

Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone



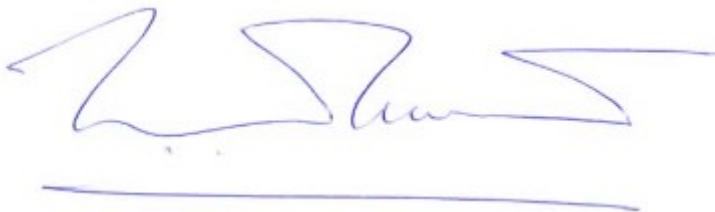
Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2028

FOREWORD

I have much pleasure in presenting the Neighbourhood Plan which has been four years in the making. During that time we have held exhibitions, we have held numerous public meetings, questionnaires have been prepared and delivered to every household and business in the Parish with replies received and carefully considered. There has been the widest possible consultation including that with TDBC. Latterly, the Plan has been scrutinised by an Independent Examiner and passed for submission to a referendum.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the Parish that reflects the views of local people and businesses. The Plan sets objectives and policies on key subjects such as housing, employment, tourism, open spaces and community facilities.

I cannot let this foreword pass without paying tribute to the Neighbourhood Plan committee ably led by Mike Rigby. They have been a dedicated team throughout the process. A special tribute is also due to our Clerk, Amy Shepherd who has kept the whole show on the road since she was appointed some two and a half years ago. I also pay tribute to Ann Rhodes at TDBC who has been of considerable assistance in guiding us towards our goal. Grateful thanks are due to each and every one of them.



Henry Davenport
Chairman, Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council

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LIST OF POLICIES

Housing & Open Space

Policy H1	Housing for Older People
Policy H2	Housing for Families
Policy H3	Housing Setting and Open Space
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Employment & Tourism

Policy E1	Conversion of Existing Premises for Commercial Use
Policy E2	Change of Use of Public Houses

Transport Infrastructure

Policy TR1	Provision of Transport Infrastructure
Policy TR2	Foot and Cycle Paths

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Planning Committee in 2012 to lead the production of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 In September 2012, Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) adopted its Core Strategy. This document sets out the vision and strategic objectives for Taunton Deane as well as the spatial strategy and policies required to deliver the vision. The document also reflects the objectives of the TDBC Sustainable Community Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, paragraphs 183 to 185).
- 1.3 The Core Strategy specifies the locations and quantity of growth to be accommodated within the Borough up to 2028 and identifies strategic site allocations. Bishops Lydeard is one of two Major Rural Centres identified by Core Strategy Policy SP1 – ‘Sustainable Development Locations’ which states that the village will provide the focus for essential facilities within the rural community, including an appropriate balance of housing provision, small scale employment and other local services. The Policy allocates up to 200 new net additional dwellings, of which 25% will be affordable units.
- 1.4 Development in the Open Countryside defined by Policy SP1 and outside development limits is limited by Core Strategy Policy DM2 to certain community, business, tourism and agricultural developments along with replacement dwellings, affordable housing and the conversion of existing buildings subject to criteria listed within Policy DM2.
- 1.5 The TDBC Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) Published (Submitted) Plan states that the allocation for housing development in Bishops Lydeard is two parcels of land at Taunton Road and Hithermead respectively. A further parcel of land at Taunton Road known locally as The Paddock has already been granted planning permission for eleven houses (including three affordable homes), which will count towards the housing target number for Bishops Lydeard. The SADMP also allocates 0.5ha west of Bishops Lydeard Station for recreational and tourism use in support of West Somerset Railway, and other commercial, employment generating uses and land adjacent to the Primary School for its possible future expansion.
- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that the ambition of a Neighbourhood Plan should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood Plans must also be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy.
- 1.7 Neighbourhood Plans in addition, should not promote less development than set out in the Core Strategy or undermine its strategic policies, rather Neighbourhood Plans should shape and direct sustainable development in the designated plan area.
- 1.8 The Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to be in general conformity with both local and national planning policy and meets all the required “basic conditions”.



2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 devolves more decision-making powers to communities and Parish Councils. One of the key aspects to this Act is to enable local communities to producing a Neighbourhood Plan to shape the future of the local places where they live.
- 2.2 On 11th January 2012 Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council formally established a Neighbourhood Planning Committee to formulate the Plan. The Committee comprised of Parish Council members who have met on a regular basis to prepare the Plan. The Plan was prepared in close consultation with local residents and businesses at every stage who have volunteered their time to provide feedback on the contents and priorities of the plan as it has been developed.
- 2.3 The Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Neighbourhood Plan area corresponds exactly with the Parish Council electoral boundary as shown in Figure 2.2., which was formally designated by Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) on 30th May 2013.
- 2.4 During its development the Plan has gone through each stage illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. Following successful completion of each of these stages the Plan is “made” part of the “development plan” for Taunton Deane. The policies it contains will be used when making future planning decisions.

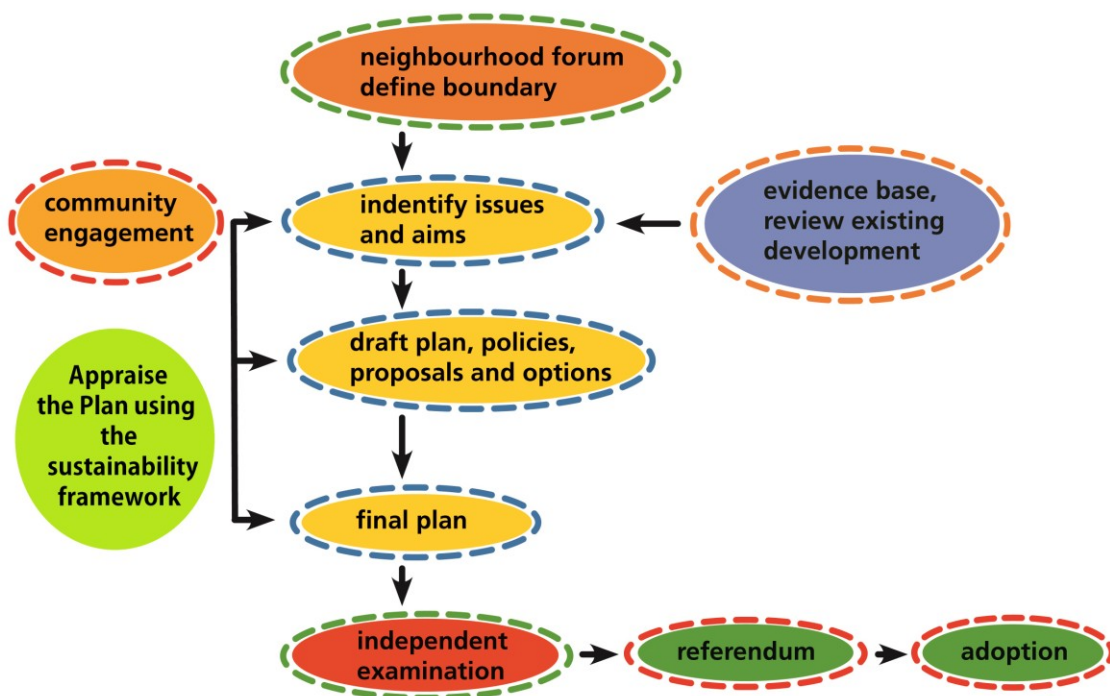


Figure 2.1: Flowchart illustrating stages of Neighbourhood Plan development

- 2.5 The Neighbourhood Plan covers the time period 2015 to 2028 so as to correspond with the TDBC Core Strategy which runs until 2028 with periodic reviews.

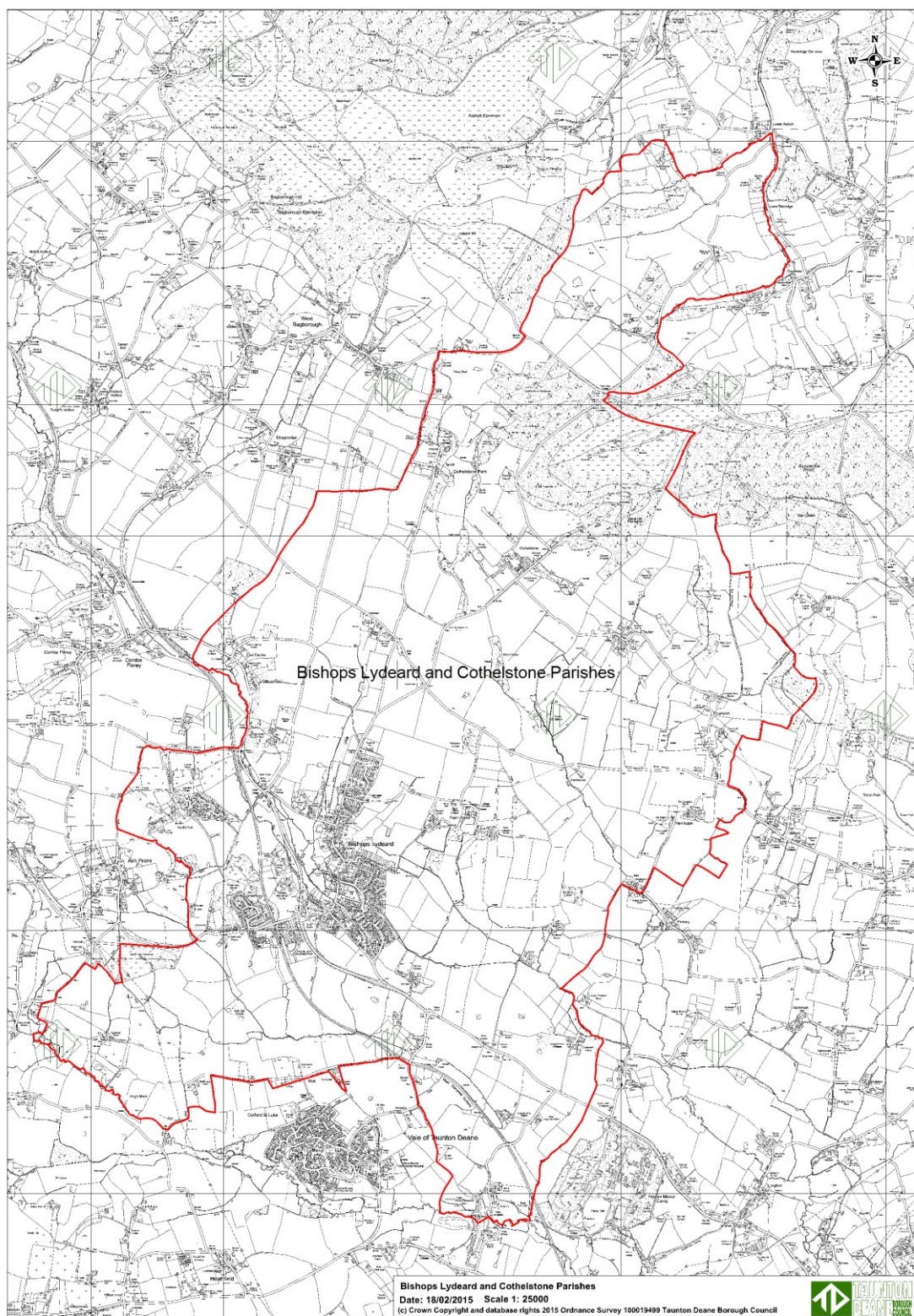


Figure 2.2: Designated Neighbourhood Area of Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Neighbourhood Plan

3. LOCAL CONTEXT

Description of the Parishes

- 3.1 The Parishes of Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone are two adjacent Civil Parishes in Somerset. They lie at the heart of the West Country, part of a network of locally distinctive, beautiful villages and hamlets surrounded by an ecologically rich and diverse farmed landscape. The historic and picturesque Parishes include the village of Bishops Lydeard and hamlets of Cothelstone, East Lydeard, East Combe, the more recent Lethbridge Park, Terhill, Kenley, Toulton, Cushuish and Fennington.
- 3.2 Part of the Parishes of Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone fall within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as illustrated in the Map below Figure 3.1.

