

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDPC-S

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-01-25 12:47:49**

### Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

David

Surname:

Price

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):

Assuming we have to accommodate the housing imposed upon us then I generally agree with the Objectives, but the detail is important, which is why I have made comments in this questionnaire.

### 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?**

Identify suitable areas through criteria based policies

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

1c/3: Not easy to retrofit character properties with more sustainable heating, such as solar panels on roof, without spoiling their character. Small rooms mean

electric storage heaters are not convenient solution.

1c/6: Must take care not to allow rural scene to be despoiled by over-development of farms with new buildings and parking. Example: Rumwell Farm Shop was once attractive farmland but is now essentially out-of-town shopping. What is to stop 'Moonbeams Farm Shop' on Wellington by-pass becoming a similar eyesore?

### 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):**

Broadly agree, but option for Watchet and Williton as associated settlements should be higher tier than Bishops Lydeard and Wiveliscombe because of the latter's character and proximity to more immediate, beautiful, countryside.

**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):**

With careful controls/handling Watchet and Williton could more easily absorb more housing and employment areas without resulting in too much damage to the countryside and views from the Quantocks. The railway link, and bus services could offset some of the increase in traffic on the roads to Minehead and Taunton.

**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):**

Much as it pains me to opt for an increase in housing in Taunton and Wellington, if we are to have the houses imposed upon us, this is the better option. We need to protect the character of smaller villages and towns from over-development. New housing developments must be of a higher architectural, and sustainable, standard than being built currently. Views from the Quantocks and Blacktowns towards Wellington and Taunton should not be marred by insensitive sprawl and light pollution.

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

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

The pie chart should be adjusted to take account of my comments in the previous box, immediately above. I made an independent note to choose Topic Paper 1, Option E.

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

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

NOTE: The above numbering is confusing .i.e. Question 2d but additional policies 2b.

I made a previous note before starting this response that, under 2d, consideration must also be given to the detrimental effects on the countryside catering for tourism could have. Encouraging tourism is fine unless it is going to spoil the beauty of the very place they have come to visit. What controls will be implemented to stop small-scale 'invisible' tourist businesses becoming unsightly 'honeypots' with additional out-of-scale buildings and parking?

### 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):**

Somerset is already having to accept more housing than it should in an area of beauty. We are in danger of permanently spoiling the county and reducing its attraction for tourism. There needs to be a national evaluation to locate new housing to more deprived areas in order to provide more employment and prosperity to them. Those areas are not necessarily unattractive places to live!

**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):**

This is a VERY thorny issue. The sites should not be close to residential areas because there will always be conflict between residents and travellers (regardless of how trustworthy most of them are). The sites should be close to main roads but well-hidden from view and tightly controlled to prevent over-spill outside the compounds with consequent environmental problems.

**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):**

Elderly or disabled individuals do not necessarily have to be provided with bungalows which are wasteful of land. McCarthy Stone-type higher density housing would suit many people but balconies need to be much larger to provide private external space with potential for a little planting to take the place of a garden. Provision is also required for car parking/charging and an adequate number of visitors parking spaces. A bus route within easy reach would also be desirable.

**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):**

Self-build housing should be included, and not separated, from the community as a whole. I do not agree with plots on Rural Exception sites as I am not in agreement with Rural Exception sites.

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

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

3e/5: I do not agree to the provision of Rural Exception sites. Properties within rural areas become available when the occupants die, so there is a natural turn-over of housing supply. To despoil small settlements (as in most cases it would be) by more building would be a mistake. Not everyone can live where they would like and most available new and existing housing is not too far away. We must protect Somerset's rural scene to encourage tourism, now and in the future. It is part of our heritage too.

3e/6 Space standards should be mandatory, similar to Parker Morris Standards.

3e/7 Agree with Policy Detail Guide

## **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?**

Allow the loss of specific sites for alternative uses – with a high flexibility buffer (i.e. fewer sites lost); or

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

In view of the stated over-provision of employment sites some could be used, in part, for more housing.

