

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDXX-P

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-15 18:06:07**

### Your details

What is your name?

**Forename:**

Andrew

**Surname:**

Tatham

Are you making an individual response or on behalf of an organisation?

Individual

**If individual, please tell us what type:**

Resident of Somerset West and Taunton

**Name of organisation:**

Please choose one from the drop-down list:

What is your (personal/organisational) address?

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What is your email address?

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### 1. Overview and objectives

Do you agree that these are the right Objectives for the Local Plan?

Agree

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

All 9 objectives are worthy. However, there are strong linkages between them. For example, 3 inevitably requires more land, which will often be at the expense of 7. Similarly, in order not to compromise 5 and 6, 3 must explicitly depend on 4, and while 6 and 8 together will encourage 9, they will have to be supported by 4 and 5, etc, etc. In other words, this is an extremely interdependent matrix which will need detailed plans at the level of individual towns/villages to bring to a desirable fruition.

### 2. Carbon neutrality

**Question 1a: Should we aim to require that all newdevelopment is 'zero carbon' by as soon as possible (e.g. by 2025) or give slightly more time (e.g. by 2030) for developers to adapt their design approaches, materials and suppliers?**

As soon as possible (e.g. by 2025)

**Question 1b: Should we allocate sites for specific renewable energy development or identify broad areas which we consider suitable?**

A combination of both of the above

**Question 1c: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

These are generally sensible policies.

1c/4 could be encouraged by a significant emphasis on micro-HEP plants especially on the shorter northwards-draining rivers and the acceptance of solar panels even in sensitive areas and on listed buildings.

1c/5 needs expanding beyond 'best and most versatile' as even poor quality land can be significant in providing settlements with landscape quality and residents with quality of life.

### 3. Sustainable locations

**Question 2a: Do you agree with the tiers that identifies Taunton followed by 6 tiers covering the other settlements?**

Yes

**If not, what changes would you make and why? (200 words max):**

**Question 2b: Do you think Watchet and Williton should be seen as associated settlements for the purposes of the Local Plan due to their close proximity and in complementing the services of each other (and therefore be in a higher tier to Bishops Lydeard and Wiveliscombe)?**

No - Watchet and Williton should be seen as separate settlements

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

The answer is really 'yes' and 'no'. In terms of services provided, it is reasonable to associate their complementarity. However, in terms of development it is important to ensure their individuality, both by a clear physical and visible separation and in terms of the type of settlement (coastal town, tourist destination, etc., versus road transport node, service centre, etc.)

**Question 2c: Do you think we should carry on with the way housing is currently distributed across our area (see pie chart) or should we be doing something different, such as one of the three options suggested below?**

Increase housing in Taunton and Wellington; and reduce in Minehead and Rural Centres

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

I want to add, and Minor Rural Centres. The main reasons for focussing on Taunton/Wellington are the lack of transport and employment in RCs and MRCs and the effect that not focussing on T/W will have on the District's carbon footprint. 100 new homes in T/W will have a much smaller carbon footprint than 100 homes in MCs/MRCs because of the additional commuter miles the latter will generate.

**What else do you think about housing distribution in our area?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

On i & ii) above :As noted above, there should be a change to the pie chart with a higher proportion in the T/W corridor

iii): I suspect that there is room for improvement !

iv): A re-instated station would certainly drive a housing increase; with the improvements on GWR, Wellington would be virtually a commuter station for London. Whether this makes it more sustainable is questionable.

v): HPC is a temporary effect and can be ignored. More significant is the availability of infrastructure (shopping, leisure activities, etc.). Given that Minehead is more than twice the population of W/W it makes more sense to capitalise on that rather than have to develop a whole new infrastructure from scratch (and probably damage the existing strong community spirit by over-rapid growth).

vi): Yes they should, but in co-operation with Sedgemoor.

**Question 2d: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

2b/1 and 2b/2 are MOST important and should be strengthened into an absolute requirement alongside the affordable housing element.