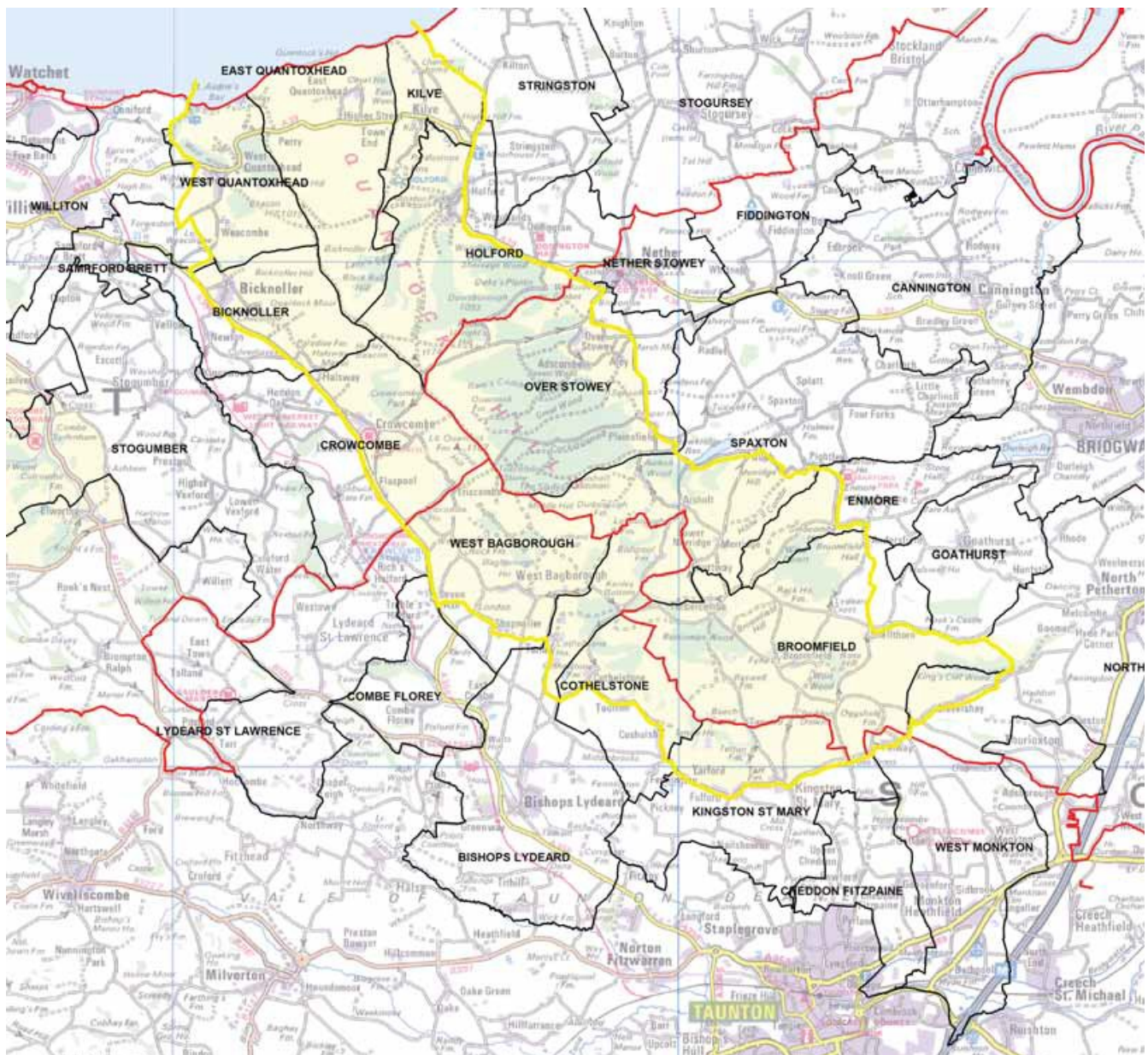


Figure 3.1 Map illustrating the location of the Quantock Hills AONB (highlighted in yellow) across Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone

- 3.6 The historic nature of the Parishes means that the roads through the centre of Bishops Lydeard are narrow and pavements are also narrow or non-existent. Bishops Lydeard has a linear development from much of the village to the north, putting pressure on roads through the centre of the village. Parking is also an issue in the centre of the village around the facilities. In addition the A358 splits Greenway, the West Somerset Railway station, the Broadgauge Business Park and Station Green all to the south of the A358 from the centre of Bishops Lydeard to the north. Planned new development provides the opportunity to reduce the reliance on the car and increase the use of sustainable transport modes.
- 3.7 The village has good employment opportunities, including Broadgauge Business Park and many other small local business. Planned new development provides the opportunity to provide additional local employment.
- 3.8 The Plan area has a number of recreational facilities including: a football pitch, a cricket club, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), village green, Cedar Falls health spa and golf club. Development in the Plan area will provide the opportunity to improve the range of open space, including the provision of allotments.
- 3.9 Bishops Lydeard village centre offers a good mix of services and facilities including shops, pubs, a village hall, children's centre, community centre and Greenway Hall, a primary school, two churches, veterinary surgery, a doctors' surgery and pharmacy supporting residents and businesses across the Plan area. Planned new development provides the opportunity to improve village facilities.
- 3.10 The West Somerset Railway (WSR), a heritage railway on a country branch line of the old Great Western Railway, is an important and highly regarded cultural asset to the village of Bishops Lydeard.
- 3.11 There are reasonable transport links to the County Town of Taunton and community links to the wider South West.

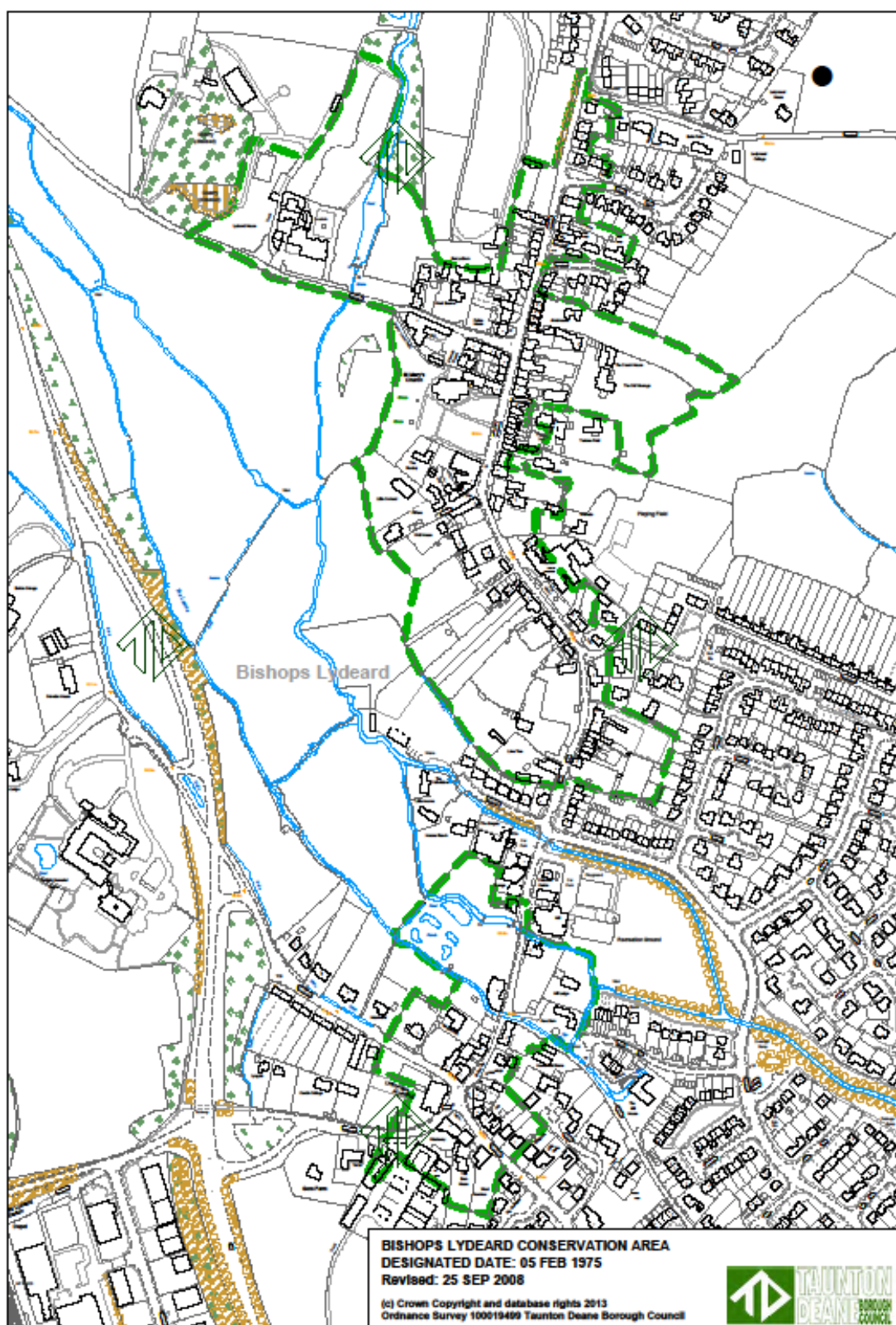


Figure 3.3: Bishops Lydeard Conservation Area

Socio-economic profile of Parishes

3.12 Population

The total population of the two parishes was 2,950 at the last census in 2011 which represents approximately 2.7% of the total population (110,187) of the Borough.

