

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDNH-V

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

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Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Joseph

Surname:

Summerell

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]
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[REDACTED]
[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):

The objectives are fine.

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):

More charge points for Electric Vehicles - maybe grants for supermarkets or workplace parking spaces. Processing as much waste for recycling/compost as possible and burning the rest. Battery storage to cover peak electricity demand and lower costs. Educating and encouraging people/businesses to update inefficient buildings/technology.

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):

I would hope that treating them individually would lead to a greater likelihood of delivering projects that are welcomed by the residents of each town. Although some blending of the perimeters of the towns is very likely, I would guess that the locals there would prefer the identity of two, distinct places. Happy to be corrected, though.

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):

Leave minor rural areas to smaller, private developers, as long as they have support of their respective villages. With Staplegrove W/E, Comeytrowe and Monkton Heathfield in progress; the edge of Taunton has taken up enough slack for the time being. Likewise with Norton Fitzwarren, Cotford St Luke and Bishops Lydeard. Those places need time to adjust and to allow more commercial developments pop up. The key area for Taunton is the masses of poorly used space in the centre.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

As above but also: Which villages/towns are asking for more houses? If there are any, build there first. The edge of Taunton is already under development, on a large scale. Emphasis should be on re-developing existing sites in the centre; especially where buildings are outdated or are in high value areas.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

These points are in line with my previous two comments. Greater density in the town centre would also be welcomed and is entirely capable of being handled by the centre, without any major changes.

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):

Instead of simply increasing the rate at which homes are being added, emphasis should be turned to ensuring that the existing residents and those who will soon be filling the completed developments are provided for satisfactorily by services/infrastructure.

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):

I have no idea. I would guess that the best we can do to assist the traveller community is find out what kind of site they would like built and where would they like it built? Do they even want one built? We need as much input from as many traveller families as possible. Give them what it is they say they need and point them toward it, should they ever need to be removed from anywhere else, in the future. I want them to enjoy their lives but we need to know how we can do that, alongside 'static' residents.

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):

I don't have any disabilities but I would think making at least a small percentage of new homes accessible, is the absolute least we could do. People with disabilities will have your answer, here.

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):

Although the core of new housing should be focused around the better connected centres, adding clutches of homes to the smaller villages wouldn't do any harm. But, they should be encouraged to submit their own plans or suggest areas where they feel homes would be suitable. With local backing for those sites from the start, the council could expedite planning and assist with surveying/prep/etc. Then help with circulating the plans to local house builders or contractors, who can bring the plans to life. The organisers would gain experience in using local talent for such projects, maybe even using local business to source materials. Keep the money in the local economy. Add 2-10 homes across dozens of villages, the numbers soon add up.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

None.

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):

I don't think we need thousands more jobs. That would just mean thousands more people, which is the root of the problem we're trying to solve in the first place: too little (desirable) housing for too many people.

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):

Taunton centre could benefit from redeveloping many retail or antiquated commercial/office sites into residential. Especially if replaced with quality homes that people actually want to live in. Look at any commercial plots that have been empty for years. Encourage new or growing businesses into Blackbrook/Tangier Central/Nexus 25/etc. Incorporate modern office space into bigger redevelopments in the centre.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

None.

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):

None.

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):

I would guess the best value for money would be found in building quality pedestrian/cycle and bus routes from the Taunton suburbs, into the centre. The bus routes to the villages on the outskirts are trickier to improve because of the distance, small catchment populations and what it would actually take to make those people leave their car at home, in favour of a 20-30 minute bus ride, at £6+ a pop. Taunton is also crying out for the bus station to be moved to or split with the train station, so that all services offer a direct link to it; and also for the centre to be pedestrianised and shared only with buses and delivery vehicles where absolutely necessary.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

None.

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):

Try to limit the number of large projects on fields, that destroy trees, hedges and other habitats. Not building on places like Longrun Meadow and the Vivary Wedge is key, for keeping large areas of greenery in the town.

This can be achieved by ensuring the large sites that are built, are of exceptional quality and will be desirable to live in for a long time. If we focus on quantity of homes rather than quality, we will end up with more areas that are undesirable for house buyers.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

None.

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):

8b/1 - No. Never. There should be town and village boundaries and no building at all, in between. A sprawling town is one problem we are already trying to solve. Out-of-settlement-boundary developments will just cause the same problems down the line.

8b/4 - No. Policy to protect 'all' agricultural and natural land, unless it is absolutely necessary to develop.

8b/5 - Only for very small projects.

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

None.

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):

All of the above. The cost of redeveloping sites in the centre will be more expensive but modernised, desirable homes/commercial space, in a town that has all the facilities/services 'plugged in' already, will surely deliver much better return, over time.

Any building in the centre that isn't listed, should be considered. So much space in the centre is wasted because the big, old shops only operate on the ground floor and waste all the space above. Modernising the high street to offer 2,3,4 storey blocks of commercial, office and residential mixes would rejuvenate the retail offering, maximise the square footage used in the town and get more people living in it.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

All good ideas.

10b/2 - With the Firepool and Coal Orchard developments, there is opportunity for nearly a mile of almost constant pedestrian way, from the Train Station to Vivary Park. Refocusing and rejuvenating along this central band (in my opinion) offers a great opportunity for businesses and residents alike.

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

None.

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):

None.