

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KD18-F

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-16 08:07:12**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Helen

Surname:

Gillingham

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?

Not Answered

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

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?

Allocate sites for specific renewable energy development

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I think that new housing developments should be made to be carbon neutral sooner than 2025. If carbon offsetting is an option in how to do this, I don't see why this can't go in place as soon as it is bureaucratically possible. It is possible to work out your carbon footprint now, and also there are many schemes the building companies can pay into, if their less-than-perfect housing plans can't be altered at a late stage.

All housing developments that are going through the planning process at the present time should conform to the strictest guidelines possible, and legislation to make the carbon neutral should be rolled out as soon as the paperwork is done. I don't see why this needs to take 5 years if it can take two, or one even.

Some of the steps that need to be taken are really obvious. Why can't all new homes have solar panels at the very least, new estates have ground source heat

pumps, permeable surfaces to allow rainwater to trickle through, and from an ecological point of view, hedgehog holes in fences, tunnels for animal migration under roads, swift boxes near the roof in policy in the next 6 months or so? Surely this wouldn't take long to put into place. More complex and innovative ideas to get the whole site carbon neutral can be added over the next 5 years.

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):

Don't always presume that a bigger urban area is more sustainable. One of the biggest causes of global greenhouse gas emissions (44-57% according to grain.org) is from intensive agriculture. If we want to get away from this, we need smaller and more numerous farms, large farms require less people and more machinery. In order to farm on a small farm, organic basis, with less machinery, more people are needed per acre.

This would mean that in the future, more people are going to be needed in agriculture, and therefore living in the countryside. As so many peoples dream is to have a place in the countryside, where they could have a small holding or even large garden to grow veggies etc, then huge housing developments with small gardens does not fill that need. Currently you need to be very well off to afford a house with land in the countryside. It should be easier and accessible to more people to have a small house with land.

Also, building around our larger towns, means using our class 1 agricultural land for housing, reducing our food security.

More houses scattered in the countryside has a place in your plan. Say, for instance that every tiny hamlet with 5 houses or so, was able to have two more houses per year? There must be numerous of these, so however small scale, would this not mount up to a larger %?

Tiny communitys are also not sustainable human settlements, having a few more people would increase their resilience, come snow fall or whatever the future may hold climate wise.

I would suggest in order to do this, as no one wants a housing estate in a tiny hamlet, to change the rules for self builds. Policies have been introduced in Wales and Ireland, meaning people have moved away in order to afford the "good life". Some regulation on self builds could get around the problems. If a house was to be off grid, the reliance of infrastructure of electric and sewers is reduced. Ensuring the owners can work from home, for example using the land for their income, say, with a minimum of an acre of land, therefore not having to travel to work, would reduce load on small roads. This would increase the number of small scale farmers, reducing out dependence on intensive agriculture, and help supply the increase in demand for locally produced, organic food that will arise as more people are educated to care for the environment.

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)?

Not Answered

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

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?

Not Answered

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

None of your selected answers relate to my response above, to increase affordable housing in rural areas for agricultural workers.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Question 2d: 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):

One aspect is cost: it needs to be cheaper to travel by bus than car, preferably free.

The service needs to run frequently, preferably every 15 minutes.

The busses should be electric, it will encourage people to use it for environmental reasons, plus diesel puts people off as busses are smelly and noisy.

Bus stops to be dry and comfortable to wait if it's raining.

Cycle paths need to be safe and take a direct route.

More places to lock your bike up in town.

Shared electric bikes as in London.

A train station in Wellington would help commuters, especially those travelling to Bristol, Exeter, Taunton etc for work.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

In regards to 6b/5 and 5G, it is vital that the roll out of 5G is halted until adequate safety testing has been done, to ensure there is no risk to human health, and the migration of birds and insects. Our insects are especially under strain at the moment, and we are experiencing a collapse in their populations. Any interruption to their life cycle or navigation, could tip them over the edge, and would result in a collapse for all species including ourselves.

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):

Keeping existing hedgerows within the design of the development as with Cades a Farm in Wellington, kept as wildlife corridors.

Swift boxes in all eaves of roofs.

Hedgehog holes in all fences.

Grass maintained as meadow, rather than manicured lawns.

Gardens made bigger, parking space smaller with water permeable hard landscaping

More diverse plants used in landscaping design, with an emphasis on herbs, food producing trees and bushes (berries, nuts and fruit provide food for both wildlife and people, increasing our food security as well as enhancing communities, reducing our carbon footprint as well as helping biodiversity) and wild plants and flowers.

Gardens big enough for at least one tree. (Trees need to be roughly 20ft away from foundations. Many small gardens aren't big enough currently for a tree.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):