3.13 Demographics

The table below summarises the demographic profile of the Parishes against the borough, regional and national profile:

Age Group	Percentage (%)				
	Bishops Lydeard	Cothelstone	Taunton Deane	South West	England
0-17	22	15.3	21	20	21
18-29	10.3	11.7	13.5	14.7	16.3
30-44	20.5	13.5	18.4	18.8	20.6
45-59	21.3	27.9	20.4	20.1	19.4
60-64	6.8	7.2	6.8	6.8	6.0
65-74	10.6	11.7	9.8	10.1	8.6
75-84	6.9	10.8	6.9	6.6	5.5
85-89	2.3	0.9	2.1	1.9	1.5
90+	1.3	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.8

3.14 The Parishes have an above County average proportion of people aged 0-15 years, but the primary school is small and spaces are limited. In addition the closest secondary school is Kingsmead, 8 miles away. Youth facilities are also limited as is the range of leisure provision.

3.15 The demographic profile of Bishops Lydeard is similar to that of Taunton Deane, though slightly lower numbers of 18-29 year olds live in the Parish.

3.16 The demographic profile for Cothelstone shows fewer young people and younger adults living in the Parishes but more middle aged and elderly residents than the average for the Borough, the region or the country as a whole.

3.17 Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Reports of anti social behaviour and crime rates tend to be lower than in the County generally. Compared with the Somerset average a higher proportion (69%) of people in the area feel safe going out after dark (Partnership Intelligence Unit, SCC).

3.18 Health and Wellbeing

All cause mortality rates for the under 75's and mortality rates (28%) for cancer are slightly below the County average. A relatively small proportion (6%) of residents are Blue Badge holders. (Partnership Intelligence Unit, SCC)



3.19 In Bishops Lydeard 81% of residents and in Cothelstone 86% of residents are said to be in Good or Very Good Health (Census 2011).

3.20 Employment and Jobs

The Borough of Taunton Deane has a higher than average number of people not in

work (economically inactive), this is mainly due to retirement. 28% of the borough are economically inactive (defined as people who are unemployed or currently not seeking employment for reasons including retirement, studying, looking after family members or long-term sick) compared to 22.8% nationally (Census 2011).

3.21 In Bishops Lydeard there are 1,998 aged 16 to 74 and of these 604 (30%) are not in work. 18% of those not in work are retired (Census 2011).

3.22 In Cothelstone there are 82 aged 16 to 74 and of these 20 (24%) are not in work. 16% of those not in work are retired (Census 2011).

3.23 **Ethnicity**

Within the Parishes 97.57% of the population are White British (compared to 97.06% in Somerset) (Census 2011)

3.24 **Housing**

Bishops Lydeard Parish has 1198 dwellings (1171 households) and Cothelstone Parish has 48 dwellings (44 households) (Census 2011).

3.25 **Travel**

Households in Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone both have a higher than average number of cars per household as illustrated below:

No of cars in household	Percentage %				
	Bishops Lydeard	Cothelstone	Taunton Deane	South West	England
No cars	12	22	17.5	19	26
1 Car	29	34	44.9	43.5	42.2
2 cars	35	43	28.3	28.3	24.7
3 cars	9.9	11	6.8	6.7	5.5
4+ cars	3.5	9	2.5	2.6	1.9

3.26 This reflects rurality and indicates the reliance of households on the car as their main form of transport.

Challenges and Opportunities

3.27 The outcome from the community consultation is summarised by the SWOT analysis diagram below in Figure 3.4. From this, six key themes emerged: housing, employment, tourism, community facilities, recreation and open spaces and transport.

3.28 Challenges arise if development is permitted to ensure that the character of the Parishes is maintained through an appropriate mix of housing, whilst maintaining the landscape character. New development should also be designed so as not to increase congestion in the centre of Bishops Lydeard any further, and should, if possible, ease the existing congestion problems. Furthermore new development should provide an appropriate level of community benefit to meet these challenges.



Figure 3.4: SWOT analysis diagram

4 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

We aspire to build on the evident fondness that local people have for the village and surrounding countryside by ensuring development does not damage those essential characteristics. Development will be accompanied by the necessary economic growth and infrastructure. We aim to create a sustainable community of which future generations will be proud.

Objective 1: Housing mix to ensure cohesive and diverse communities

That the major rural centre of Bishops Lydeard is able to accommodate residents throughout their life-time should they so wish by providing a balanced mix of different house types and tenures.

Objective 2: Sustainable quality housing with green open space

New residential development should provide sustainable quality housing and places with appropriate green open space and other supporting infrastructure, and should be in keeping with the local character of the area.

Objective 3: Employment

Enhance opportunities for employment in the Parishes by maintaining and increasing the range, extent and scale of commercial and light industrial premises.

Objective 4: Tourism

Facilitate opportunities to capitalize on the presence of the Quantock Hills AONB and West Somerset Railway in the Parishes

Objective 5: Recreational and other open spaces

Conserve existing recreational and other areas of open space and the existing foot and cycle path network and provide further recreational open space, foot and cycle path provision which will promote health and wellbeing and reduce the need to travel by car.

Objective 6: Transport infrastructure

Seek to deliver sustainable transport infrastructure to alleviate traffic congestion and road safety issues which have the potential, unless suitably mitigated, to be exacerbated by future residential development in Bishops Lydeard.

5 POLICIES

Overview

- 5.0.1 The following policies seek to shape the future development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In particular, the Plan policies relate to the development of the allocated residential sites for Bishops Lydeard in the SADMP Published (Submitted) Plan. The proposed policies will ensure that these sites are developed sustainably with appropriate areas of green open space, supporting facilities, transport and other infrastructure.
- 5.0.2 These policies respond to concerns and issues raised during the community consultation process and seek to deliver the plan Vision and Objectives.
- 5.0.3 The Plan covers the two parishes of Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone. There are limited development opportunities in Cothelstone which along with small villages and hamlets are classed as Open Countryside in the Core Strategy. Cothelstone was designated a Conservation Area in 1992 but has no appraisal. The opportunity exists for the Parish Council to produce a conservation appraisal in conjunction with the local authority's Heritage Officer.

5.1 HOUSING

Context

- 5.1.1 Bishops Lydeard is expected to deliver up to 200 new dwellings (Core Strategy Policy SP1) over the next twelve years and these have been allocated on two sites (seven and eight) to the south side of village (illustrated in figure 5.1)
- 5.1.2 The TDBC SADMP Published (Submitted) Plan notes that parts of the sites (illustrated in figure 5.2) are visually prominent for the setting of Bishops Lydeard and will therefore need to be appropriately screened through landscaping and a planting belt to the south and south-east. In addition, land to the northern part of the Hither Mead site lies within the flood plain which, taken together, may reduce the net developable area to around 4.5 hectares and thus a development of around 150 dwellings would be anticipated.
- 5.1.3 This offers an opportunity to rebalance the housing provision in the local area to reflect changing demographics where there are already insufficient larger family houses and too few small dwellings for older people to downsize or retire to. A village the size of Bishops Lydeard, defined as a Major Rural Centre by the Core Strategy, ought to be able to accommodate residents throughout their life-time should they so wish by providing the different types of housing necessary to achieve this.
- 5.1.4 With this in mind any new development should complement what is there already and together provide a mix of starter, family, worker, retired, sheltered, extra care, residential and nursing homes to give people the opportunity to remain in, return to or move into the village or immediate local area.



- 5.1.5 The challenge with so much new housing proposed at one end of this already linear settlement, is to establish easy links back into the heart of the village and make new development feel part of the village. These links should include views and vistas concentrated back towards the village (and hills beyond), and safe connections through foot and cycle paths to discourage unnecessary car journeys. Planting woodland along the new southern edge of the village would separate it from the busy A358 (reducing noise and air pollution, although ‘bundling’ may also be necessary) and ensure Tatham Farm remains apart. This would help the new development to feel part of the village even though it may have its own central green space and small community facilities.
- 5.1.6 Whilst new development is planned for the Major Rural Centre, both Parishes include the outlying hamlets of East Lydeard, East Combe, Lethbridge Park, Cothelstone, Terhill, Kenley, Cushuish, Fennington and Toulton. The Parishes are essentially rural, part of a farmed landscape on the edge of Taunton Vale overlooked by the Quantock Hills, where farming comprises the major land use and business of the area. For planning purposes this is defined as “open countryside” where development is restricted.
- 5.1.7 There is some potential for development in line with Core Strategy DM2 although there is a general presumption against new housing in open countryside where rural housing is generally acknowledged to be in short supply. Small scale development of affordable housing on rural exception sites has gone some way to addressing this in places where there is an established need.
- 5.1.8 The continual refusal of local authorities to permit barn conversions on grounds of sustainability has resulted in a recent rebuke from government over so few permitted development orders (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015). Redundant buildings and old farm yards are brownfield sites and should be favourably considered for redevelopment. These should be judged on their merits and translate into some welcome sympathetic conversions which could help support small village schools, rural post offices and the local economy.
- 5.1.9 The forthcoming review of the TDBC Core Strategy ought to consider allowing limited development in many such small settlements. In particular for elderly residents to downsize to and for grown-up children who have had to move away to return to. The general presumption against new housing in the open countryside would remain but careful thought needs to be given to settlements which could reasonably accept some sensitive, small scale, appropriate development. The vast majority of small settlements across Taunton Deane are excluded from this at present.

