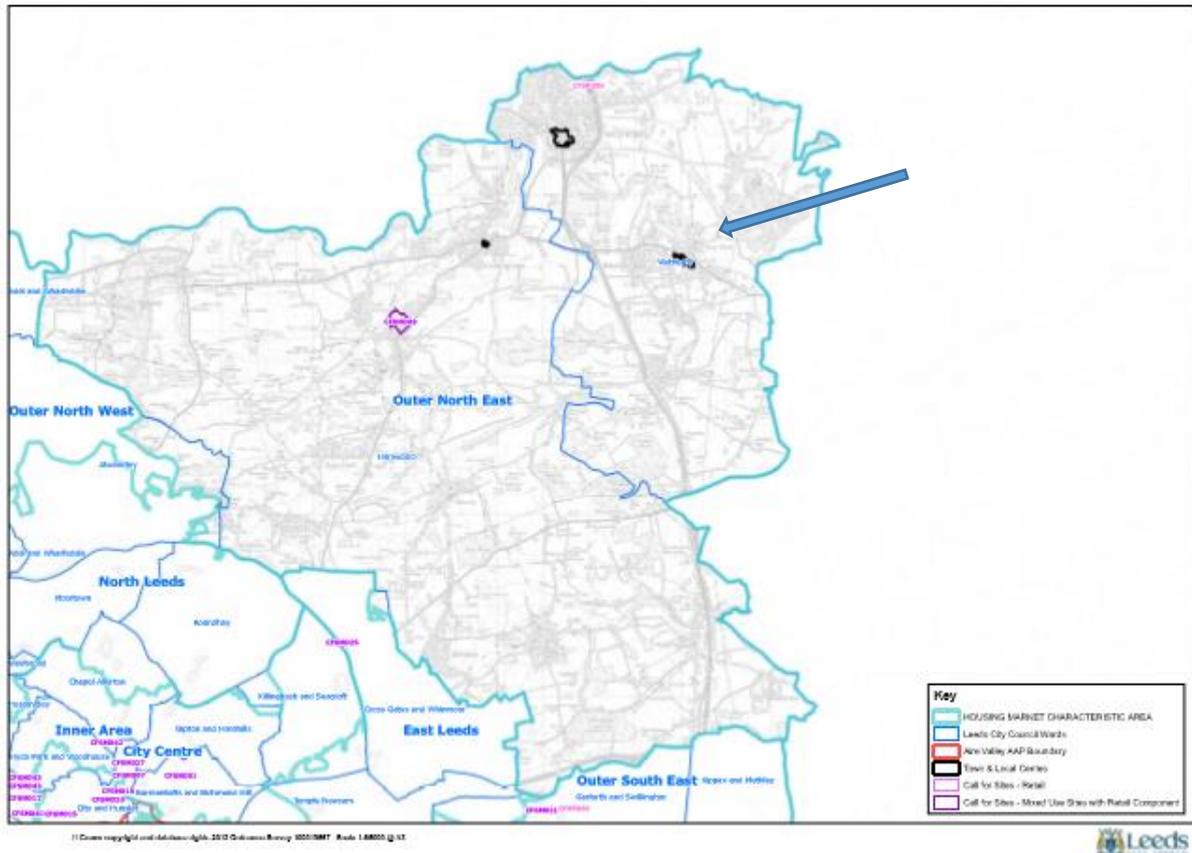
The usual Thorp Arch 778 residents live in 334 dwellings, which are mainly detached, semi-detached or terraced properties or varying sizes. Private renting has increased in the past decade while levels of owner occupation and social renting have seen a slight reduction. Property values are significantly higher than the city average. There is a primary school in the village and it is served by Boston Spa and Wetherby High Schools in Leeds, as well as Tadcaster Grammar School in North Yorkshire and a number of private schools and faith schools.

Thorp Arch is surrounded by a number of neighbourhoods. To the north are Wetherby, Knaresborough and Harrogate; to the north east is York; to the south east is the town of Tadcaster; to the west are villages such as Collingham, Linton, Bardsey and Scarcroft running towards Leeds city centre. The area is part of what has been termed 'The Golden Triangle' between North Leeds, Harrogate and York. All are 'up-market' settlements with high house prices and rents, as are the villages close to them.

