

BISHOPS LYDEARD & COTHELSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Mrs M Rousseau, West View, West Bagborough, TA4 3EG

Phone: 01823 432 658 Email: clerk@bishopslydeard.org

<http://www.bishopslydeard.org.uk/>

Ms A Rhodes (Planning Policy Team)
Taunton Deane Borough Council
The Deane House
Belvedere Road
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 1HE

11th March 2013

Dear Ms Rhodes

BISHOPS LYDEARD AND COTHELSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Further to our recent discussions, please accept this letter as our application to Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) for Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council to be recognized as an appropriate body to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan and for the area defined on the attached map to be designation as a Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Following a successful application it is our intention to proceed with the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council has formally approved this course of action at its meeting on 11/01/12 and has established a Neighbourhood Planning Committee of Parish Council Members to formulate the plan.

Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone are two parishes served by a joint Parish Council. It is the intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to cover both parishes. The population of the joint parishes is 2,950, the main settlement of which, Bishops Lydeard, is defined as a Major Rural Centre in the Taunton Deane Core Strategy. The village provides public and commercial services to a wider area including nearby Cotford St Luke, a substantial village of 2,309 population now covered by its own Parish Council. Services include, Library, GPs' Surgery, two car repair garages, one of which has a fuel retail facility, two public houses, two hair salons and a range of shops. The southern terminus of the West Somerset Railway is located on the edge of the village. The railway is a major tourist attraction, enjoyed by over 200,000 people per year with 70,000 using Bishops Lydeard Railway Station alone. Adjacent to the railway station is Broadgauge Business Park, home to around a dozen businesses ranging from a farm shop to toy distribution warehouse. Bishops Lydeard has a heavily-used village hall located at the village green. In addition to Cotford St Luke, Bishops Lydeard serves other nearby villages including Ash Priors, Combe Florey, West Bagborough, Lydeard St Lawrence, Halse and many smaller settlements.

The TDBC Core Strategy defines Bishops Lydeard as a Major Rural Centre in Policy SP1. It provides, and will continue to provide, the focus for essential facilities within rural communities; this will include an appropriate balance of housing provision (up to 200 new net additional dwellings with a target of 25% as affordable units will be sought on sites of 5 or more dwellings – Policy CP4), small-scale employment and other local services. Across all the Major and Minor Rural Centres provision will be made for, in total, 3,400sqm Comparison Retail, 350sqm Class A3, A4, A5 Retail, 1,200sqm Office (Policy CP3). New

development will promote sustainable development that creates socially cohesive and inclusive communities; reduce inequalities, promote well-being (Policy CP5). Areas of the Parish of Bishops Lydeard not allocated for development and fall outside settlement limits are classed as Open Countryside and therefore Policies DM1 and DM2 are relevant. All development will contribute to reducing the need to travel, improve access to jobs, services and facilities, and mitigate and adapt to climate change (Policy CP6).

We are in the early stages of Plan preparation and therefore no structure as to the preparation of the plan has yet been identified, however; it is anticipated that the process will likely take 12-15 months to complete. We have initiated the formation of a steering group which will include diverse representation from our community and whose first task will be to prepare a detailed timetable and initial scope of works to be undertaken

The exact scope, form and content of the Neighbourhood Plan will be determined through stakeholder and public engagement. However, it will probably address the following: identification of allocations as appropriate (including alterations to the existing settlement boundary), affordable housing, enhancement, improvement and protection of recreational open space, community assets and small scale employment.

An appropriately qualified independent inspector will be engaged to undertake a public examination into the soundness of the Plan within the existing and emerging statutory planning framework. Taking account of the examiners recommendations and any amendments deemed necessary, the Plan would then be put to a public referendum. The Steering Group, Parish and District Council would together discuss and determine the best means by which to undertake the referendum.

After appropriate consultation, examination and following a successful outcome of referendum it is hoped that the Plan will be adopted by TDBC as part of the Statutory Development Plan or as a Supplementary Planning Document.

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 please find enclosed a map, showing the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan outlined in red. This area encompasses the Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish.

The Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council have a democratic mandate and statutory standing to act in relation to Neighbourhood Areas for the purpose of producing a Plan under Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

For all the reasons above we hope TDBC will confirm the area on the attached map appropriate to be designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area and confirm that Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone Parish Council is an appropriate body to undertake the Plan.

Thank you for your assistance in starting this process. We look forward to working with you to bring this Plan to a successful conclusion.

Yours sincerely

Mary Rousseau
Clerk to the Council