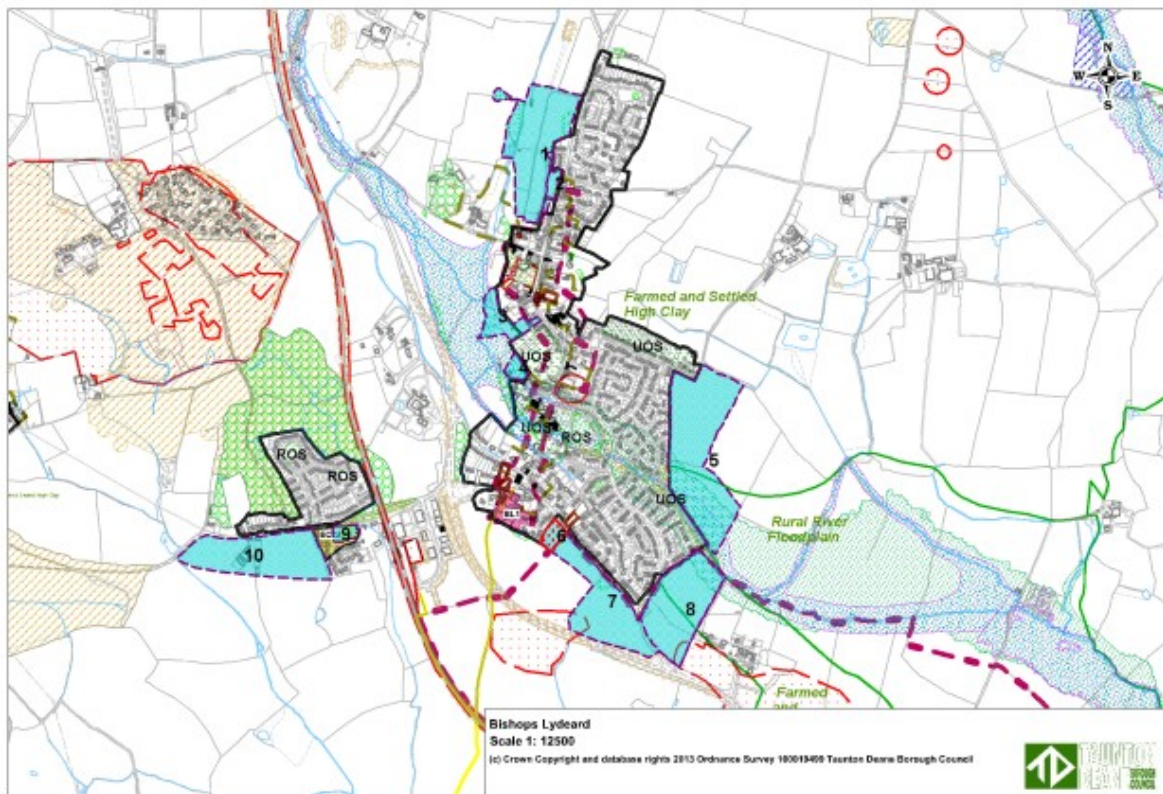


Figure 5.1: TDBC Site Allocation Management Plan Preferred Options – Sites 7 and 8 are the Preferred Site Options for Development in Bishops Lydeard

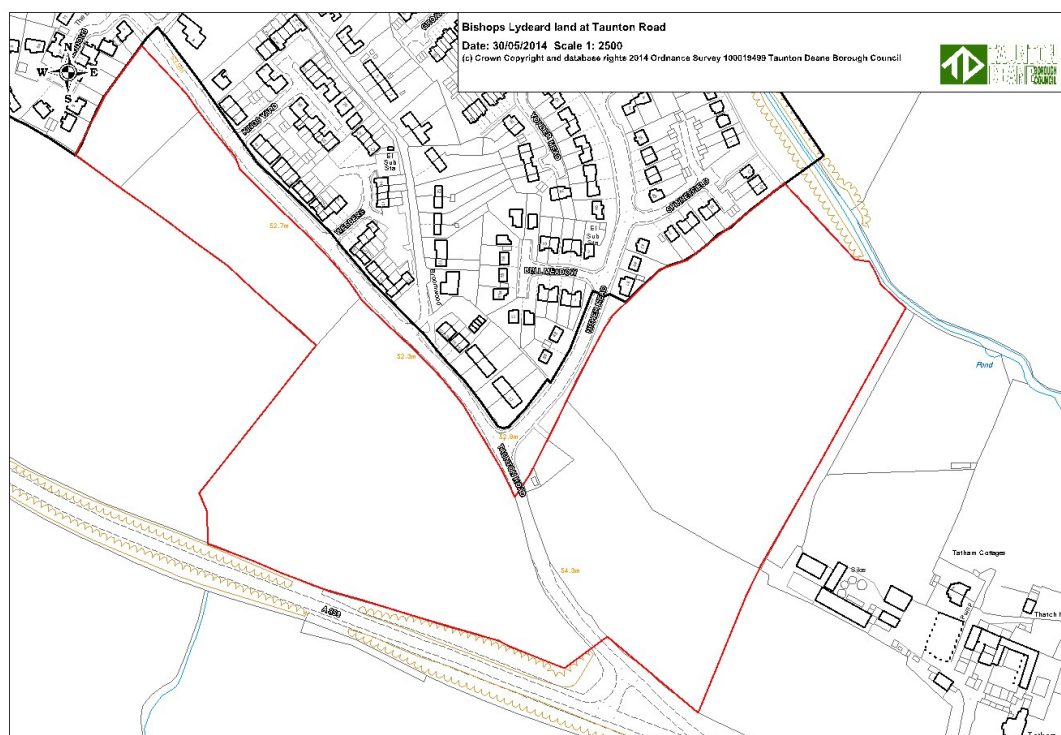


Figure 5.2: TDBC SADMP Published (Submitted) Plan Bishops Lydeard Land at Taunton Road

HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE – POLICY H1

Justification

- 5.1.10 Currently there are too few smaller dwellings for people to downsize or retire to and residents are either remaining in houses which are too big for their needs or having to move out of the village when they might prefer to downsize and stay. For the purpose of this policy, the term ‘older people’ refers to those aged 55 or older, though it is likely that the individuals requiring this type of housing will be considerably older.
- 5.1.11 The village already has some sheltered housing, a residential and nursing home at Dunkirk House which has a new dementia care unit, the parish alms houses and some small cottages with two bedrooms or less. More than one third of households in Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone have one person or one family member aged 65 or over. Many of us are living longer now and this proportion is set to grow. The largest total change is expected to be in the number of people aged 55 and over, while the proportion of people aged 15-25 and 40-50 is unlikely to change significantly (TDBC Locally Based Housing Projections: Fordham’s Research). Homefinder Somerset figures (as at 1st March 2015) indicate that 53 householders have registered Bishops Lydeard as their first choice preference to live; half of these require a 1 bedroom property. The need for additional smaller properties has also been identified through the local demographic data, the consultation process, and the residents’ survey.
- 5.1.12 Preferred options were for single storey properties to be included in any new housing development for older residents with the necessary facilities (such as scooter store). These properties should be built with future adaptations in mind to allow residents to remain in their homes for as long as possible.
- 5.1.13 Another option for older residents might be a granny annexe, which could be an extension to an existing family property, or part of a new build larger family home and which might alternatively be used for independent young adults on low incomes who are still living at home.
- 5.1.14 Access to village services such as local shops, buses and open spaces become more important as people age and general mobility reduces. Therefore properties for the active elderly who are still living at home should be sited closest to existing village facilities and link directly onto foot and cycle paths and mobility scooter routes.

Policy H1: Housing for Older People

Subject to a viability assessment, any new residential development site of 5 or more net additional dwellings in Bishops Lydeard will be expected to make provision, evidenced by local need, for accommodation suitable for occupation by older people. Such accommodation shall fulfill all the following criteria:-

- Be either 1 or 2 bed properties
- Be situated as close as possible to village facilities and services within the development site

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.1.15 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP4 (Housing), CP5 (Inclusive Communities) and NPPF paragraph 50

What difference will it make?

- 5.1.16 This policy will help to deliver **Objectives 1 and 5** by providing more accommodation for older people to remain living in the local area. This will be of benefit to the older people concerned, their families and will also help to support a diverse and cohesive community. This policy will also reduce the need to travel by car.

HOUSING FOR FAMILIES – POLICY H2

Justification

- 5.1.17 One third of resident questionnaire respondents felt that there was a need for more family housing. Three quarters felt proximity to friends and family was an important aspect of living in the Parishes with half considering it as important or highly important. There should therefore be more opportunities for families to remain in, return to or move into the village by the provision of some larger but not luxury housing with four or more bedrooms. TDBC Locally Based Housing Projection figures (Fordham's Research 2011) predict that an additional 1,903 4 bedroom properties will need to be built between 2008 and 2028 to satisfy need and 448 affordable 4 bedroom properties in the same period. Homefinder Somerset figures (as at 1st March 2015) indicate that 53 households have registered Bishops Lydeard as their first choice preference to live, approximately 22% of these require 3 and 4 bedroom properties.
- 5.1.18 There are larger houses in the village and surrounding area, however, these tend to be older properties which do not come on to the market very often (such as farm houses for example). Most new larger properties are luxury housing and concentrated at Lethbridge Park, a relatively new outlying hamlet sited in the grounds of an historic house. A further new development of 28 four and five bedroom properties and conversion of the mansion house and orangery to 18 apartments is currently underway in the grounds of Sandhill Park, a mansion house, which when complete will also offer luxury housing.
- 5.1.19 Extensions to existing properties where there is space can provide additional accommodation. This can also benefit both independent young adults earning (but not enough to buy/rent themselves) or offer a granny annexe for elderly parents wishing to downsize. However, there are limited opportunities in the village with a lot of older terraced properties where space is not always available, so more affordable family sized houses are needed. Where extensions are suitable and need planning permission, these will be supported by the Parish Council.



Policy H2: Housing for Families

Subject to a viability assessment, any new residential development site of 5 or more net additional dwellings in Bishops Lydeard will be expected to make provision evidenced by local need, for accommodation suitable for family occupation, including affordable units, defined as at least 3 bed properties with potential to extend to provide additional accommodation.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.1.20 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP4 (Housing), CP5 (Inclusive Communities) and DM3 by maintaining Bishops Lydeard's "sense of place".

What difference will it make?

- 5.1.21 This policy will help to deliver **Objective 1 and 5** by providing more accommodation for families living in the local area. This will be of benefit to the families concerned and will also help to support a diverse and cohesive community. This policy will also reduce the need to travel by car.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 5.1.22 **Objective 1** seeks to achieve the right housing mix to ensure cohesive and diverse communities in Bishops Lydeard, with the opportunity for residents to remain within the village throughout their life-time. To help achieve this objective, new housing developments must provide the right number and type of affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.
- 5.1.23 Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy requires that all housing schemes of five or more net additional dwellings shall include 25% as affordable units. The detailed requirements of this Policy are set out in the TDBC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in May 2014. This SPD defines what is meant by affordable housing and how it will be delivered. The SPD also requires:-
- A local connections clause in Section 106 agreements in relation to all schemes outside the Taunton and Wellington urban area to ensure that local people have priority access to affordable homes which can contribute to meeting the Parish's housing needs. (Where a scheme provides 25 or more affordable homes on one site a local connection clause is not required).
 - Design, quality and sustainability standards including a requirement that affordable housing should not be visually distinguishable from the market housing on the site in terms of build quality, materials, architectural details, levels of amenity space, parking provision and privacy. Furthermore affordable housing should meet the latest Homes and Communities Agency Design and Quality Standards.
 - That all types of residential development should be provided to meet local housing needs and that a developer may be required to undertake a local Housing Needs Survey in close liaison with the relevant Parish. This approach should be followed for the Bishops Lydeard allocated residential sites to ensure that the right affordable housing mix is provided to help deliver **Objective 1**. This would include the right mix of affordable housing for local

families (three bed plus houses) and local older people to allow them to remain within the village. These needs were clearly expressed through the various community consultation exercises and should therefore be properly addressed.