Immediately adjacent to the parish are the villages of Walton, to the north – a small village with limited services – and Boston Spa, to the south – a large village with a wide range of facilities and services. Access to the latter is across a narrow single lane river bridge.

Background Information

Thorp Arch is located within the Outer North East of Leeds as shown on the map below:



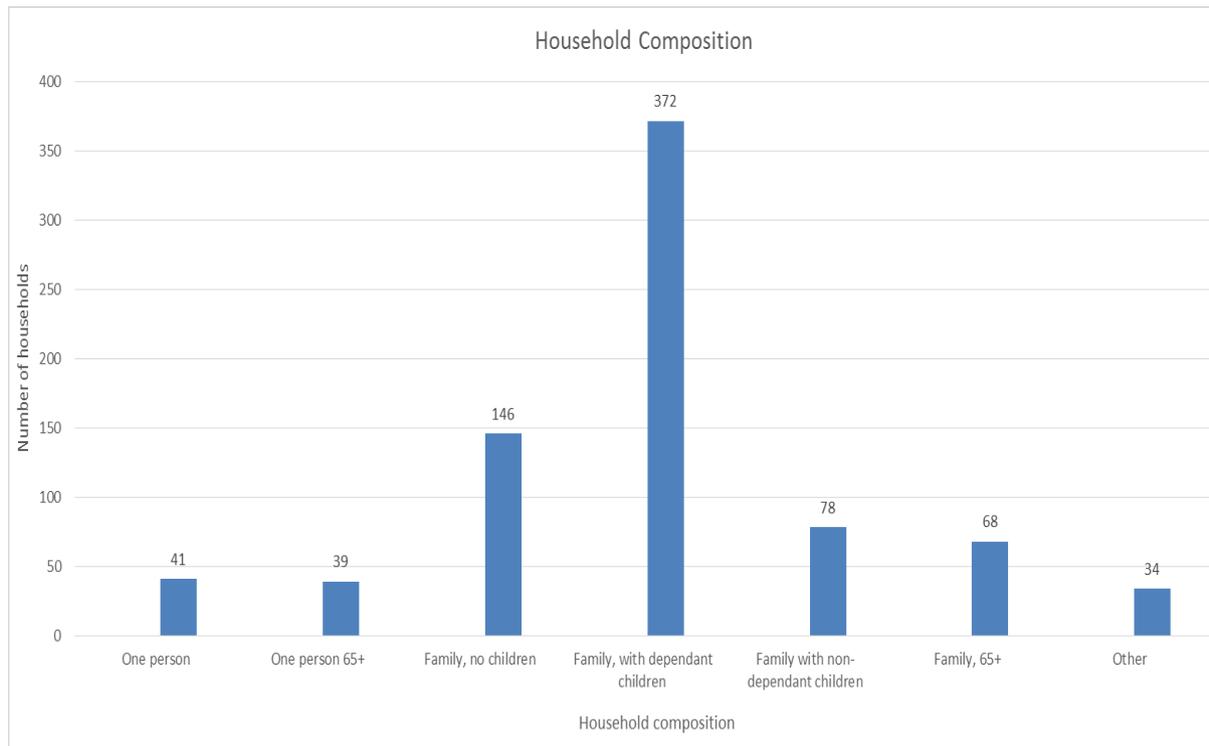
Demographic profile

The following statistics have been taken from the 2001 and 2011 Government Census as provided by the Office of National Statistics.

