

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KD4N-8

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-02-10 18:32:16**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Jean

Surname:

Watson

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):

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):

Agree with all.

1c/7 waste recycling also needs to be designed into flats and O.P apartments.

3. Sustainable locations

Question 2a: Do you agree with the tiers that identifies Taunton followed by 6 tiers covering the other settlements?

Not Answered

If not, what changes would you make and why? (200 words max):

There is a limit to the number of houses that can be built around Taunton without creating gridlock, since it is not possible to create an effective ring road. With all the planning approvals already granted, that limit has probably already been surpassed).

Should also consider a new town or large village (similar to Cotford St Luke but with proper infrastructure from the outset) and /or building south of the M5 near to junction 25 (closer to where the new jobs are to be created).

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?

Leave housing distribution the same

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

see 2a

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Taunton's highway network is a constraint, at least until we all stop driving cars!

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Strongly support

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):

Should not build more until need is proven and houses can all be built to zero carbon standards (construction and use)

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):

Council should decide where needed and allocate sites - cannot rely on developers

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):

May be desirable, but developers will say unaffordable. Disabled usually prefer to adapt their existing homes? Council should build themselves if disabled want to rent.

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, 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):

Self builds must be sustainable (i.e zero carbon) and affordable.

Seems logical for Council to allocate suitable sites according to demand, but this could also be a requirement in very large developments.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Support all

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):

Need more green jobs, but not growth for the sake of growth

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):

We need flexibility, but should not be too quick to give up employment sites required on new large-scale developments which are required to provide local jobs and reduce the need to travel to work by car. Developers are unlikely to promote these employment sites if they think they can make more money providing houses here.

However, where individual buildings have remained empty for some time, then converting them to housing is a good idea (as was agreed for the old inland revenue office). This can also be applied to empty shops no longer needed.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Support

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):

As a Climate Emergency has been agreed, this should be the top of the list for policy requirements, but this must not mean a reduction in essential infrastructure and should not lead to a reduction in affordable housing. Developers could give a proportion of the land to the Council to build council houses for rent since this is the best way to provide homes with affordable rents.

All houses should be reasonably accessible for disabled, but detailed requirements can be added later as required. Don't most disabled people prefer to adapt their existing homes?

The argument that developers cannot afford to do what is required is because they pay too much for the land.

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):

Take over control of buses, reduce fares, esp. for children and students or make all buses free (and increase poll tax to cover cost). Provide some buses in the evening.

Provide once (or twice) a day buses for rural areas which have no service.

Close town centre to cars - i.e Bridge Street and North Street

Provide better, safer routes for cyclists

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 existing trees and hedgerows and plant more trees and woods. The Woodland Trust advocates planting 10 trees for each house built to ensure a minimum 30% tree canopy cover. This is essential both to tackle the biodiversity crisis and the climate crisis.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Agree to all the above, but add requirement for tree planting on all new development sites to provide 30% tree canopy cover (10 trees per house)

9. Thriving coastal and rural communities

Question 8a: How should we manage development in rural areas? Should we:

Not Answered

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Broadly agree

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

All good policies

Aren't there any other skylines that need protecting?

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):

A mixture of all three is best

To some extent all three are already being done with the development of flats for retired people and the conversion of the inland revenue office to flats. Town centre is the best place for homes for those who do not drive (esp elderly and poor)

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Council should build block of flats on Firepool site.

Should also convert unused shops on edge of town to one or two bed flats (as per 10 East Reach - with no cars)

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

Question 11a: 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):

Press for the reopening of the railway link from Taunton to Minehead