

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDDY-3

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-07 11:49:31**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Jonathan

Surname:

Collis

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:

N/A

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):

In addition to addressing local housing needs, the climate emergency needs to be taken into account.

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?

Allocate sites for specific renewable energy development

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

New developments should aim at 'zero carbon' but this does not mean that new buildings should always look ultra modern. In areas which have predominantly traditional houses, such as conservation areas, any new buildings should be in a traditional style. There is no need for energy efficient / carbon zero structures to be cuboid, flat roofed eyesores.

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)?

Yes - Watchet and Williton should be seen as associated settlements

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?

Increase housing in Taunton and Wellington; and reduce in Minehead and Rural Centres

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

Taunton and Wellington have easy access to the transport network. Elsewhere the road system will not support substantial further development.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Settlements closer to the M5 corridor should have a higher proportion of development than those closer to the coast.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with approaches 2b/1 to 2b/3.

I am not sure about 2b/4 in the absence of further information.

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):

In various parts of West Somerset and Taunton, the actual housing need appears to be lower than the government's figure. We ought to have developments which match local need rather than building large numbers of new homes for people from other parts of the country to move in.

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):

This is a contentious issue which requires careful planning.

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):

There are a growing number of people in the general population with disabilities as well as an increasing number of elderly people.

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):

This issue is better to be demand led.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

3e/4 would be preferable so as to best reflect the need in our area.

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):

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):

Some employment sites may no longer be viable and could be allowed to become residential developments.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The proposed policies to meet objective 4 appear sensible.

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):

I feel unable to comment on these approaches

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 public transport services including free services.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with these approaches.

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):

In new developments new trees should be planted, but where sites have existing trees and/or hedges of some size and worth, these should also be preserved and building works should be planned so as to incorporate them. Open spaces of grass should also be included. Any existing streams, or brooks, should not be piped but should be incorporated into the development. Also wild flower sections should be planted and maintained. In housing developments when any trees are considered to be diseased, or unsafe, and require felling, then replacements should be planted. Where possible certain areas should also be left untouched / wild. Wildlife underpasses between green areas should be provided under busy roads.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The objective 7 policy approaches appear to be sensible.

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):

Particular attention should be paid to coastal erosion and coastal flooding, avoiding building developments altogether in these areas as the situation will only become worse as global warming continues, sea levels rise and weather extremes become more commonplace. It would also be most helpful if work could be carried out to defend / reinforce cliffs which are eroding and which will soon lead to the loss of roads, such as between Blue Anchor and Watchet.

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 all the Objective 9 policy approaches.

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):

Car free developments would fit well with climate emergency planning.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I do not feel I have sufficient knowledge of Taunton to comment on these approaches.

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

Question 11a: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I do believe that Wellington is suitable for housing developments in view of its location next to the M5, but I have insufficient knowledge of the town to be able to comment on these policy approaches.

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):

I would not wish to see too much development in Minehead or Watchet in view of the poor road access. Also care should be taken to avoid spoiling the historic nature and character of these coastal settlements. I would like to see greater care taken by the planning authorities when applications are made for new, out of character, buildings in the conservation area. Such building applications should be refused and only those which are of a traditional style should be given any consideration at all. No further building work should be allowed on low lying areas such as Dunster Marsh. The houses which were recently built there are bound to be flooded as we see the effects of global warming and rising sea levels and more extreme weather events. Similarly, the SHLAA identifies an area at Culvercliffe, Minehead (SO15) as being a possible site for building development. This is totally unsuitable, being a low lying area right next to the sea and forming part of the coast path. When it comes to enhancing the waterfronts, Watchet Marina desperately needs dredging as it is full of very deep mud, making it both unsafe and unsightly. It is off-putting to tourists and to boat owners, who are choosing to relocate because of this problem.