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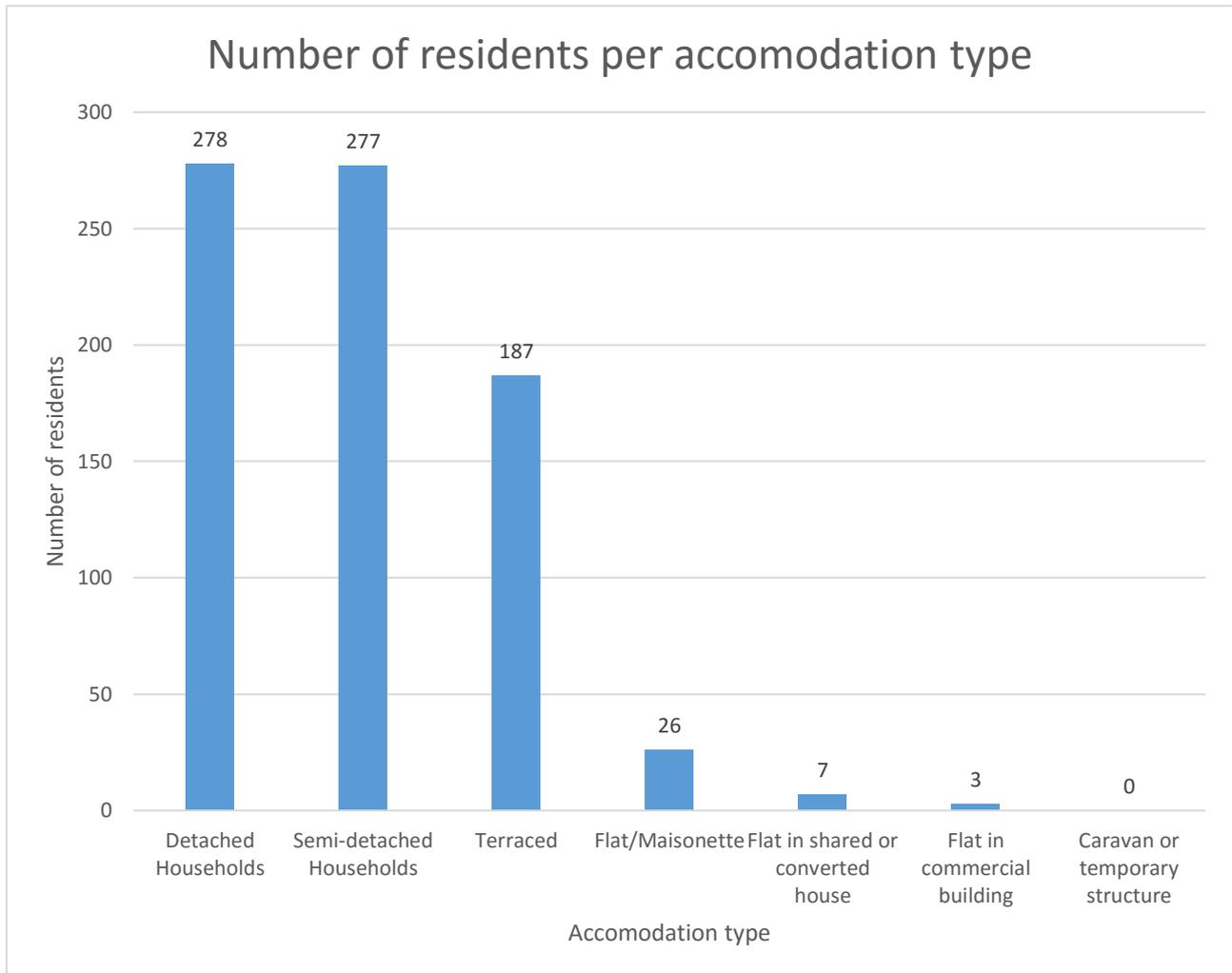
Household composition

In 2011 the number of households in the parish was 324 (0.1% of Leeds households). The following graph shows the household composition, according to the 2011 Census.



