

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KD55-G

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-16 13:20:39**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Fran

Surname:

Hicks

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?

Agree

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

I am heartened that the main thrust of the plan is in the light of the Climate Emergency that is upon us.

I think it should be more radical because we are in an emergency situation, and that it can be so if it energetically engages with the local community in how things are done.

There is much understanding and concern in the community about the climate and ecological emergency, and a willingness to contribute to the solutions. However, consultations like this are not sufficient. Engagement in parishes and villages, where people can deliberate together and own the solutions and identify actions they can do to support the council in its aims, are needed. Knowledge that groups across the district are thus engaged can create wider forms where pressure from the community can support the DC to put pressure on the government to legislate and release funds to make the radical changes we need.

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?

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):

press government to bring in legislation to force developments already agreed to update requirements to higher standards and incentivise zero carbon.

Also to force developers to show the imbedded carbon building costs.

Future proofing should be mandatory and insulation always before considering energy generation however green, such as solar - which still uses materials and minerals which are not sustainable.

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 will only work if new settlements have all the facilities they need to make them communities in stead of dormitories, with solely car access, as is the case now, e.g. small convenience stores, a decent community hall (such as the excellent village halls in our area), with different sizes rooms for maximum use, and possibly a room with sink for creative activities, and possibly a space for worship, (since churches not built in new developments); shared hubs for working as well as small industrial areas, and schools of course, to create the 15 minute neighbourhood much favoured by the mayor of Paris.

Because our working patterns are likely to change, I think a focus on creating fewer larger settlements is not future proof. If we are to change our farming practices, we may need more people working the land in the future and therefore re-vitalising villages, and possibly making them small towns such as Wivey, would make sense, as well as more people wanting a better work/life balance working from home in a rural setting (the Somerset Chamber of commerce identified this trend), would mean the need for more housing in villages. More, smaller settlements are more sustainable, are likely to attract local developers rather than the huge developers who take money out of the community rather than allowing it to circulate locally. Also smaller developments are attractive to community land trusts and small self build developments. Also creative businesses are more likely to favour a rural setting. These developments have less transport infrastructure impact but will demand better cycle and public transport links.

Affordable housing here will be crucial to combat inequality and offer opportunity.

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):

Small is beautiful. Communities thrive when they have a clear identity. This would be counter productive. what needs to happen is to have better connectivity between them.

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):

Increase in the villages as previously noted.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Have covered these points in previous comments

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with all these points.

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):

At this point we need to have the option to scale up if necessary but not to until we have exhausted all options e.g. bringing back into use buildings not currently used as housing e.g. offices, or empty properties, and seen where need is developing. We need to be flexible.

Question 3b: How should we proactively plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches?

Apply rural exceptions criteria for small scale residential sites where pitches which would be affordable in perpetuity; and/or

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

I think this option is the one that travellers are more likely to favour, but they should be consulted in the first instance, to identify their needs. If they need a pitch from which they will travel, then they may prefer a rural location: if they are settling they might prefer one nearer an urban location.

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):

With our ageing, and, at present, quite unhealthy population, we need adaptable housing, where folk can stay until their end of life. If we want a more equal society we need to cater for a range of needs.

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, Include a requirement for all housing development sites over a threshold to include a proportion of plots as self-build plots; and/or, Allow self-build plots on Rural Exception sites provided that they are secured as affordable housing for ever

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

I would not leave things to the market; it has played havoc with our public services and does not put people first. I hope that we will encourage sustainable innovation and try and champion good practice such as zero carbon homes, homes built by co-operatives and land trusts, showing innovative things such as green roofs, green walls, 3D printed housing using sustainable materials, earth ships and all the other inspirational attributes of creative minds.

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):

Higher value jobs, as long as fitting with our zero carbon aims, will bring in innovative minds which see other potentials for the area. This will create further opportunities and encourage inward investment, and hopefully greater localism.

We do not need employment from big industry which puts profit before people and takes money out of the local economy.

We need to proactively encourage the growth of small scale co-operatives and not-for-profit outfits which can contribute to our carbon plan such as local energy providers and creatives.

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):

We need to be flexible in our rapidly changing world. Some sites can be used for short term housing for instance such as the Y-pods of the YMCA (London and Bristol), which can move after 5 years and therefore not tie up land in perpetuity, if another use is deemed more suitable or convert to more permanent building after this time. They can also be put into operation swiftly, and thus can address our policy of "housing first", to get everyone housed.

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:

1

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

4

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):

I think, when dealing with large developers (which, going forward I hope we will avoid), the most important issue is that the houses are green. Secondly they must consider infrastructure needs.

Affordable homes, and adapted homes are more likely to be met by the local council in their own provision, and also through housing associations, community land trusts and housing co-operatives.

All these things are necessary, and therefore pressure needs to be put on central government to make this so.

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):

The only working solution is a carrot and stick. You need to make town parking prohibitively expensive, apart from those with medical needs, but this must work alongside creating a fully functioning public transport system, a town where walking a cycling is paramount (extensive pedestrianisation), free public transport and a free and comprehensive park and ride e.g. sites north south and east and west of the town, and cycling and walk ways joining all of the settlements easily to the town centre.

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):

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 greatest improvement that could be made to the health and well being of the community and the greatest challenge to inequality would be to introduce a Citizens Income. This can only happen at a national level and therefore needs the DC and the CC to lobby for this with the support of the community. Challenging inequality and poverty is the most significant approach to wellbeing for all and a citizens income is more likely, if national, to have a buy in from everyone since everyone wins. It also saves money in the long run, gives power to the people and a safety net and flexibility at a time of rapid change and insecurity for all

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):

If developments are in town there is no need for cars. If these developments are green, well designed and have attractive greening (space to grow stuff etc), they will appeal to those wanting to have greener lifestyles, to those who might commute but do not want to use cars. If these are co-housing developments they can require those buying to adhere to green policies e.g. agree to use shared electric car use and prioritise bike storage. They need to be well connected by public transport.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):