

CHAPTER 20

Bishops Tawton Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

20.1 Bishops Tawton is situated to the east of the A377, approximately half a kilometre south of Bishops Tawton Cross on the North Devon Link Road and approximately 1 kilometre south of Barnstaple. The village is located within the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration.

ENVIRONMENT

Landscape

20.2 Bishops Tawton is located on rising land on the eastern side of the Taw Valley, where the landscape is dominated by Codden Hill to the south east and by the wide valley of the River Taw to the west. Whitemoor Hill and the rising land to the north east of the village are dissected by Venn Stream, which flows westwards from Landkey through the village to join the River Taw.

20.3 Codden Hill forms the western end of a distinctive series of 'whale backed' limestone and chert ridges, which are uncharacteristic of the surrounding types in North Devon and are protected as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The extent of the AGLV is shown on Inset Map 9 and the Proposals Map where Policy ENV6 will apply.

20.4 Although Bishops Tawton is not within a protected landscape designation, the surrounding landscape is considered to be attractive countryside. The village is prominent from the main road and from parts of Tawstock on the opposite side of the valley.

Nature Conservation

20.5 There are no sites of national nature conservation importance around the village although there are two County Wildlife Sites. Codden Hill to the south-east includes lowland dry heath and dense bracken, whilst Bishops Tawton Saltmarsh on the eastern side of the River Taw to the north of the village includes saltmarsh and semi improved grassland. There is also a Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (RIGS) at the western end of Codden Hill. These sites are identified on Inset Map 9 and the Proposals Map where Policy ENV12 will be relevant.

Historic Environment

20.6 The village centre of Bishops Tawton retains much of its historic pattern and character. A Conservation Area has been designated for the southern half of the village and includes the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist. Proposals within the Conservation Area will be considered against Policy ENV16.

Flood Risk

20.7 The Venn Stream flows from east to west through the centre of the village where residential properties have experienced flooding regularly. Areas at risk of flooding based on the Environment Agency's indicative floodplain map are shown on Inset Map 9, although these do not identify more localised problems. In order to mitigate the risk of flooding within the village, any new developments will be assessed against Policy DVS6 and should incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to manage and control surface water in accordance with Policy DVS7.

20.7A Water draining from the hills and lanes either side of the Venn Stream causes localised flooding within the centre of Bishops Tawton. Improved land and highway drainage systems are needed. Consequently, any new development permitted on either side of the valley, which would increase the risk of flooding in Bishops Tawton, will be required to contribute towards the cost of these improvements.

HOUSING

20.8 A development boundary is identified for Bishops Tawton on Inset Map 9. Within the development boundary residential development will be acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy HSG2. Outside of the development boundary the principle of residential development will not be acceptable unless it complies with Policies HSG8, HSG9, HSG9A or HSG10.

20.9 There are no large previously developed sites within the village. No significant areas of land are specifically proposed for residential development, although a small housing site is identified as part of a package to provide public open space in the village (see Proposal BIT1).

EMPLOYMENT

20.10 The village is largely dependent on Barnstaple for employment opportunities with the local economy dominated by agriculture, Venn Quarry to the east and the provision of local services.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Sport and Recreation

20.12 The only existing recreational open space within Bishops Tawton is the Stanley Verne Playing Fields east of Sanders Lane, which includes a children's play area and junior football pitch. This site is identified on Inset Map 9 and will be protected from other uses in accordance with Policy REC6. The Public Open Space Strategy undertaken by the District has identified the following deficiencies for public open space provision within Bishops Tawton:-

- ◆ *Sports pitches*
- ◆ *Informal open space*
- ◆ *Equipped children's play area.*

Land South of Sentry Lane

20.13 Land south of Sentry Lane, including the former allotment site, is proposed for a sports pitch and public open space. The site will need to be levelled in order to provide a formal playing pitch. In order to support and facilitate its provision, up to five dwellings are also proposed along the road frontage adjoining the playing pitch. These dwellings will only be permitted in connection with the development of the playing pitch and will be required to contribute towards the cost of improving the land and highway drainage system for the village in accordance with Policy DVS7 (see paragraph 20.7A).

20.14 In view of the elevated nature of the site and its visual prominence, the development of the playing pitch and dwellings will need to be sensitively designed, sited and landscaped. Extensive and sensitive boundary treatment will be required to the south and east in order to minimise any impact on the surrounding area in accordance with Policies DVS1, DVS2 and ENV1. Additionally, the existing hedgerows and trees on the site should be retained wherever possible.

PROPOSAL BIT1 (PUBLIC OPEN SPACE)

LAND SOUTH OF SENTRY LANE, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 9, IS PROPOSED FOR A SPORTS PITCH AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, AND UP TO 5 DWELLINGS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT AND FACILITATE ITS PROVISION.

20.14A In addition to the identified need for additional public open spaces, there are opportunities to improve accessibility to existing recreational facilities at Rock Park within Barnstaple. There are public footpaths and cycleways along the eastern bank of the River Taw and along Pill Lane to the north of the village. Support will be given to proposals that enhance the links between Bishops Tawton and Barnstaple (see Proposal BAR16 and paragraph 12.113).

20.15 Codden Hill provides an important recreational opportunity for the village. It requires active and careful management to improve public access whilst ensuring its landscape and nature conservation value are not eroded but enhanced.

Education Provision

20.16 Bishops Tawton primary school is at capacity. The village falls within the designated area of Barnstaple's Park Community School, which has spare capacity.

Car Parking

20.17 There is no existing public car parking within Bishops Tawton, although there is a need for a small car park within the village. A site fronting The Square has been identified and is shown on Inset Map 9.

PROPOSAL BIT2 (VILLAGE CAR PARK)

LAND FRONTING THE SQUARE IS PROPOSED FOR A VILLAGE CAR PARK, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 9.