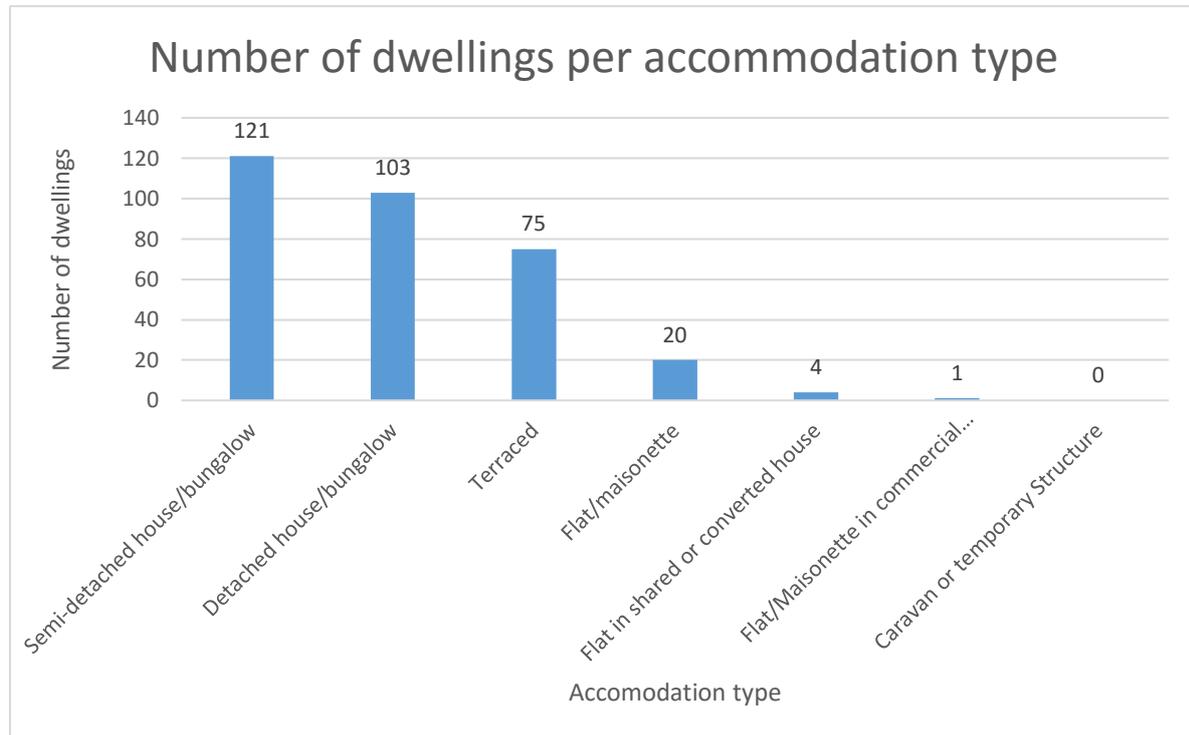
Number of residents by accommodation type

The following graph shows the number of residents by accommodation type, according to the 2011 Census. 71% of residents live in semi-detached or detached accommodation.



Number of dwellings per accommodation type

The following graph shows the number of dwellings by accommodation type, according to the 2011 Census. 69% of dwellings within the parish are semi-detached or detached houses or bungalows.



Stakeholder information

The following information provides an indication of the current housing market, according to the website Rightmove.co.uk:

- There are currently 5 residential properties for sale, with asking prices ranging from £140,000 for a two bedroom apartment to £1,350,000 for a seven bedroom detached house.
- There is currently 1 four bedroomed house for rent at £1350 pcm.
- Last year most property sales in Thorp Arch involved semi-detached properties which sold for on average £300,248. Terraced properties sold for an average price of £271,900, while detached properties fetched £696,250.
- Thorp Arch, with an overall average price of £383,602 was more expensive than nearby Wetherby (£299,497), Tadcaster (£237,771) and Boston Spa (£332,895).
- During the last year, sold prices in Thorp Arch were 29% up on the previous year and 11% up on 2007 when the average house price was £344,063.

Leeds Housing Market Context

The most recent data from the Office for National Statistics shows the number of households in Leeds increased by 6% in the last decade, compared to by 3% in the previous decade.

There are now approximately 320,000 households in Leeds, up from 302,000 a decade earlier.¹ While below national and sub-regional levels, this is likely to represent a significant increase in demand for housing. The number of households is projected to increase by a further 13% in the next decade, outstripping wider West Yorkshire and national levels of growth. The number of households is projected to rise to 361,000 by 2021. There are now approximately 320,000 households in Leeds, up from 302,000 a decade earlier². The number of households is projected to increase by a further 13% in the next decade, outstripping wider West Yorkshire and national levels of growth. The number of households is projected to rise to 361,000 by 2021.³

The Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) used an employment-led household growth scenario to inform long term planning decisions. This shows an annual household growth rate of approximately 4,500 per annum, which, due to latent demand, was translated into a net dwelling requirement of approximately 4,680 per annum and a gross requirement, taking account of potential demolitions, of 4,930 per annum.

The Leeds SHMA also indicates that affordability of housing is a key issue to address. In line with national trends, house prices in Leeds have seen a significant increase over the past 20 years. The most recent average annual price in the city is now £175,000. This increase has seen house prices outstrip incomes in this period, making housing increasingly unaffordable, especially to first time buyers. The most recent SHMA undertaken for the city suggests that approximately 1,158 affordable dwellings per annum are needed, in order to both clear the existing waiting list backlog and meet future arising household need. It identified a “sustained demand for ‘affordable’ properties across the city.”

