

Mr Mike Parker
Director for Economic Prosperity & Place
Wyre Forest District Council
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
KIDDERMINSTER, Worcs
DY11 7WF

31st March 2015

Dear Mr Parker

Application for Designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Bewdley Town Parish

Bewdley Town Council, being a 'relevant body' as required by legislation under Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, wish to formally apply for the administrative area of Bewdley, encompassing the parish wards of Bewdley East, Bewdley West and Wribbenhall to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area, with the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. A resolution to make this application was agreed by Bewdley Town Council on 2nd February, 2015.

We confirm that, as a Town Council accountable to the community that it serves, Bewdley Town Council is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act (inserted by paragraph 2 of Schedule 9 to the Localism Act 2011).

The Neighbourhood Area defined by the Town Council is the area outlined in black on the attached map. We consider that area so defined to be an appropriate area for designation as a Neighbourhood Area for the following reasons:

1. The Neighbourhood Area defined on the map comprises the exact administrative area of Bewdley Town Council. The area incorporates the Town Centre and the Conservation Area of Bewdley and is a well-recognised political and geographical area.
2. The Town Council understands that the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan provides a statutory right for local people and businesses to plan for the future in a fair and sustainable way. It will enable direct influence over the long-term future development of this whole area; seek to protect the unique historic character of Bewdley and its heritage, whilst promoting sustainable growth and prosperity. The

whole of the community will be involved in the preparation process and referendum vote, following independent examination.

3. Wyre Forest District Council's Site Allocation and Policies Local Plan, adopted July 2013, includes indicative development areas for Bewdley in terms of both residential and business – retail and office - development. However, in addition to existing identified sites within the Bewdley boundary, the plan states there may be instances where residential development is permitted on sites which have not been specifically allocated ('windfall development'). A 'call for sites' was undertaken by Wyre Forest District Council during 2014, as part of its evidence base preparation to inform its Local Plan Review, due to start in 2015. The area proposed for designation under the Neighbourhood Plan comes within the area covered by the Local Plan Review, hence future development will impact upon its residents and businesses. Bewdley Town Council will aim to work closely with the District Council Local Planners to ensure that there is a logical and formal approach in place throughout its Neighbourhood Plan process in order that there is conformity with the District Council's updated Plan and that a timetable is agreed to enable effective joint working based on the resources available.

Bewdley Town Council has set up a Steering Group to lead the Neighbourhood Planning process. Meetings/communication channels have been opened with the Senior Forward Planning Officer, Maria Dunn at the District Council. Funding channels have been explored and dialogue with other local Town Councils already involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan has been established, in order that we can draw on best practice and also identify possible problem areas at an early stage.

Bewdley holds a Royal Charter (Edward IV, 1472) and is an area with a rich agricultural and industrial history. It is a gateway to the Wyre Forest and the English-Welsh borderlands. Its very uniqueness and historical backdrop has made it a favoured spot for tourists to Wyre Forest as well as anglers and is popular for its many diverse attractions, such as the Severn Valley Steam Railway, National Cycle Network route, West Midlands Safari Park, etc. Bewdley Town Council envisages that the Neighbourhood Plan will address environmental, social and economic issues such as employment opportunities, housing needs, infrastructure requirements, utility services, environmental issues (particularly flooding) and improved recreation facilities. The design and character of development and its relationship with the landscape will aim to fit within the prescribed parameters of the Local Plan and, at the same time, seek to reflect and meet the needs and expectations of the people living within the proposed Designated Area.

We formally request that you consider this area designation request application. I am happy to answer any queries you may have.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Inman
Town Clerk