

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KD5Y-M

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-16 13:13:29**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

David

Surname:

Mitton

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?

██████████
██

██████████
██████████

What is your email address?

██████████
██

1. Overview and objectives

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

Disagree

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

Objective 1 While I agree that Carbon Neutrality by 2030 is a laudable idea without national legislation early on such issues as building regulations (scheduled at present to be revised in 2025) it is impractical.

Objective 3 The definition of "Affordability" needs to be re-addressed. Building less carbon using housing costs more and puts more buying houses out of reach for more people in our low wage economy. Far more emphasis needs to be placed on social housing and until our housing supply problems are well on the way to being resolved the right to buy should be restricted. Again without addressing the excessive profits made by developers this is impracticable.

I agree with the other objectives.

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):

Again nationally the position adopted nationally of presumed acceptance of sustainable development needs to be addressed. Sustainability should be defined in national legislation to include carbon neutrality, agreement with local planning authorities for the provision of adequate infrastructure not just within the

development but to places of employment, renewable energy on, or close to site including for example the right to give local authorities the power to insist that all south facing houses should have solar panels, and transport plans. I think that there are plans for electricity charging points for electric vehicles. The problem with sustainability at present is that is far too open to interpretation leading to developers with pockets undermining a really sustainable approach.

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):

There is a problem with tier 6. There needs to be distinction between villages which have stronger social structures such as a village shop, local bus or community transport schemes or a pub and those without. If development is allowed in villages without local facilities it just adds to the carbon footprint of that village. Unless developers agree plans to produce viable additions to add to the social fabric of the village for the benefit of existing residents including social/affordable (Real not theoretical) housing and useful infrastructure benefits for the community there be a presumption against development. Parish Councils should be involved in this matter rather than issues being left to discussion between the developer and development control staff.

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):

Looking from outside this approach seems logical. There may however be local issues of which I am not aware

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):

This, of course depends on the definition of "Taunton" I am presuming that it includes the areas on the outskirts such as West Monkton and Trull.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

There is an argument for Williton and Watchet having a greater focus on housing than Minehead but I would suggest that it also requires a major upgrading of the road links not just the A39 but also the A358 and could there be a greater general transportation role for the West Somerset Railway including a direct link to Taunton Railway station.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

2b/3 If there is to be higher housing densities in town centres and on REGULAR public transport routes then consideration needs to be given to the provision of more allotment sites for householders who wish to grow their own food but cannot do so because of their restricted garden space.

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):

While continuing to put local government under financial restraints The National Government is asking the impossible. In the present emergency climate emergency the pursuit of economic growth is a blunt and irresponsible objective unless we consider ways of improving productivity in the South West in general. This consultation does not in itself provide the vehicle for a detailed analysis of this issue.

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):

Local Authorities need to "Grasp this nettle" rather than just give in to NIMBY attitudes.

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):

I have answered this question as requested but with respect the questioners seem only to have addressed the Wheelchair issue. What about people with eyesight problems or hearing difficulties for example (I admit that to date I have not read Building Regulations Part M)

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

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

I planned approach would seem to me to be a better idea than the others if we are to achieve "Sustainable" development.

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):

This would seem to be sensible but the District Council needs to take into consideration the the Government may expect it to subordinate it's own plans to the needs of the Heart of the South West approach and the possible implications of a combined authority. The Council has also to consider the LEP branding of the Great South West and the potential implications of the Green and Blue economic "Revolution".

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?

Retain all existing and currently allocated employment sites; or

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

The danger of moving from the existing strategy is that we could under the others lose employment opportunities for the many new people who will be moving to the area in the future. We should avoid the area just becoming commuter country.

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:

1

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

3

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

It is with some reluctance that I ordered the Developer contributions because all of them are important. It is important where an area is parished to ensure that Parish/Town Councils are involved at an early stage in these additional policy approaches.

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 Community Transport Schemes. If there was a Unitary Authority rather than a two tier structure it would be far easier to develop a joined up approach. What are the implications of the Heart of South West approach on transport?

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I have commented on Developers contributions to transport plans earlier. Another issue which the previous District Council failed to address was the development of Cul de Sac estates rather than connecting the road structures with the existing road structures. This has been difficult because local existing residents have adopted the NIMBY approach of claiming that linking roads creates "Rat Runs" but creating cul de sac developments means that local high streets are bi-passed damaging their viability and increasing carbon footprints.

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):

Question 7b: 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):

ga7 I would suggest that the sky line has already been compromised but the local plan could include the same comment for all of the other towns in the new District Council area.

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The inclusion under 11a/5 of White Hart Lane makes no sense. Apart from a local Cobblers and the Rear entrance to Royal Mail there are no other commercial outlets in that road. More importantly as a result of applications accepted by the Planning Committee of the previous District Council, often opposed by locals, all of the previous retail outlets have been converted to residential accommodation and there is physically not enough room for new developments. I have also seen in other information pertaining to planning decisions reference to Wellington containing many burgage properties. Historically this is correct but it is now a fiction which needs to be updated.