- 5.1.24 The Affordable Housing SPD is supported by the Parish Council and the delivery of affordable housing within the Plan area will be closely monitored as part of the Neighbourhood Action Plan.

HOUSING SETTING AND OPEN SPACE – POLICY H3 & H4

Justification

- 5.1.25 The challenge new housing faces when located at one end of a historically linear settlement, is not to feel isolated and turn away from the village towards Taunton. It is therefore important to establish easy links back into the heart of the village and make any new development feel part of it.
- 5.1.26 These links should include views and vistas concentrated back towards the village (and hills beyond) and use of new open green shared space between the new development and Hither Mead. New community woodland planting should be concentrated along the new southern V- shaped boundary of the village which separates it from the busy A358 (reducing noise and air pollution, although ‘bundling’ may also be necessary) and Tatham Farm further East which can then still remain apart. This would help the new development feel part of the village with a new shared green space although it may well have its own small community facilities.
- 5.1.27 Existing mature trees or old hedges should be conserved and incorporated into the development. Additional tree planting should include edible species such as fruit trees including hazel and walnut. The new woodland should be a mix of native tree species with a shrubby edge. Bio-diversity should also be encouraged by developing wildlife areas next to existing wildlife habitats.
- 5.1.28 Other links into the village through foot and cycle paths should help to discourage unnecessary car journeys and connect with those already established through Hither Mead. Residents should be able to walk, cycle and use a mobility scooter in safety. The development should be designed around people, with the car being confined to roads which do not impact directly on where people will be walking and cycling. All road access to the new development sites will be from Taunton Road. A four way junction somewhere between the existing Taunton Road / Hither Mead junction and the Taunton Road junction with the A358 is expected. Traffic lights or a mini roundabout should be placed at this junction to slow traffic as it approaches Taunton Road and the centre of the Bishops Lydeard. Nearly all of those who responded to the residents’ survey felt that open green space in the village was important and reflected the rural feel of the area as a valued aspect of living there.
- 5.1.29 Parts of the allocated residential land are unsuitable for housing, for example the length running immediately alongside the A358. This is suggested as one stretch of community woodland (the other alongside the boundary with Tatham Farm). The low lying flood plain and stream adjoining Hither Mead might provide another green open



space or woodland attracting wildlife and still serving as a flood plain. Consideration must be given to the provision of allotments as part of the open space provision. A green burial ground should also be considered although this will probably need to be sited elsewhere within the Plan area.

- 5.1.30 The residents' survey found that 91.5% of those who responded rated open / green spaces within the village as important or highly important. Comments in the housing section of the questionnaire supported the provision of further open spaces and safe play areas for children and seats for the elderly as part of any new development in Bishops Lydeard.
- 5.1.31 Once these green spaces are established after a few years of being managed by the developer, they are usually adopted by the local authority. In the past this has been Taunton Deane Borough Council but in the spirit of localism and diminishing budgets, consideration should be given to the Parish Council to succeed as owners with responsibility for management and precept accordingly once the relevant open space is adopted. An appropriate commuted maintenance payment would be expected with transfer of ownership secured through a legal agreement.

Policy H3: Housing Setting and Open Space

The sites allocated for residential development in Bishops Lydeard will be subject to a development brief prepared by the developer in consultation with the Parish Council and to be adopted by TDBC. The development brief must address the following criteria:-

- Include adequate play areas for younger children
- Include adequate off street car parking to minimize on street parking on existing routes
- Provide minimal levels of street and path lighting
- Maintain views towards the village centre
- Establish a community woodland along the new V-shaped southern village boundary
- Conserve existing mature trees and old hedgerows and respect Tree Preservation Orders
- Link new foot and cycle paths to the existing network
- All road links to allocated sites will be from Taunton Road
- Complete a flood risk assessment (FRA) and retain areas liable to flooding as green open space or woodland
- Provide adequate green open spaces, including informal open space areas for dog walkers with dog bin provision. Consideration should also be given to the possible provision of a skate park and other facilities for young people
- Include a number of serviced self-build plots.

- 5.1.32 A schematic diagram (figure 5.3 below) has been developed; it illustrates the criteria listed in policy H3 and H5. The required development brief must follow the schematic diagram as far as possible.

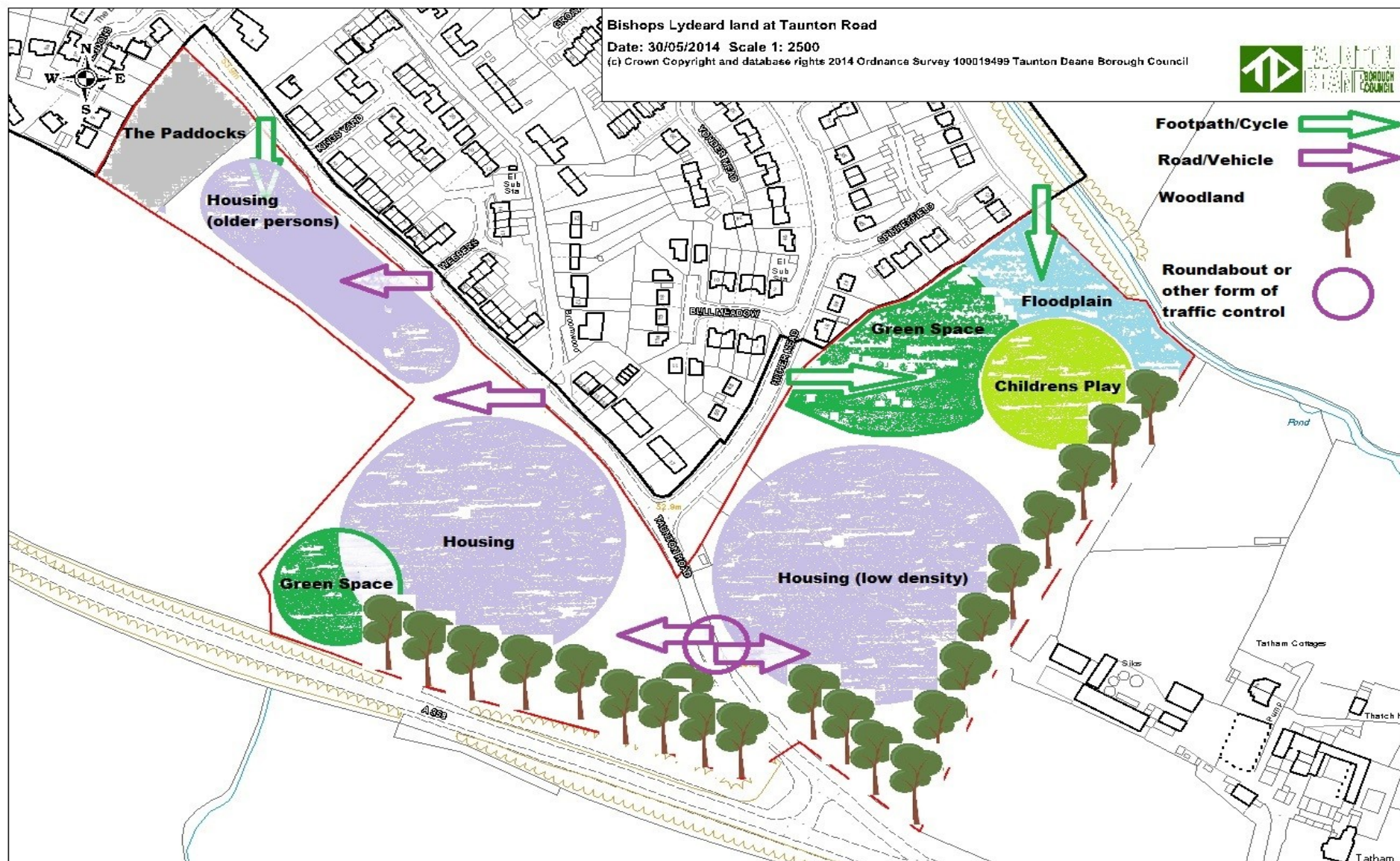


Figure 5.3 Schematic Diagram illustrating Policy H3 and H5 criteria

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.1.33 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policy CP4, (Housing), CP5 (Inclusive Communities), CP6 (Transport), CP7 (Infrastructure), CP8 (Environment), SP1 (Sustainable Development Locations), SP4 (Vision for Rural Areas), DM1 (General Requirements), DM4 (Design), DM5 (Use of Resources), DM3 by maintaining Bishops Lydeard's "sense of place" and NPPF Paragraph 58.

What difference will it make?

- 5.1.34 This policy will deliver **Objectives 2, 5 and 6** by helping to create new quality sustainable places which also maintain and enhance the character of the existing village.

Justification

- 5.1.35 Separate dwellings within gardens should be resisted. Gardens make up a significant part of green space within a built-up area (sometimes the only green space) and contribute significantly to health and wellbeing, character and feel of a place. It is considered that there is sufficient land allocated to housing in the village to make separate building in gardens unnecessary as well as undesirable and avoid too great a density of development within the village.

Policy H4: Separate Dwellings in Gardens

Development which results in the loss of or significant harm to the ecology, character of the local area, open space provision or landscape value of private residential gardens will not normally be permitted

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.1.36 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policy DM3 by maintaining Bishops Lydeard's "sense of place".

What difference will it make?

- 5.1.37 This policy will help to deliver **Objective 5** by retaining green open spaces within Bishops Lydeard.

HOUSING DESIGN AND DENSITY – POLICY H5

Design

- 5.1.38 Three quarters of residents in the residents' survey preferred new housing to be of a more traditional design in keeping with the historic centre of the settlement. New housing development should be a coherently attempt to mirror the local vernacular architecture and character which makes the centre of the village distinctive. Housing which has no discernible local character should be avoided.
- 5.1.39 New housing should be designed well and be built to last from quality materials. The materials used should be predominantly local sandstone, with render and appropriate brickwork. Roofs should have reasonably steep pitches and be of red clay or slate. Windows should ideally be made from timber, not plastic, and should not be too large. Guttering and other external features should further seek to reflect traditional styles.

- 5.1.40 New houses built to a traditional design can still be innovative and with ever increasing energy costs and the detrimental effect on the environment, more energy efficient building should be encouraged which results in lower fuel bills. Sustainable construction and high energy standards will be expected to meet or better the following as they will apply at the time of construction.



