

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDX4-J

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-15 12:35:12**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Christopher

Surname:

Miller

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:

Community Group

What is your (personal/organisational) address?

██████████
██████████
██████████
██████████
██████████

██████████
██████████

What is your email address?

██████████
████████████████████

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):

Generally OK, however, the so called Climate emergency appears to be the new shibboleth around which is being wrapped all sorts of spurious issues, one of which includes increases in Council tax, increases in parking fees,, basically anything that nets the Council greater revenue, all in the spurious name of 'climate emergency'. Basically you are now using climate emergency as the new 'elf and safety' to justify anything, however silly, upon the local populus.

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?

Slightly more time (e.g. by 2030)

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

Identify suitable areas through criteria based policies

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Here we go again; the questions are posed so as to invite the agreement without any disagree option; it's a bit like being asked to vote for 'dictator 'A' or dictator

'B'.....well actually I'd like to vote for another candidate.

In essence, when you number crunch the figures, all we are going to get is a 'yes' to either options. Actually as a member of the public, whose opinion is being sought, I think a date well after 2030 is potentially reasonable, but no option to say so....a gagging technique

3. Sustainable locations

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

No

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

Taunton and Wellington should be the key towns, where jobs and communications are better. Minehead is already packed to the gills. We are already seeing a very pleasant town being swamped with tin box trading estate developments in unacceptable locations. This detracts from or hoped-for venue as a tourist venue. We've had enough house building.

What you fail to appreciate, is that Brexit may relieve our country of the catastrophic housing and infrastructure pressures previously forced upon us by open borders from Europe. You as planners have no crystal ball, yet you are setting up structures allowing vast housing areas to rape or countryside and all in perpetuity. It just seems to be a numbers game to you folk.

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):

If you raise this question, it shows how out of touch you are with the locale.

'Associated Settlements?' What is all this nonsensical jargon? Each needs its own infrastructure.

This seems to me to be another way of 'rationalising' local services and amenities in a covert way of reducing budgets. We have seen the calamitous merger of Minehead with Taunton Council, the vast waste of nearly 100 million pounds. The incompetence of the merger is frightening...and to think you folk are thinking of visiting this on laces like Watchet and Williton; places of completely different character and miles apart from each other

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):

Moratorium on new housing in Minehead, apart from the most urgent of cases. The south of town is going to be utterly ruined on the slopes, a vast unedifying clutter; yet another reason for visitors to stay away. Stop it.

IMPORTANT:

I went to the Road show in Minehead in February. I was shocked to see that SHLAA designations for MHD 7 Land to the South of Beacon Road Minehead was a designated area. This site has been refused planning permission TWICE: 20 years ago and more recently and comprehensively in the decision dated 26.03.20 Ref 3/21/19/007. It is high time this site was de-allocated in view of the damning report underpinning the refusal decision against ruining Minehead's most visible and iconic view towards North Hill...by house building. We need this designation removed from the Local plan as an urgent matter

ALSO, the SHLAA MHD 18 Culvercliffe should be de-allocated. The council will be sowing a flowering meadow on the site, so this designation must now be removed from the Local Plan

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Focus it all on Taunton and Wellington. (There is still too much being built there) I weep at the huge and perpetual rape of the countryside around Taunton. All lost for ever in an unremitting 'plain vanilla' housing estate, stretching like a festering sore across the outskirts of what was once a beautiful county town, inexorably becoming like Slough... and trust me the only good thing about Slough, is the view in one's rear-view mirror, heading west.

Stop eroding the character of our outlying villages with clutches of executive homes in green fields (airbnb, London lawyers with their west country bolt-holes). People come to see old traditional villages, not a cut and paste of the Thames corridor. You planners really need to get your feet under the table of understanding in this respect.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Every planning application for new-build should be met with a default refusal unless there are comprehensive submissions with every application which include a full and professional visual impact assessment carried out by a professional member of the Landscape Institute. If this pushes up the cost to applicants and puts them off from making the initial application...so much the better. The hurdles for new-build need to be so much higher than at present.

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 higher than 702 dwellings per year and determined by economic growth strategies, infrastructure improvements and unmet need from neighbouring planning authorities

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

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):

Setting any predetermined figures is an act of folly. It plays into the hands of chancers and speculators.

Any gypsy/traveller sites should be kept to a minimum and only on brown field sites in urban areas. We live in an age of settlements and shouldn't be pandering to what is in effect a lifestyle choice. I'm sure we'd all like to be free as birds, going where the will takes us, but not at the expense of the community and certainly not as a human right.

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?

Do not require specific measures for adaptable, accessible and wheelchair homes.

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

It might help if you gave a link to the regs.

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

Include a requirement for all housing development sites over a threshold to include a proportion of plots as self-build plots; and/or

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

How about an option above for 'no', no facilities. If you want to go new-build, then fine, but don't expect the council to make special provision. What I find problematic with this Question is ...why are you even raising it? There are so many more important matters to ventilate.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):

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):

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

6. Infrastructure

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

IO - 5a - ranking - Affordable housing:

2

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

4

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

3

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):

You keep using the perjorative term 'climate emergency' as if its a FACT. In your OPINION it's an 'emergency'

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):

You need to get real about this issue. The public transport system will NEVER be so sophisticated as to serve the needs of folk in outlying villages. The services will always be substandard, unless we have tax rates of 60% and most buses run with a couple of passengers at odd times of the day.

What you must not do is kill off town centre shops by milking the public with huge parking costs. Your rate payers just get fed up and your shops lose trade. The town centres just become charity shop clusters. Look for yourself; open your eyes. Become aware. It's simple

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):

Please de-allocate MHD 7 and MHD18 from your local plan SHLAA documents. Both sites are now irrelevant and should be expunged from your publications

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

9. Thriving coastal and rural communities

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

Have a policy which is a hybrid of (i) and (ii) where there are settlement boundaries only in areas of greater development pressure i.e. parts of the District that are more accessible - closer to the M5, Taunton and Wellington areas.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The residents of Milnehead are astonished that SWAT has a policy of felling reasonably healthy trees in the Avenue yet have no policy to replant them. How utterly ridiculous is that? Tree canopy is essential to well being...ask any psychologist. Get replacing. It's far more important than some of the peripheral issues you have raised. The stumps of trees are a blot and visitors note the signs of urban decay such as this....and they will just say to their friends, 'they've cut down loads of trees, made a right mess and not replanted' ... More loss of tourists. When will SWAT begin to understand some of these really basic issues?

11. Policies for our places: Taunton

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

Not Answered

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

None of the above.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

None of the above

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):

Visitors come to Minehead for a sense of well being, which means freeing their minds from the constant cancer of construction. There seem to be no areas where speculative developers are not prepared to make egregious applications, which degrade and defile our heritage. This must stop. We are no longer prepared to put up with this. The BEacon Road application, which took over a year to determine and was refused, should never have got as far as it did.

You now need to de-allocate that MHD 7Beacon Road site urgently from the SHLAA . It should never have been included. The Culvercliffe Site is currently not under threat of development MHD18, but anyone who thought that there was potential for 45 houses in a critically iconic location must need their head examining. The designation is intellectually bankrupt and should be allocated now from the Local Plan

Local Plan criteria must be drawn more stringently so as to discourage applications in our Minehead's Conservation Areas and other locations which have important landscape character, but lack a designation.