

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDN2-6

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-01-25 17:01:25**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

David

Surname:

Topham

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):

The Climate emergency must be a central focus. I would prefer even more emphasises on issues associated with the emergency. In particular I feel sustainable transport should be higher in the priorities.

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):

The council should use its planning powers to ensure developers design to ensure community facilities are accessible without the need for a car. New housing should stipulate minimum cycle parking standards so that cycles can be safely stored at or next to homes. Developers should also be required to build infrastructure to facilitate and encourage sustainable transport such as bus stops and cycle routes.

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):

Williton and Watchet are further apart than most people would want to walk or cycle between.

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?

Leave housing distribution the same

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

The current policies would seem to provide the right balance of housing to ensure more rural areas remain sustainable while emphasising the benefit of concentrating the majority of development where existing services can easily be accessed.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

1 Current distribution would seem to be fine

2 This give emphasis to Taunton which is correct

3 A Wellington train service if ever it happens is likely to be limited so this town should not have an increase in housing above existing targets.

4 Watchet and Williton should not be given any extra housing focus because of Hinkley point C as the any housing built will need to serve a need beyond the construction of Hinkley C (which will not last for ever) Housing in this area could create ghettos or ghost towns in the future when building work finishes. Any extra housing for Hinkley should be in Sedgemoor.

5 Settlements with good train access should have priority. Emphasis on the M5 will continue to emphasise car journeys which need to be reduced.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

These seem like sound proposals

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):

The housing crisis needs attention the priority needs to be to drastically increase the numbers of social rented housing and the council should take a lead in this. The council should let the markets deal with building affordable housing and require developers to only build social rented housing to achieve quotas.

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):

I don't believe sufficient pitches will be made available unless the council pro actively allocates sites.

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):

All dwellings need to be built to be as accessible as possible to allow people to remain in their homes should they become infirmed.

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):

It would seem to be an impossible task for the council to predict where self builders may want to build. If the council can encourage self build by using its knowledge and powers to signpost and advise they should. The council should also consider sale of land they own to help where appropriate.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I support the council's proposals here. However the council should define affordable as social rented housing not owner occupier.

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):

Jobs growth needs to remain within the boundaries of sustainable development. Priorities need to reflect quality of life and not solely economic drivers.

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):

The changing nature of work demands an approach that is flexible and allows for the council to take advantage of new opportunities as they emerge. The council is right to ensure good internet access and to recognise that the retail environment is undergoing seismic changes. Opportunities afforded by a shift towards greater environmental awareness will inevitably grow but may demand greater flexibility.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Taunton town centre desperately needs a cinema and a bigger venue for concerts and other performances. With retail declining in significance the need for other all weather attractions to the town centre increases.

Otherwise the objectives seem fair enough.

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:

1

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

4

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

2

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):

Recent years have seen a massive deterioration in the bus services in Somerset. This needs to be reversed as the current Somerset Bus services are dire and actively discourage bus usage. First bus have a virtual monopoly on Somerset Bus services which does not help this situation.

Cycle route infrastructure is particularly poor for connections to the towns from villages. Cycling needs sustained and proper investment. The advent of electric assist for cycles means that cycling over a longer distance is becoming more manageable. As a result it should not be seen as a solution for only very short journeys.

The council could discourage single passenger car journeys and promote car sharing.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with these broad objectives. Please note my previous comments though.

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):

Access to green spaces and the natural environment is important for wellbeing and it helps in peoples appreciation for the need to preserve and cherish the environment. Development should therefore ensure easy access to green space and wildlife rich areas in design and implementation. Where possible existing trees should not be cut down during development.

Taunton green wedges should not be allowed to be developed on again (even for the schools)

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with these objectives.

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):

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with the broad objectives. The production of a wellbeing action plan would seem to be a good idea if done properly in consultation with voluntary sector and other stakeholders such as sport and art organisations.

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 a greater density of housing is needed going up is preferable however in doing so adequate space between buildings must be considered to allow sun to get in and so as not to create dark, gloomy and forbidding developments.

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):

In addition to the proposals, travel links by bus and cycle need improving to and from Wellington improving links to it from Taunton and surrounding villages.
Cycle infrastructure needs improving within Wellington

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):