2b/3 and 2b/4 are both eminently sensible.

### 4. New and affordable homes

**Question 3a: Should our housing requirement figure match the Government's minimum figure of 702 dwellings per year or should we have a higher figure?**

The housing requirement should be the Government's minimum figure of 702 dwellings per year

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

Or fewer, since the government figure is not arrived at by consideration of the actual needs in SWT.

**Question 3b: How should we proactively plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches?**

Allocate sites specifically for pitches.

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

Although it will be important to determine the actual real demand for such pitches within SWT rather than inflated estimates by interest groups. Once allocated, they will need to be carefully monitored with size and location adjusted proactively in the future.

**Question 3c: Should we require that all new housing developments include a percentage of new homes that are designed to be accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible?**

Require a proportion of dwellings to meet the category standard as set out in Building Regulations Part M.

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

This is particularly so within the old WS area where the proportion of elderly people is already notably higher than the national average.

**Question 3d: How should we provide for custom self-build plots? Should we:**

Identify and allocate specific sites for self-build plots in locations related to where people want to live according to our self-build register; and/or, Include a requirement for all housing development sites over a threshold to include a proportion of plots as self-build plots; and/or, Allow self-build plots on Rural Exception sites provided that they are secured as affordable housing for ever

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

It is important that these are included within the 702 annual figure noted above.

**Question 3e: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

These are sensible additional policies. However 3e/6 will need to be carefully and sensibly interpreted in light of conversion under 3e/7.

## 5. A prosperous economy

**Question 4a: Should we ensure the growth of our local economy through an increase in the proportion of higher value jobs (with limited increase of jobs overall) or through a significant increase in the number of jobs?**

Develop bespoke and realistic growth ambitions linked to the Council's Economic Development (Prosperity) Strategy (i.e. increase the proportion of higher value jobs within existing overall job numbers and not pursue a significant increase in job numbers overall); or

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

Given the existing relatively low level of job values, it is sensible to 'level up'. However, in those parts of the District where overall unemployment is high and where transport links are poor, some alignment towards the 'Heart' ambitions would be advantageous.

**Question 4b: Should we keep all of our existing employment sites and allocations in employment use or should we allow the loss of some to other uses? How should we decide which ones to lose?**

Develop flexible policy allowing for the loss of any existing/ proposed employment site subject to specific criteria

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

Given the rapidly changing nature of employment requirements, the greater the flexibility, the better.

**Question 4c: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

It would be good to encourage the 'repopulation' of town centres. To achieve this (which has an added benefit for the council's carbon policies) edge of centre shopping centres, especially in food retail, should be strongly discouraged if not banned altogether.

All policies that encourage the re-use and/or the re-purposing of the existing built environment rather than new developments on green field sites should be strengthened.

Indeed, given the positive view of the existing housing stock supply, the Council could prohibit all greenfield developments.

## 6. Infrastructure

**Question 5a: On what infrastructure should we prioritise developer contributions? (Please rank in order of priority)**

**IO - 5a - ranking - Affordable housing:**

3

**IO - 5a - ranking - Designing for the Climate Change Emergency:**

2

**IO - 5a - ranking - Accessible, Adaptable and Wheelchair Accessible homes:**

4

**IO - 5a - ranking - Strategic Infrastructure (schools, transport, community facilities):**

1

**Question 5b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Further Policy requirements should cover provision of community 'goods', e.g GP surgeries, employment opportunities, the necessary construction of roads/bypasses, etc for affected communities. For example the line of a 'Watchet Relief Road' from Cleeve Hill via the Mill access road to Brendon Road needs to be protected, even though it might at present be considered unaffordable.

Given the Council's belief that existing land commitments are in good shape, the Council could certainly require more, rather than less, of developers.