The waiting list for social housing in Leeds has been above 20,000 since the late 1990s. Positively, it has reduced since its peak of over 30,000 in 2005, but still represents a consistently large amount of unmet need. Levels of homelessness have reduced since the early part of the last decade, in line with national trends although there is evidence of a modest increase since 2009/10.

The Leeds SHMA also found that in line with national trends the city is projected to experience an increase in the number and proportion of households where the head of household is over 65. The projections indicate that over half of these households will be couple households and just under half will be single person households. Significantly, the projections continue to show an increase in households in the higher age brackets e.g. over 85 years old.

The Leeds Core Strategy has identified Thorp Arch as being a village in the settlement hierarchy, which may lead to small scale office development (up to 500 sqm) being encouraged and not be subject to sequential assessments, (Leeds Policy EC2: Office development).

¹ Demographic Evidence – an update, Edge Analytics; September 2013

² 2001 and 2011 Census reported on ONS website 2015

³ Demographic Evidence – an update, Edge Analytics; September 2013

Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment

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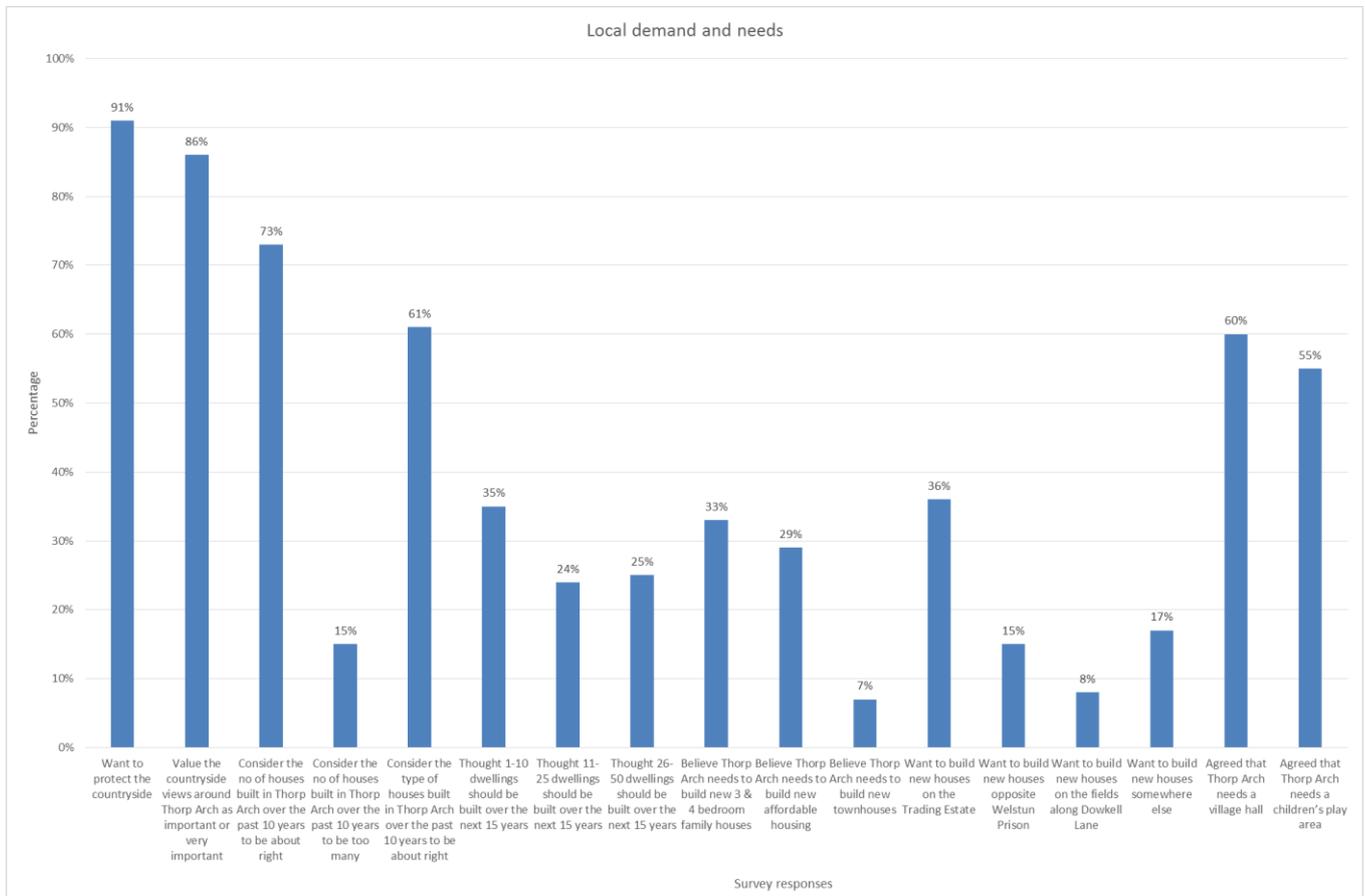
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The Leeds SHMA found that there are 17,183 properties in the Outer North East area, of which 654 are vacant, (4% vacancy rate). Between 2001-2010, the number of net housing completions in the Outer North East was 858 which represented 3% of net completions across the Authority. The Leeds SHMA identifies that the Outer North East has potentially 169 land units for housing supply between 2010-2016 and 1241 land units between 2010-2026.

