

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDQG-X

Submitted to Local Plan Issues and Options

Submitted on 2020-02-11 10:16:36

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Janet

Surname:

Gladstone

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?

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

What is your email address?

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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):

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?

Slightly more time (e.g. by 2030)

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):

If you are planting trees to become carbon neutral don't allow developers to cut them down in the first place. Wooded areas should be preserved or else what's the point.

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):

They have always been separate and should remain so. Joining them together with housing estates will simply make a coastal town bigger than Minehead. The coast road is already at risk from erosion so houses would be better built elsewhere.

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):

There is poor infrastructure in Minehead - the bus service is awful and there is no national rail link. The A39 is already busy. There is also little work for people so if you build housing there the people who move in will have to commute into larger towns (Taunton or Bridgwater) to find work. This is hardly carbon neutral. Minehead is also for the most part low lying and at risk of flooding if sea levels rise. If the MIU is closed (there is a consultation going on at the moment) the increased population you are suggesting for Minehead will have poorer medical facilities than currently.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Minehead depends on tourism to survive. If you swamp it with housing estates it will become less attractive and people will go elsewhere. This will mean even less work for local people. If you want to be carbon neutral build housing where the jobs are so that people can travel by public transport / bike / walk rather than have to drive 50 miles a day from Minehead to Taunton or Bridgwater/Hinckley and back. This is not sustainable.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Any development needs to be sensitive to a range of issues - flooding, deforestation, infrastructure, affordable housing, environmental impact. Continued population growth in the long term is simply not sustainable anyway. Brownfield sites should ALWAYS be used in preference to greenfield sites - towns are changing so empty shops, factories and offices could be repurposed or demolished and rebuilt without the need to destroy precious green sites that are a finite resource.

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):

There isn't an option for lower than the Government figure, but this would be my choice. These targets are imposed centrally with no thought or research into whether this unsustainable level of house building is actually needed. Do that many people move to Somerset? Where's the evidence to back up this demand for housing?

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):

Residents and the traveling community do not mix, for many reasons of which I am sure you are well aware. Allocated sites are best.

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):

Somerset has an aging population and that isn't about to change. Developers don't like bungalows because they don't make them enough money so not enough are being built. Even if you require them they will find a way round it, but you can try.

Question 3d: How should we provide for custom self-build plots? Should we:

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):

Self builds are rarely for affordable housing, but making them so might help.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Unbridled development is spoiling Somerset which is a 'holiday' county for the most part. If you ruin it people will go to Devon or Cornwall and the county will get even poorer. If you have to develop use brownfield sites and leave conservation areas and woodland alone - be sensitive to the fact that places need to retain their charm or they will no longer attract people to visit.

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):

Attracting high value jobs will be hard outside the main towns and Hinckley will be very difficult - you haven't been successful so far.

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):

Employment is changing and you need to be flexible.

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:

1

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

4

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

3

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):

If the UK became carbon neutral tomorrow it would have no global impact whatsoever. Affordable housing is needed but developers will have to be forced to build it as it makes them no money. As it is they always put the affordable housing in the worst area of any development area that gets limited light, faces North, risk of flooding etc and save the best bits for the executive dwellings where they make their large stacks of cash. If they build they should have to contribute to new schools and GP surgeries, drainage, roads etc. to minimise the impact on already stretched local services.

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):

Better bus services would be a great help, as well as building new developments where the jobs are rather than in the villages and small towns where people will be forced to use their cars.

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):

Protect conservation areas from inappropriate development. They are conservation areas for a reason and Somerset is rubbish at protecting them. Don't allow development right up to the boundary of the National Park as it will spoil the area for those who want to visit. Leave woodland and greenfield sites on the edge of towns untouched and protected. Don't swamp Minehead with development which will cut it off from its setting and drive the wildlife away.

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 settlement boundaries across the District; or

Question 8b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?

Please provide comments (250 words max):

You have to have boundaries - but you must also enforce them. They aren't respected at the moment at all and developers put in applications (with the help of planning officers I might add) which are outside of those limits and totally inappropriate. You can't allow villages and coastal towns to be swamped with poor quality developments built to make a fast buck for fat cat developers.

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

If you allow developers to concrete over the outskirts of towns and villages it is a detriment to everyone. Some places should be left alone and not subjected to massive housing estates, particularly those popular with tourists. You have to strike a balance between providing housing and ruining somewhere completely. As the MIU in Minehead may close this isn't going to help anyone as they will have to travel to Taunton to get treatment - not sustainable in the long run if you want to be carbon neutral.

11. Policies for our places: Taunton

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

Requiring a housing mix skewed towards dwellings with fewer bedrooms; or

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

Don't go the way of towns like Watford and turn into Manhattan. Smaller affordable homes where you can walk, cycle or take public transport to work are best.

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):

No comments to make.

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):

Don't over develop the coastal strip. Protect the MIU in Minehead as it serves not only Butlin's but a huge rural hinterland. Protect the character of the coastal towns which are in grave danger of being swamped by inappropriate high density housing developments. Coastal erosion is a real issue and should not be ignored - there is no point in developing lower lying areas if they will be under water more often than not due to flooding. If you want the coastal towns and villages to thrive retain their character, don't dilute it and make them look like every other spoiled and over developed tacky seaside resort. Protect what you have, don't squander it to greedy developers who don't care about the town and just want to make a fast buck.