

Mrs Marilyn Small  
Clerk to Bickleigh Parish Council  
BY EMAIL ONLY

13<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Marilyn

**South Hams District Council response to the draft  
Bickleigh Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for sending the Regulation 14 draft of your neighbourhood plan to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for comments. This will be referred to as the Draft Bickleigh Neighbourhood Plan (the NP) in this document.

The LPA fully supports the initiative for the Neighbourhood Planning Group to produce a neighbourhood plan and recognises that much work has gone into the development of the NP with extensive community involvement. The LPA commends the Bickleigh Neighbourhood Plan Group for all the hard work already put into the NP.

These comments have been provided to assist the Neighbourhood Planning Group in producing a draft NP for submission to the LPA at Regulation 15. The response is based on the information provided and available at the time of writing, which includes the Regulation 14 draft Bickleigh Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Version August 2017) and information on the neighbourhood plan website.

A number of suggestions are made below for further consideration prior to submission of the Plan to help ensure it is successful at examination and contributes to a strong planning policy framework for the Bickleigh.

Key comments on the overall NP are:

- 1) **Meeting the 'Basic Conditions'**. You are aware of the need for neighbourhood plans to meet certain 'basic conditions', as referenced in paragraph 4.2 of the NP.

The basic conditions are set out in [paragraph 8\(2\) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#): neighbourhood plans must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority
- not breach, and otherwise be compatible with, EU obligations

The LPA considers that the aims and objectives of the draft Bickleigh NP are in compliance with the basic conditions, and that there are no major issues that would prevent the NP being successful at examination and referendum. However, there are wording issues that should be addressed and these have been highlighted in the detailed comments below. The relationship of the NP with the emerging JLP could also be reconsidered, as follows:

- 2) **The Local Plan context.** The LPA acknowledges the challenge for NP groups of producing their neighbourhood plans while a new Local Plan is emerging, and the Bickleigh group is to be congratulated on working successfully within an uncertain Local Plan context. However, the draft Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) is currently at examination stage and once this stage is complete there will be considerably more certainty over the policies that the adopted JLP will contain. Given the timing of the Bickleigh NP, the NP group may do well to consider delaying finalisation of the submission draft until after the examination of the JLP. This would make it easier to ensure no conflict with, or unnecessary repetition of, final JLP policies. Individual instances of where this is likely to occur are picked up in the detailed comments below. It would be useful to provide appropriate JLP and NPPF policy references against all the NP policies.
- 3) **Affordable housing.** Evidence for affordable and local housing need appears to rely on data from Devon Home Choice and the 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The LPA would prefer to see a Local Housing Needs Assessment undertaken to ensure that the housing needs of the existing community within the Neighbourhood Area are taken into account in any future planning decisions. While the JLP has not identified any sustainable locations for market housing developments outside the urban fringe, it may be appropriate to provide for a site to deliver affordable housing for local people, perhaps progressed through a community led initiative.

### Comments on specific parts of the Neighbourhood Plan

Section, policy or text	Comment
Sections 1, 2 and 3	These sections contain valuable background information. However, consider whether some of this text may be better situated in a supporting evidence document in order to keep the main NP document as succinct and usable as possible.

<p>3. The Strategic Context</p>	<p>This section is a useful summary of the relationship between the NP and the Local Plan. It is likely to need updating to reflect the situation with the JLP at the time of submission/examination.</p> <p>The positive approach to Woolwell is noted. In this respect it would seem to be inevitable that the landowners / developers will comment and I suggest we convene a meeting to discuss this aspect of the NP.</p>
<p>4. Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Guidance has been replaced by Planning Practice Guidance at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance</a></p>
<p>Policy Bick01 <b>Ecology, Geology and Diversity</b></p>	<p>Consider what this policy adds to JLP Dev28. Map 2 is helpful and perhaps the most useful thing that the policy could do is to identify the local sites and areas that JLP Dev28 should apply to. This has been addressed in supporting text, but could be clearer in the policy. It is good to refer to the HRA and likely requirements for contributions from development within the 'Zone of Influence'. JLP STP13 sets out the relevant requirement and should be referred to in supporting text, if not in Policy Bick01 itself.</p>
<p>Policy Bick 02 <b>Access to the Countryside</b></p>	<p>For clarity, suggest replacing 'accessibility' with 'access to the countryside' in the policy wording,</p>
<p>Policy Bick 03 <b>Areas of Special Landscape Significance</b></p>	<p>Although the government is resistant to locally applied landscape designations, this policy is in conformity with JLP Policy TTV31 and as such is supported by the LPA</p>
<p>Policy Bick 08 <b>Heritage and Local Character</b></p>	<p>Consider what this policy adds to JLP Policies Dev20, Dev21 and Dev22. Dev 22 requires development to conserve or enhance the historic environment, including 'undesigned heritage assets of local significance and their settings'. It would be useful for the NP to add local detail to this JLP policy by identifying any heritage assets that are of particular value to the local community.</p>
<p>Policy Bick 09 <b>Local Green Space</b></p>	<p>The LPA supports the designation of Local Green Spaces in neighbourhood plans. However, no detailed evidence has been seen to demonstrate that these sites fully meet the requirements of NPPF 77. This evidence should be available when the NP is submitted at Reg 15. Guidance can be provided on this matter if needed.</p>
<p>Policy Bick 10 <b>Housing Mix</b></p>	<p>JLP Policy Dev8 requires a mix of housing to meet local needs and especially to address the needs of younger people, working families and older people. It should be considered whether Policy Bick 10 adds significant value to JLP policy.</p>

Policy Bick 11 <b>Housing for the Elderly</b>	JLP Policy Dev8 requires a mix of housing to meet local needs and especially to address the needs of older people who wish to retain a sense of self sufficiency. It should be considered whether Policy Bick 10 adds significant value to JLP policy.
Policy Bick 12 <b>Design and Layout</b>	The relevant JLP policy is Dev 10, to which this policy adds further detail.
Policy Bick 13 <b>Space Requirements</b>	JLP Dev 10 requires sufficient outdoor amenity space or gardens. Bick 13 adds further detail.
Policy Bick 14 <b>Local Food Growing</b>	The requirement for developments of over 25 dwellings to provide land for community food growing may be considered too restrictive. Suggest the addition of text such as 'where appropriate and viable'. However, the policy is supported by JLP Dev5.
Policy Bick 13 <b>Self-Builders</b>	No indication of the number of self-build plots expected from developments is given. Consider restricting floor size to ensure affordability. Other Local Authorities have used 100m <sup>2</sup> gross internal floor area as a guide.
Policy Bick 21 <b>Walking and Cycling</b>	JLP policy Dev 10 requires housing development to provide good pedestrian, cycling and public transport connectivity to existing developed areas, open spaces and local services such as schools and shops. Consider what Bick 21 adds to JLP policy.
Policy Bick 23 <b>Existing Community Facilities</b>	It is appropriate for neighbourhood plans to seek to protect valued local community facilities. The Policy is supported by JLP TTV2.
Policy Bick 26 <b>Existing Sports and Recreation Facilities</b>	It is appropriate for neighbourhood plans to seek to protect local Sports and recreation facilities. The Policy is supported by JLP Dev 3.

I hope you find these comments useful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like further clarification on any of them.

Best wishes,



Thomas Jones  
COP Lead, Placemaking