Local demand and needs

In 2012 Thorp Arch Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group surveyed the residents to establish local needs and demand. The following graph shows the local demand and needs of those who responded to the survey as a percentage of overall responses.



Other relevant survey information included that 33% of respondents agreed that if there were flats or smaller dwellings available, they would consider downsizing and remaining in the village on retirement. 24% did not agree and 22% were already retired.

Of the respondents, 4% were 10-24, 9% were 25-34, 35% were 35-54, 38% were 55-74 and 14% were 75 and over 81% of the respondents were residents of Thorp Arch and 76% were owners of property in Thorp Arch.

Site assessment

Following the publication on the Leeds Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and work undertaken by Leeds City Council to assess sites proposed, the Neighbourhood Plan group undertook their own assessment of sites and rated them using a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system where Red would be a development which would cause unjustified harm to the parish with no mitigating factors, where Amber would have neutral impact and some potential benefits; and Green would have positive benefits.

Area (ha)	Capacity (at 30 dwellings per hectare)	Location /reference	Leeds City Council SAP Comment	Thorp Arch NP Comment	R.A.G
5.7	150	1239 Dowkell Lane (south)	Greenfield site. Sieved out -not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for development. - Situated within conservation area -Situating within Special Landscape Area. -Scale would adversely affect village. -Historic features would be lost	R
4.9	128	1240 Church Causeway (north)	Greenfield site. Sieved out -not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for development. - Situated within conservation area -Situating within Special Landscape Area. -Scale would adversely affect village. -Historic features would be lost	
8.9	233	1241 Walton Road	Greenfield site. Sieved out -not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for development. - Situated within conservation area -part designated as Leeds Nature Way -Scale would adversely affect village. -Historic features would be lost	
0.8	25	1290 Rear of Old Vicarage	Greenfield site. Sieved out -not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for development. -Situating within conservation area. -Poor access to Church Causeway -Close to mature trees	

Area (ha)	Capacity (at 30 dwellings per hectare)	Location /reference	Leeds City Council SAP Comment	Thorp Arch NP Comment	R.A.G
12.2	317	1289 Dowkell Lane (north)	Greenfield site. Sieved out-not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for development. -Situated in conservation area -Situated within Special Landscape Area -Scale would adversely affect village -Historic features would be lost	
10.1	227	2068 Thorp Arch waste tip	Greenfield site. Sieved out-not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for development. -Scale would adversely affect village -Some infrastructure issues with potential contamination, landfill and underground pipes.	
0.4	14	71 Thorp Arch Grange, Walton Road	This site has already been completed with 14 units.	Achieved.	
0.6	16	2067 Thorp Arch Grange, Walton Road	Greenfield site. Sieved out- not within settlement hierarchy. The site is designated as N6 protected playing pitch on the existing UDP and currently provides an open setting for Thorp Arch Grange and Leeds United training ground. The site is flat and has a road frontage.	Not appropriate for residential development. Originally designated as a 'Protected Playing Pitch'. This site is considered a suitable location for a childrens play area.	
0.9	23	4079 Former social club, Walton Road	Greenfield site / Brownfield site (65/35%). The site is situated outside the defined settlement hierarchy within the Core Strategy and as such is considered to be situated in an unsustainable location. However the site is brownfield and lies	This site is considered suitable for small scale residential development of 25-30 units depending on the housing mix.	