## **7. Connecting people**

**Question 6a: How can we encourage people not to use their car when travelling into our towns for shopping and work? How can we provide more opportunities for using public transport in rural areas?**

**Please provide comments (200 words max):**

Encouraging people not to use their car : This is a matter of a major culture shift. However, it must be the case that if public transport is non-existent, unreliable or infrequent, the shift will not occur. This is particularly the case in rural areas where a significant proportion of public transport users are elderly and presently have a free service.

More opportunities for using public transport : It has to be recognised that even with dial-up services, the reach of public transport beyond urban/suburban areas and away from main roads is always going to be problematic. As a case in point, a carbon footprint benefit analysis of the HPC bus services would be interesting , but very valuable.

**Question 6b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

These are sensible, although I don't think there are many 'disused...corridors' (6b/3) in SWT.  
Design work under 6b/2 should assume smaller, rather than larger types of bus.

## **8. The natural and historic environment**

**Question 7a: Are there any specific measures that you would like to see new developments deliver to improve biodiversity locally?**

**Please provide comments (200 words max):**

All new developments should include a minimum proportion of the total area assigned to biodiversity. This is in addition to any individual non-built land, e.g. back gardens, allotments, etc.

All developments within a given area should be punctuated by green corridors and each area of development should have a buffer zone around it.

**Question 7b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

7b/2 is particularly important within any given development.

7b/5 should be strengthened.

Under 7b/9 it must be noted that very localised surface water flows can be very damaging and that these can easily occur away from areas of recognised flood risk.

Under 7b/6 and 7b/11, it is important that the boundaries of, or buffer zones around, 'heritage assets and their settings' and 'sites of archaeological importance.or ...potential' are set widely.

7b/9 should be extended to provide protection for landscapes beyond zones around water courses and wetlands. Locally determined areas of landscape importance should be designated.

## **9. Thriving coastal and rural communities**

**Question 8a: How should we manage development in rural areas? Should we:**

Have settlement boundaries across the District; or

**Question 8b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

8b/1 negates the need to apply option 2 above.

8b/4 needs to be extended to all categories of agricultural land.

8b/6 & 7 are crucial tests for the Council.

This whole section needs much greater emphasis and expansion. It is the rural/coastal part of the District that provides the tourism income and much of the biodiversity that characterise our District. It is also the part of the District where many of the challenges from developer pressure are most acute.

## **10. Wellbeing of our residents**

**Question 9a: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

This section needs to be strengthened :

9a/1 should include all developments, not just larger ones.

9a/2 should include all sites, not just key sites.

9a/3 requires developer investment in public transport as part of the development.

9a/5 contamination and instability are more than 'considerations' - they are often absolute constraints against development.

9a/7 the word 'Taunton' should be omitted - it is the skyline throughout the District that is important.

## **11. Policies for our places: Taunton**

### **Question 10a: How do you think we could introduce more housing into Taunton Town centre?**

Requiring a housing mix skewed towards dwellings with fewer bedrooms; or

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

Although there may be scope for car free developments as well, especially if edge of centre retail/leisure developments can be banned.

### **Question 10b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

10b/2 : There is no real need to allow heights to increase - indeed, such a permission would negate 10b/7.

10b/6 : integrating these new communities is a key challenge for the Council and its partners (including, for example, faith communities, voluntary organisations, sports clubs, etc.)

## **12. Policies for our places: Wellington**

### **Question 11a: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Specific policies of this sort are to be encouraged for all settlements.

## **13. Policies for our places: the Coastal Strip**

### **Question 12a: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

12/a2 : Because of the paucity of public transport, parking for local residents needs to be at the ratio of 2 spaces per house.

12a/3 : 'Accessibility by sea' - the Council urgently needs to take firm control of the harbours.

An additional policy is required to encourage the enhancement not just of waterfront sites, but of the whole area of each centre.

Detailed policies need to be established BEFORE any new or pending planning application is determined. This is especially true of Watchet and Williton where there are a number of pending applications that are taking advantage of the fact that the present plan predates the availability of the Wansborough Mill site.

Furthermore, the applications are being considered in isolation rather than against an updated overall plan.