**Green Construction is about building a structure that is beneficial or non-harmful to the environment and resource efficient, otherwise known as green building. This type of construction is efficient in its use of local and renewable materials, and in the energy required to build it, as well as the energy generated whilst being used.*

**Natural Building is a similar concept, which is usually on a smaller scale and tends to focus on the use of natural materials that are available locally. Construction uses locally sourced materials as far as possible; water conservation which may including biological waste water treatment and re-use (a reed bed for example), the simple collection and recycling of rainwater for garden use; Low energy light bulbs; natural insulation materials; non-toxic or lead-free paints and wood preservatives; and locally-grown timber from sustainably managed forests.*

- 5.1.41 Sustainability can be defined as meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- 5.1.42 Renewable sources of energy help a development to be as close to carbon-neutral as possible. This might involve ground source heat pumps, as well as the use of photovoltaic panels for generating electricity and solar thermodynamic panels to heat domestic hot water.

Density

- 5.1.43 New residential development in Bishops Lydeard should include a variety of low and higher density housing to reflect the historic mix of housing types and densities in the village. Well over three quarters of the questionnaire respondents felt that larger gardens should be included in any new housing development. Should garden space be limited, allotments should be provided.
- 5.1.44 Any new development should be family and people friendly. This involves finding ways to tame the impact of the private car. Residents have to be able to walk and cycle in safety. The development should be designed around people, with the car being confined to roads which do not impact directly on where people will be walking and cycling.
- 5.1.45 On street parking is perceived as a problem through the centre of the village with many older houses with no off-street parking. In the comments put forward by respondents to the questionnaire, adequate parking to avoid further problems with street parking was highlighted as an important consideration in any new housing development. People tend to park closest to the preferred entrance into their property which should be borne in mind. This is well illustrated along part of the road through Cotford St Luke where street parking is preferred to what's allocated for parking behind the houses. Street parking does slow down through traffic though and can serve as inadvertent but effective traffic calming.

**Secured by Design is the official UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of designing out crime. The principles have been proven to achieve a reduction of crime risk by*

up to 75%, by combining minimum standards of physical security and well-tested principles of natural surveillance and defensible space. For example overlooked areas within a development are less likely to be chosen as hang-outs which may attract trouble and result in antisocial behaviour or even crime.

- 5.1.46 Whilst it is accepted that a certain level of street lighting will be necessary, this should be kept to an absolute minimum and capped to focus light on the ground where it is needed and so avoid unnecessary light pollution of the night sky. Infrequent low level lighting can be used for foot paths.

Policy H5: Housing Design and Density

The sites allocated for residential development in Bishops Lydeard in the TDBC Published (Submitted) SADMP will be subject to a development brief prepared by the developer in consultation with the Parish Council and to be adopted by TDBC. The development brief must address the following criteria:-

- Include a range of densities, with higher densities closer to village facilities and services and all provided with reasonable garden and outdoor amenity space
- Be in keeping with local character
- Be in accordance with a design code to be agreed as part of the brief
- Achieve Secured by Design standards
- Incorporate wildlife friendly planting and landscaping to encourage biodiversity
- On Taunton Road new houses that are built should reflect the street scene opposite with style of houses. Taunton Road will also contain the entry roads into the new developments (see schematic diagram in Figure 5.3 above)

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.1.47 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Climate Change), CP4, (Housing), CP5 (Inclusive Communities), CP6 (Transport), CP7 (Infrastructure), CP8 (Environment), SP1 (Sustainable Development Locations), SP4 (Vision for Rural Areas), DM1 (General Requirements), DM4 (Design), DM5 (Use of Resources) and NPPF Paragraph 58.

What difference will it make?

- 5.1.48 This policy will deliver **Objectives 2, 5 and 6** by helping to create new quality sustainable places which also maintain and enhance the character of the existing village.

5.2 EMPLOYMENT AND TOURISM

Context

- 5.2.1 Bishops Lydeard supports a range of commercial premises and community facilities and this variety of services is one of the reasons that the village is such a popular place to live and work. There is a range of shops including a small supermarket, a

butcher's, a newsagent, doctors surgery and pharmacy, petrol filling station and two vehicle repair garages, Post Office, hairdresser, interior design shop, tea rooms, two public houses, recently complemented by a Chinese takeaway. It has been many years since the village has had empty commercial premises for any length of time. A dental surgery in part of a former public house has also recently been permitted. In addition, we have a successful village hall, which supports a wide range of clubs and societies, two churches and a very active and well-equipped Scout group. The West Somerset Railway is one of the largest employers locally and the longest standard gauge heritage railway in the United Kingdom. Services normally operate over the 20.5 miles (33.0km) between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead. During special events some trains continue a further two miles south of Bishops Lydeard to Norton Fitzwarren where a main line connection allows occasional through trains to operate to and from the national network.



5.2.2 Around 20 years ago, the Broadgauge Business Park was developed alongside Bishops Lydeard Railway Station, by Taunton Deane Borough Council. Since then, vacancies at the business park have been rare and shortlived.

5.2.3 Agriculture continues to be an important industry in the Parishes.

EMPLOYMENT - POLICY E1

Justification

5.2.4 The questionnaire found, unsurprisingly, that 208 respondents worked in Taunton. Perhaps slightly more unexpected was the fact that 127 of respondents reported that they worked in Bishops Lydeard. This is a high number and demonstrates the importance of the Parishes, not only as a significant concentration of population but also as a focus for employment.

5.2.5 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to facilitate and support the growth of Bishops Lydeard's commercial activities. Such an approach firmly accords with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework allowing, as it does, an increasing number of local residents to work near where they live, minimising the need for travel on what are already very well-used highways.

5.2.6 The Plan seeks to enable existing businesses to expand and for new business development to cluster near existing businesses. Existing businesses in the village tend to fall into three categories, namely the shops & retail-type facilities, larger scale commercial and industrial premises and working from home. Shops and retail facilities are scattered throughout the village, largely along the linear pattern described by the older parts of the village while the larger scale premises are clustered around the railway station at Broadgauge Business Park.

5.2.7 Beyond Bishops Lydeard there is an extant planning consent for the conversion of a series of barns to commercial use at Cothelstone Manor, which has not yet been fully implemented.

5.2.8 The Parish Council does not have the power to expand the number of commercial and

industrial premises in Bishops Lydeard but, this Neighbourhood Plan, does have the ability to facilitate such an expansion if the market wishes to deliver it and the following policy seeks to provide such support, however, regard needs to be given to the potential impact on local residents that converting existing premises for commercial use may have. These are therefore noted in Policy E1 (noise, hours of operation, refuse etc). In relation to noise, regard should be given to the Noise Policy Statement of England (Defra 2010).

Policy E1 - Conversion of Existing Premises for Commercial Use

The conversion of existing properties (other than existing public houses, valued community services and uses such as doctors' surgery, school, shop, community facilities and veterinary surgery) to commercial use classes A1 to A5 and to light industrial use classes B1 will be supported provided that the amenities of neighbouring residential properties can be preserved. Amenity considerations will include the following:-

- Hours of operation
- Noise considerations
- Refuse storage, fume extraction and potential odours
- Outdoor seating areas
- Parking and delivery arrangements

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.2.9 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP2 (Economy) CP3 (Town & other centres), CP5 (Inclusive communities), SP4 (Vision for rural areas) and NPPF Paragraphs 28 and 70.

What difference will it make?

- 5.2.10 The policy will help to deliver **Objectives 3 and 5** by providing local employment, promoting community cohesion and by reducing the need to travel by car by helping to facilitate and support the conversion of properties to shops and retail type facilities where such use would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residents.

EMPLOYMENT – POLICY E2

Justification

- 5.2.11 The Parish Council is conscious of the important role in the community played by the village's two remaining public houses. As recently as 14 years ago, there were 4 public houses in the village and it is said that there were once as many as 13, going back to the 19th Century. The Council wishes to retain the last two public houses. In support of that aim, the Council has added them both to the Register of Community Assets, enabling the Community Right to Buy in the event that the existing or future owners should wish to sell. Regardless of whether the community is willing and/or able to mount successful purchases for these public houses, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect them from changing to other uses.

Policy E2 - Change of Use of Public Houses

Change of use of public houses in Bishops Lydeard (including the Lethbridge Arms and The Bird In Hand) to other uses will not normally be supported unless considerable efforts have been made to market the public house (for at least one year) and it has been justified by a viability assessment and marketing strategy to be prepared in accordance with TDBC Technical note: - Policy Guidance for the change of use of rural service provision and conversion of existing buildings.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.2.12 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP3 (Town & other centres), CP5 (Inclusive communities), SP4 (Vision for rural areas) and NPPF Paragraphs 28 and 70.

What difference will it make?

- 5.2.13 The policy will help to deliver **Objectives 3 and 5** by providing local employment, promoting community cohesion and by reducing the need to travel by car.

TOURISM

- 5.2.14 Tourism is an important element of Bishops Lydeard's economy and therefore **Objective 4** seeks to facilitate opportunities to capitalize on the presence of the Quantock Hills AONB and the West Somerset Railway (WSR).
- 5.2.15 Bishops Lydeard station is the southernmost terminus of the WSR dispatching and receiving trains to and from Minehead, and occasionally Bishops Lydeard receives trains onto the WSR from the national network.
- 5.2.16 The proximity of the WSR and the Quantock Hills, the UK's first officially-designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), draws many people to Bishops Lydeard. It has long been accepted that while the village has a good variety of local services (including two pubs and several B&B's), it does not do enough to hold the attention of the 200,000 people who get on and off trains at the railway station each year.
- 5.2.17 Planning permission exists for a range of commercial and tourism-based uses such as a restaurant on land to the west of Bishops Lydeard Railway Station illustrated in Figure 5.3 below. These facilities were granted planning permission as part of a scheme to boost tourism associated with the WSR. In order to 'enable' these uses, the project was made viable by the construction of 39 homes on land adjacent to the railway station. The remaining undeveloped land west of the railway station should be reserved for the purposes permitted and any further attempts to gain planning permission for alternative uses will not be supported. This approach is in accordance with Policy EC22 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan ("saved" by the Core Strategy) which allocates this land for recreational and tourist development and as such provides important support for the future development of the heritage railway and associated tourism uses.