Area (ha)	Capacity (at 30 dwellings per hectare)	Location /reference	Leeds City Council SAP Comment	Thorp Arch NP Comment	R.A.G
			adjacent to existing housing. Presently the derelict buildings are an eyesore.		
1.1	39	4218 TABS Cricket ground	Greenfield site. Sieved out -not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for residential development. -Situated in the heart of the conservation area -Identified for protection in Thorp Arch NP -Subject of a public meeting (3/7/13) where there was strong opposition to the proposals for any development of this site.	
12	270	5134 Wetherby Road /Walton Road	Greenfield site. -Sieved out- not within settlement hierarchy.	Not appropriate for development -Scale would adversely affect village -Identified as critical to protect the gateway vista to Walton and defining Walton as a separate entity to Thorp Arch. -Identified for protection within Walton NP	
50 (approx.)	1000	1055-1055A Thorp Arch Trading Estate "Rudgate village"	Employment land	Not appropriate for residential development. Residential development of TAE has been subject of a previous Planning Inquiry for the UDP and was not found to be a sustainable site for housing. An earlier planning application for 2000 dwellings, some retail development, a school, and medical facilities with a relief road, was withdrawn in 2015 following extensive and valid local objections lead by TAG and the Parish Council. The new proposed scheme 'Rudgate Village' comprises c1000 dwellings, a school and	

Area (ha)	Capacity (at 30 dwellings per hectare)	Location /reference	Leeds City Council SAP Comment	Thorp Arch NP Comment	R.A.G
				<p>community facilities, with no relief road. The scale of the development is not appropriate and would overpower Thorp Arch and surrounding villages.</p> <p>The additional traffic generated would have serious detrimental effect on the character of the village and would lead to congestion, particularly at the single track bridge to Boston Spa.</p> <p>The site is a former ROF munitions factory and will require extensive investigation and decontamination. Removal of many tons of potentially contaminated materials through residential villages is not acceptable.</p> <p>Large areas of the proposed site are ecologically sensitive and include one of the most extensive areas of limestone grassland in West Yorkshire. There are four areas within TAE which are designated as Sites of Ecological and Geological Importance (SEGI). West Yorkshire Ecology considers that there are several other areas that would qualify under the new 'Local Wildlife Site Selection' criteria.</p>	

Conclusions

The location of the parish within easy reach of Leeds, York and Harrogate, as well as smaller hub settlements in between, such as Wetherby and Tadcaster, make it an attractive location for development in a rural setting. Equally, the high quality environment particularly in and surrounding Thorp Arch village has the potential to attract high end new housing development that would meet a particular need for the city.

However, the parish has a number of important restrictions with regard to development:

1. The extensive Conservation Area and high quality of surrounding rural land means that development would inevitably need to encroach on the open countryside where impact would be high.
2. The access out of the village to the south is severely restricted by the single lane bridge across the River Wharfe and additional traffic generated as a result of new development would create significant management issues at this pinch point.
3. Surveys of the parish for the Neighbourhood Plan have revealed a very strong desire to protect the high quality landscape setting and protected habitats within.
4. The same surveys revealed very little support or demand for new homes to be built in any significant number, with a large majority thinking that the number of new homes the parish had accommodated over the past 10 years to be “about right”.

The analysis of sites undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan group revealed support for 2 sites that will provide in the region of 40 new homes over the next couple of years – at the front end of the plan period. It will be important for the developers of those sites to recognise the potential demand for smaller accommodation as expressed through surveys for downsizers and for younger people and families.

The previous and current proposals for large scale housing development on the Thorp Arch Estate may clearly serve a strategic purpose in relation to housing land supply for the One North East and Leeds as a whole. However, the restrictions on the site and on the parish as a whole as described above make it difficult to justify when considering the demand from within the parish and the negative impacts upon the parish as a whole and its resident population in terms of traffic movements, loss of habitats and loss of employment land.