

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDZP-G

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-01-15 20:52:55**

### Your details

**What is your name?**

**Forename:**

David

**Surname:**

Mather

**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):**

Whilst I agree with the approach i.e. getting public feedback on objectives they are very high level and subject to changing the apparent priorities today. For example, there has been a truly terrible imbalance between allowing developers to build new homes, the proportion of affordable homes and the monies spent on the consequent effects on infrastructure, whether that be availability of schools, doctors or the detrimental effects of increased traffic on our roads. In Wellington I have seen none of the monies supposedly paid by developers in support of infrastructure upgrades used for that purpose. Perhaps with the exception of an increase in roundabouts.

### 2. Carbon neutrality

**Question 1a: Should we aim to require that all new development 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?**

A combination of both of the above

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

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

The effects of climate change are already being felt, mainly seen with the increase in flooding of the area in recent years. Whilst again I commend the ambition

stated above our communities are interested in the Councils intent to offset how climate change is already affecting our lives. Cost cuts over recent years have exacerbated the flooding issue with reductions in pro-active drain clearing and a lack of general road maintenance. Over development of some sites also seem to be creating a worse situation with historic drainage course being reduced. So the objective should be twofold - 1) to reduce our impact on the environment in the future and 2) how to minimise the impact of change to date.

### 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):**

Wellington is already becoming over developed with no change to infrastructure although with the addition of hundreds of existing new homes. If the Council is to be trusted in this regard then a plan showing infrastructure changes is necessary. Otherwise this exercise will be seen as box ticking.

**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)?**

Yes - Watchet and Williton should be seen as associated settlements

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

These are closed questions and therefore of little value over repeating my message above re infrastructure.

**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 reduce in Minor Rural Settlements

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

Taunton is the County town and most capable of supporting new developments through existing infrastructure and road networks

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

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

Personally I believe the focus on house building is more about propping up the economy via the construction industry rather than supporting the counties current housing needs. That being said I believe the onus on developers to create affordable housing is a joke and I wonder where all the people that can afford the expensive options are coming from. Presumably the short term financial need of both developers and the council (ie through rates for reducing services) put any other considerations to the back of the queue.

I believe this plan is in direct opposition to the other Climate related proposals.

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

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

As above

### 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):**

I see no reason to increase this based on current demand

**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):**

These should be separately allocated and charged for through rents.

**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):**

Of course. As a volunteer for a disabled charity no discrimination with regard to access should be applied.

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

Include a positive encouragement policy, including for community-led projects, and leave the housing market to deliver plots as and when demand arises; and/or

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

Availability of self build plots will be dependent on individual circumstances and should be actively encouraged with normal application criteria. e.g. impact on local area/community.

**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?**

Align with the Heart of the South West growth ambitions (deliver a shift towards a significant increase in overall job numbers including higher value jobs)

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

a broad spectrum of job availability is better for the local economy but should not be applied on purely financial grounds. i.e. businesses that support our Counties sustainability rather than just trying to cram as many in a possible.

**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):**

Difficult to answer without more details. Too open a question for effective feedback

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

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

What are the perceived benefits to increasing the workforce in Somerset apart from financial. Community wellbeing should be a major aspect of this decision making.

Currently I perceive this is being destroyed through over development and a focus on financial benefits.

**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:**

3

**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):**

The elements of this criteria are not mutually exclusive. A balance is imperative.

**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):**

Vastly improve public transport options. When I go to Exeter I use the Park & Ride scheme. Not so in Taunton. There are reasons to do with cost and availability.

Train fares are stupidly expensive however opening up new stations would help on existing lines.

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

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

The focus on digital electronic communication access is over-rated (I have worked from home for many years and part from occasional glitches have never suffered overly from bad communication with existing Internet services), we are in danger of wasting money on this rather than improving public transport.

**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):**

More open areas and less density of building.

Somerset legacy is in danger of being over-run with overdevelopment. Strains on unchanged infrastructure e.g. road networks and lack of public transport options exacerbate the situation.

**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):**

Unless the Council decide to hold Developers to account on the subject of affordable housing I see no change coming.

**10. Wellbeing of our residents**

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

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

I commend the recognition of this policy and would re-iterate the need for balance in development of the area versus the well being of residences. I see no current appreciation of this.

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

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

Encouraging car-free developments (which could include allocating specific sites for car-free developments).

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

Why? 2000 more house at Rumwell already agreed others in the pipeline already agreed. what will change? reducing cars is good but dependent on so many other factors. Too open a question to get valuable feedback.

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

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

as above

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

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

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

As a resident of Wellington for the past 40 + years I can honestly say that the recent development decisions together with a total lack of improved infrastructure have been most detrimental to our town. No increase in doctors, road access improvements, Schools (although I realise Longforth is in the works) and general facilities lead us to believe that decisions are taken for Council funding benefits and Developers are left to their own devices with little regulation or control.

Will that change? Lest see some evidence.

**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):**

Not enough known about the areas