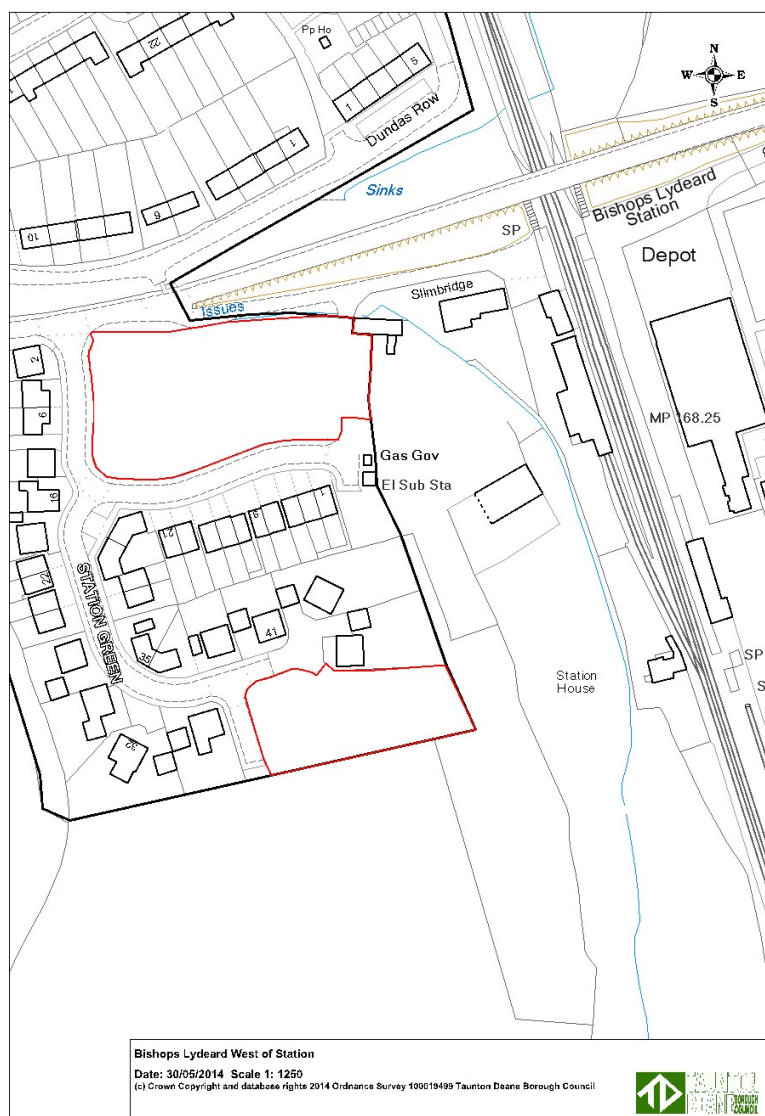


Figure 5.3 Land for Commercial and tourism-based uses to the west of Bishops Lydeard Railway Station

- 5.2.18 The TDBC SADMP published (submitted) Plan Policy MAJ5 supports retention of Policy EC22 . This approach is supported, and the Parish Council who will continue to monitor outcomes through the Neighbourhood Action Plan to ensure they help to deliver **Objective 4**.
- 5.2.19 The “saving” and implementation of Local Plan Policy EC22 will also help to deliver **Objectives 3 and 5** by creating local jobs and reducing the need to travel by car.

5.3 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Context

- 5.3.1 Transport affects village residents and the life of the village in a number of ways. The Neighbourhood Plan approach to transport focuses on the following issues:-

Health and Wellbeing

Residents should have ample opportunity to walk and cycle. These forms of transport have clear health benefits. Steps should be taken where possible to mitigate the effects of vehicle noise and emissions, particularly from heavy goods vehicles, as these are harmful. The volumes of road traffic in the village also need to be curbed to increase not only the actual safety of residents but also their perception of the village as providing a safe social space.



Sustainability and climate change

Increased emphasis over time on walking, cycling and public transport will reduce the overall CO2 emissions produced, making a positive contribution to combatting climate change and producing a more sustainable transport pattern. There should also be the development of charging points for electric and hybrid vehicles. These are likely to become increasingly popular in the period covered by this plan. Such vehicles may have a particular appeal for this community as it is thought that a significant proportion of vehicles are used to travel the relatively short distance to Taunton for work, shopping and leisure and so any range limitations would not be a limiting factor in their use.

Access to employment, services and leisure

The Plan has to recognise the primacy of the private car for the period governed by the plan. Although we may seek to reduce its role we must also recognise the importance of private car use for many residents in accessing their place of employment, or carrying out their employment, and accessing services and leisure opportunities, primarily in Taunton but also in other local centres.

General Information / background

- 5.3.2 Bishops Lydeard lies mainly to the north of the A358, regarded as a key or “county” road because of the high volume of traffic between Taunton and Minehead, particularly in the summer months. However a significant portion of the village sits to the south of the A358, including the Greenway estate and a relatively new development, Station Farm. This section of the A358, which divides the village, is a by-pass, built in 1967.
- 5.3.3 There are four roads which allow access from the A358 into the village.
- 5.3.4 The village itself is largely linear, with Station Road/Mount St/Church St/High St as the main road through the village. As this road leaves the village it becomes Cothelstone Road, joining the village to the hamlet of Cothelstone, before it goes over the Quantocks towards Bridgwater.
- 5.3.5 Most journeys from the village are to Taunton along the A358. However, residents travel on the A358 in the other direction, towards Minehead, and also to Bridgwater along Cothelstone Road. There is thought to be some element of commuter traffic to Bridgwater from those living in Halse and the surrounding area.
- 5.3.6 The village has one public car park in the centre close to the Village Hall, the Surgery, Mount Street garage and the village green. This is well-used. However, there is only

on road parking provision for users of the busy Co-operative mini-supermarket, church and other shops in that area of the village, so parking in that part of the village is often difficult and there are congestion issues.

- 5.3.7 The village is served by a bus service operated by First Bus, which runs between Taunton and Minehead. In the recent past two other operators “Nippy Bus” and “Webber Bus” have run services to the village but these are no longer in operation.
- 5.3.8 The village is the terminus of the heritage West Somerset Railway, which runs from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead. Although mainly a focus for tourism and railway enthusiasts, it is possible to travel on this railway using a resident’s travel card which reduces the cost, however, the service is not operated all year round and there are thought to be few using the line to commute. The railway does connect to the mainline at Taunton, and trains do travel along it, but for access and not as a publicly licensed service. West Somerset Railway Association does aspire to reopen the line to Taunton from Bishops Lydeard at some future point.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE – POLICY TR1

Justification

- 5.3.9 The residents’ survey revealed a lot of important information about transport issues:

Use of different modes of transport

The overwhelming proportion of respondents, 383 out of 432, or 89%, said they often used a car or van as their mode of transport. By contrast, only 50 out of 340 “often” cycled, whilst 168 out of 340 “never” did. 76 out of 373 often used the bus but 65 never did. 247 out of 395 walked often. A number of respondents commented that they would only cycle to Taunton if it were safer, reinforcing the argument for a cycle path. Others suggested that if the railway line were to operate a commuter service to Taunton they would use it.

Employment

Those responding to the survey gave details of where members of their family worked. Of 513 workers, 208 work in Taunton, and only 26 in Bridgwater and 17 in Williton or Minehead. A further 74 worked at other locations more than 5 miles away and it is presumed that many of those would be travelling via Taunton to those more distant locations. Significantly 139 worked in either Bishops Lydeard or Cothelstone, underlining a trend towards working from home.

Even with improvements to public transport and the provision of a cycle path to Taunton it is not practicable for many workers to abandon private car use. Also, there are a significant number of self-employed tradespeople or small family concerns based in the Parish who use their car or van routinely for work purposes.

Taunton Deane Borough Council has in recent years created a well-used Park and Ride scheme at Silk Mills, which is appropriate for drivers from the Parish. The Parish Council does not have any data on how many of those “driving to Taunton” are in fact driving to Silk Mills and making use of the Park and Ride scheme.

Transport concerns

The survey revealed a high level of concern about the following issues:-

- Vehicle speed through the village – highly important to 272/429 respondents

- Bus services – highly important to 191/421 respondents
- Parking – highly important to 274/424 respondents
- Road maintenance – highly important to 252/421 respondents
- Cycle Paths – highly important to 198/412 respondents
- Footpaths – highly important to 230/412 respondents
- Residents were canvassed on 2 other issues where the responses were less definitive. Speed humps/traffic calming was regarded as highly important by 129 respondents but not important by 106. HGV traffic was regarded as highly important by 167 of 396.

There was a further question which asked: “The Parish Council is considering the idea of “20 mph speed limit area” covering the entire residential area of the Bishops Lydeard village. Such a limit would be enforced only by signs, without physical traffic calming measures. Would you be in favour of such a scheme?” Of 436 responses 207 were definitely in favour and 83 probably in favour, giving roughly 3 to 1 in favour of such a scheme. In the light of this the Parish Council is working with the highways authority, Somerset County Council, to bring in such a scheme, in line with the provisions of the Department for Transport Circular 01/2013.

Addressing these concerns

- 5.3.10 Not all of these issues can be addressed effectively, and, indeed, some of them may even be mutually exclusive. Furthermore some of these issues are outside the scope of neighbourhood planning, such as the 20 mph proposal, which will therefore be pursued by the Parish Council through other channels as described above.
- 5.3.11 Although there is widespread concern about parking and many individual comments suggesting a need for more parking provision in the centre of the village, there is unlikely to be much chance of change in this area as there is physically no space of a reasonable size that could be dedicated to parking. Furthermore, it could be that the more parking that is provided the more people will make use of it and thus it just increases traffic, leading to a demand for more parking, in a downward spiral.
- 5.3.12 In this context, it should be seen that the traffic congestion in the middle of the village, created by a combination of traffic density and on-street parking in narrow roads, is an effective way of limiting speeds and an effective way of deterring private car use.
- 5.3.13 Respondents also noted the congestion problems outside the village Primary School at the beginning and end of the school day. These could be lessened were more children to walk or cycle to school. Many parents are understandably wary of letting their children do this because of the volume of traffic. New approaches are needed; perhaps including cycling proficiency work and “walking bus” provision to reduce the numbers of children currently being driven relatively short distances to school.
- 5.3.14 To avoid, as far as possible, any additional congestion in the centre of the village, it is crucial that any new residential development in Bishops Lydeard is planned appropriately and that any off-site infrastructure is planned and secured by a planning condition or planning obligation. It is current TDBC practice, as part of the planning application, to consult with the Parish Council regarding any such condition, obligation or agreement. The Parish Council welcomes, supports and encourages this consultation.

Policy TR1: Provision of Transport Infrastructure

The sites allocated for residential development in Bishops Lydeard will ensure that:-

- Development is planned and designed to minimize additional traffic through the village centre
- Adequate bus stops and shelters are provided at convenient locations
- Safe routes for walking and cycling are provided which conveniently connect with existing networks.
- On-site transport infrastructure is provided and brought into use before first occupation of part of the development which is to be served by that element of infrastructure. Any necessary off-site infrastructure shall be provided and brought into use in accordance with a timescale to be agreed by the local planning authority and secured by a planning condition or planning obligation, as appropriate.