The allocated employment site on Longforth Farm, Wellington, could be used for a proportion of housing, retaining some employment. If more employment sites are scheduled towards the M5 then this would be a better location for them, providing they are screened from view with deep landscaping belts. The employment site at Longforth should have such a landscaping belt (as already provided on the Chelston Business Park on the Taunton Road (A38) and NOT the shockingly bad example of Westpark.

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

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

4c/6: Any commercial developments on the outskirts of towns should be very strongly resisted to keep town-centre businesses in business.

Budgens, and Costa, at Westpark, Wellington is a prime example of what should NOT be permitted on the outskirts of a town. This is out-of-town shopping which permanently devalues the character of the town with out-of-scale sprawl and light pollution.

4c/7: Vacant upper floors of town shops should be used preferably for homes, but also office use. However, separate access is often difficult and Building Regulations also have to be complied with (e.g. fire and acoustic separation).

## **6. Infrastructure**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5b/2 If, for example, a school is to be provided as part of a Section 106 agreement it should be possible to set the standard of design to ensure that it is not to the absolute minimum which can be 'got away with'.

The new school to be provided at Longforth, Wellington, is of the lowest possible standard in the provision of 'a school' both in terms of its external design and internal provision. The provision is for years to come and our children should not be inflicted with poor design through inadequate briefing.

## **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):**

Public transport will never replace the car for people in rural areas unless, in the future, autonomous vehicles can be summoned as, and when, they are required. Our network of narrow roads and small settlements make it impossible to provide the sort of service most people require. Having to walk to a bus stop and wait in the cold and rain is not attractive to most people, especially the elderly.

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

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

6d/2 This is a suggestion;

Seek S106 agreements, and other funding, to support the provision of a cycle path on the route of the old Grand Western Canal between Wellington and Taunton. This would provide a safe and attractive route for commuters and visitors. Perhaps National Cycle Route 3 could be diverted to make use of it.

## **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):**

Ensure new developments are screened from view with banking and tree planting. This would provide habitats for wildlife and help stop the spread of light pollution. Provide bat boxes and other similar encouragement for wildlife.

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

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

7b/3: Consideration must be given to mitigating the damaging effects of new developments on views from the top of the Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills. Those views are what tourists come to see for their beauty.

7b/5: Protect green wedges and do not chip away at them. For example, the green wedge between Wellington and Chelston has been encroached upon by a new veterinary practice which set the precedent for further housing!

## **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 Any criteria-based policy must be biased towards not giving approval for anything outside settlement boundaries. It only leads to the devaluation of the rural character of Somerset and is likely to set a precedent for more development.

8b/2 and 3: Must resist despoiling of the rural scene with over-development of farms which is likely to mar their character, with large additional buildings, parking and light pollution. Setting precedent for more of the same.

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

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

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

9a/6: Unless public art is of the highest standard it is likely to devalue the location, which would be better without it. Any public art/sculpture is likely to be controversial and money would more likely be better spent on better street furniture, for example.

## 11. Policies for our places: Taunton

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

Positively encouraging taller buildings (subject to impact upon the skyline); or

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

If more housing provision is essential it is better to build to a higher density, providing they are well-designed and do not affect Taunton's skyline.

### 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):

11a/3: It is essential that the sequential test does not allow the continuation of the out-of-town shopping such as Budgens and Costa at Westpark. Controls should be placed to limit the expansion of developments like 'Moonbeans' on the Wellington by-pass from becoming like The Rumwell Farm Shop with all the additional parking and light pollution in what was open countryside.

The countryside on the Wellington Monument side of the by-pass should be protected from development by designating it as part of the AONB.

Garden centres on the outskirts of Wellington are now not restricted to garden produce and have become out-of-town shopping centres, complete with restaurants. Why is this not more effectively controlled?

11a/4: It would appear that Strategic Employment Sites near Junction 26 will grow in size. If this is to happen they should be screened with tree belts/banking. Wellington Town should not start at the motorway with unsightly development to negotiate first.

11a/6 and 7: Wellington town's character has already been devalued by insensitive plastic windows and doors and the original designs need replacing in the long-term. Glazing bars between double glazing looks dreadful!