Furthermore all new dwellings will include at least one charging point for electric and hybrid vehicles to the Somerset County Council standing advice specification.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.3.15 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Climate change), CP6 (Transport) and CP7 (Infrastructure) and NPPF Paragraphs 28 and 29.

What difference will it make?

- 5.3.16 This policy will deliver **Objective 6** by helping to provide transport infrastructure which the community feels is needed to alleviate some of existing concerns about transport congestion and road safety, which could worsen with new development in Bishops Lydeard and the surrounding area.

FOOT AND CYCLE PATHS – POLICY TR2

Justification

- 5.3.17 Responses from the residents' survey demonstrate the importance that residents place on the rural environment and associated rights of way and footpaths.
- 5.3.18 There is a long-held desire first appearing in the Taunton Deane Local Plan (TDLP) 20 years ago, to establish a cycle path between Bishops Lydeard and Taunton. The A358 is not regarded as a safe or desirable route by cyclists. The Cycle Path, which would connect Bishops Lydeard and Cotford St Luke with Norton Fitzwarren and on to Taunton, is supported by the Parish Council
- 5.3.19 A local group, Quantock Eco, is hoping to turn desire into reality and is undertaking a feasibility study into the project. The TDLP marked out the route as running down the railway line that connects Bishops Lydeard and Norton Fitzwarren, picking up existing cycle paths from there to Taunton.
- 5.3.20 Since that time, the village of Cotford St Luke has been developed and the plan has evolved to connect Cotford to this proposed network. In addition to forming a vital and sustainable transport link, the cycle path would form a major tourist attraction

in its own right connecting Taunton to the West Somerset Railway terminus at Bishops Lydeard through beautiful countryside.

- 5.3.21 Although on a lesser scale, similar cycle paths elsewhere in the south west have generated significant revenues for their local economies with both the Camel Trail in Cornwall and the Tarka Trail in North Devon are estimated to add over £5m each to their respective local economies.

Environment

- 5.3.22 Of those who responded 93% rated the rural environment of the Parishes as important or highly important. Furthermore 83.2% rated easy access to the countryside as important or highly important as something they enjoyed about living in the Parishes.

Rights of Way and Footpaths

- 5.3.23 A total of 62.2% said they 'often' walked and this increased 92.7% when including those who responded that they 'sometimes' walk. It is therefore not surprising that 79.6% rated the need for changes to the footpaths of the Parish as important or highly important.

Policy TR2: Foot & Cycle Paths

New residential or employment development and associated infrastructure will:-

- Provide appropriate public foot and cycle paths to connect with the existing foot and cycle path network

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

- 5.3.24 This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP6 (Transport), CP7 (Infrastructure) and NPPF Paragraph 29.

What difference will it make?

- 5.3.25 This policy will help to deliver **Objective 5 and 6** by supporting the existing foot and cycle path network and by developing good links with any new development, thereby encouraging inclusive communities and social cohesion. Good foot and cycle paths will reduce the need to use the car to access some of the facilities available in the village centre, thereby reducing traffic congestion while promoting better health and wellbeing.

6 MAKING IT HAPPEN

Viability and Deliverability

- 6.1 Proposals should be financially sound and deliverable. This will be achieved through ongoing liaison with both TDBC and relevant land owners. The TDBC SADMP (submitted) Plan Policy allocated residential sites (and alternative options) have also been given detailed consideration as part of the TDBC Site Allocations and Development Management Plan process.

- 6.3 If viability is disputed due to the affordable housing and other requirements necessary to create a satisfactory and sustainable form of development the “open book” process detailed by paragraph 1.7 the TDBC Affordable Housing Supplementary Document will be followed in consultation with the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Action Plan

- 6.4 A Neighbourhood Action Plan will be developed in consultation with local people and regularly reviewed by the Parish Council to ensure that the Plan policies are monitored and delivered. The Action Plan will also set out in more detail how CIL contributions will be allocated and aligned by the Parish Council to the priorities set out in Annex A Other Infrastructure.

Annex A: Other Infrastructure

1.1 Context

- 1.1.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into force for the TDBC area on the 1st April 2014. The CIL Charging Schedule published by TDBC sets out the types of development (including residential) which will be liable to make CIL contributions to be used to provide infrastructure needed to properly support new development.
- 1.1.2 The Charging Schedule states that 25% of CIL receipts will go to the relevant Parish Council where a neighbourhood plan is in place. If no neighbourhood plan is in place the Parish Council will receive only 15% of receipts received.

1.2 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PAYMENTS

- 1.2.1 The TDBC Core Strategy 2012 includes a Policy – CP5 Inclusive Communities which states that development proposals will promote sustainable development that creates social cohesion and inclusive communities; reduces inequalities, promotes personal wellbeing and addresses accessibility to health providers, inclusive housing, training, education, places of worship, leisure and other community facilities ensuring a better quality of life for everyone both now and for future generations.
- 1.2.2 The TDBC Corporate Business Plan 2013-16 includes an aim that the Borough has ‘a vibrant social, cultural and leisure environment’ by facilitating and supporting cultural and leisure opportunities and maintaining clean streets, good quality parks, open spaces, leisure and cultural facilities.
- 1.2.3 Alongside this local policy context, the appetite expressed in the residents’ survey about the importance of recreational and other facilities in the Parishes is clear.



With this in mind, the Neighbourhood Action Plan will support existing recreation, open space, foot and cycle path provision and also include realistic proposals for future provision to cope with any increase in population which is inevitable as a result of future residential development and to enable Bishops Lydeard to fulfil its role as a Major Rural Centre with a “focus for essential facilities for rural communities”.

- 1.2.4 Responses from the residents’ survey demonstrate the importance that residents place on green spaces within the village, village activities, community groups, the village hall and the village green. The detailed comments and responses received can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 1.2.5 Comments in the employment section of the questionnaire supported the creation of more leisure activities, particularly for children and young people.

Parish Priorities for Community Infrastructure Receipts

- 1.2.6 Financial contributions paid to the Parish Council as a result of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be held by the Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council and used to deliver priorities in the Neighbourhood Action Plan. Priorities

will include the following subject to detailed public consultation:-

- Improved maintenance and signage of public foot and cycle paths including a safer crossing of the A358 for those walking the “Whiskey Trail at Cedar Falls
- Improvements to the Bishops Lydeard village hall
- Improvements to the playground adjoining the Bishops Lydeard village hall
- Provision of additional green open space (which might include allotments) with connecting foot and cycle paths
- Support the provision of a cycle path connection to Taunton
- Provision of appropriately sited seating, particularly for the elderly
- Improvements to play area provision throughout Bishops Lydeard

1.3 **SUPERFAST BROADBAND**

1.3.1 The provision of good telecommunications is increasingly important in the modern world. It is even more important in isolated rural areas. There has been a market failure to provide good connectivity in rural areas resulting in a number of government backed initiatives to remedy this situation. The ability of these initiatives to deliver good connectivity to all existing and new developments is as yet unknown. The world of telecommunications and connectivity is a changing environment with new technological advances occurring all the time. However, it is considered that the provision of fibre optic connections is the most robust and future-proof method of delivering connectivity, and this should be the aim for all developments. Other technologies may provide interim solutions.

1.3.2 It is expected that all new dwellings, commercial buildings and related infrastructure will have access / connection to Superfast Broadband

New development should demonstrate how it will contribute to and be compatible with local fibre or internet connectivity. This could be demonstrated through a Connectivity Statement provided with relevant planning applications. Where possible and desirable, additional ducting should be provided that also contributes to a local access network for the wider community.

GLOSSARY

Affordable Housing	Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF.
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)	The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve natural beauty – which the statute includes wildlife, physiographic features and cultural heritage as well as the more conventional concepts of landscape and scenery. Account is taken of the need to safeguard agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and the economic and social needs of local communities. AONBs have equivalent status to National Parks as far as conservation is concerned.
Community Infrastructure Levy	A charge on new development. The charges are set by the local council, based on the size and type of the new development. The money raised from the community infrastructure levy can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods want.
Conservation Area	These are designated by the Local Planning Authority for their special architectural and historic interest. They entail restrictions on property alterations, tree works and demolition.
Core Strategy	The Core Strategy sets out a vision for Taunton Deane and strategic objectives, spatial strategy and policies for meeting that vision. It also reflects the strategic objectives of the 'Sustainable Community Strategy' as well as national planning policy. The Plan specifies the locations and quantity of growth to be accommodated within the Borough up to 2028 and identifies strategic site allocations, including mixed-use urban extensions.
Development Plan	This incorporates the Local Development Framework (a folder of documents detailing how planning will be managed for that area) and also any saved policies from the LPA's Local Plan.
Environment Impact Assessment	Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2011. The aim of Environmental Impact Assessments is to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects and takes into account in the decision making process. The regulations set out procedures for identifying those projects which should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects.
Homefinder Somerset	A partnership of local authorities and housing associations who are working together to make the process of finding a home simple and transparent for all applicants across Somerset.
Housing Needs Survey	A survey to identify the housing needs of local people and give up to date information about local housing circumstances and aspirations – including

	whether there is a local need for affordable housing and, if so, of what type and size.
Housing Register	The waiting list for people who have applied for council housing.
Lifetime Homes	Lifetime homes are ordinary homes designed to incorporate 16 design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life.
Listed Building	A building that has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. A listed building may not be demolished, extended or altered without special permission from the local planning authority.
Localism Act 2011	<p>The Localism Act was introduced in November 2011. The aim of the act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The act covers a wide range of issues related to local public services, with a particularly focus on the general power of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing. The key measures of the act were grouped under four main headings;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new freedoms and flexibilities for local government • new rights and powers for communities and individuals • reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective • reform to ensure decisions about housing are taken locally.
Material Consideration	A process in planning law which the decision maker must consider in deciding the outcome of an application.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	This document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
Public Open Space	Open space, including playing fields, owned to which there is a public right of access, used by the public primarily for recreation purposes.
Registered Park and Garden	The Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest provides a listing and classification system. The register aims to safeguard the features and qualities of key landscapes for the future, and protection is provided through the NPPF.
Section 106 (S106)	Section 106 agreements or planning obligations are an established mechanism for securing planning matters arising from a development proposal. They are commonly used to bring development in line with the objectives of sustainable development. The introduction of the CIL now limits their application.
Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP)	Site specific allocation DPD, to assist in meeting housing, employment and other targets and requirements specified in adopted TDBC Core Strategy. Will also contain a suite of 'detailed' development management policies.
Tree Preservation	A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by a local planning authority in

Order (TPO)	England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodland in the interests of amenity
Use class	The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. For example, Class A1 are shops, Class B1a offices, Class B1c light industry and Class C3 dwelling houses.

