

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDZD-4

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-01-14 12:20:18**

### Your details

**What is your name?**

**Forename:**

Kevin

**Surname:**

Comer

**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?**

Agree

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

Carbon neutrality is the most important factor in any plan. Very much related to that is the commitment to biodiversity, and this is an area which has many advantages in achieving that. I also believe that development should be focussed on the towns with plenty of amenities and infrastructure to discourage excessive travel by private car.

### 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):**

It is vital that bold objectives are set and that work begins ASAP towards those targets. However it is also important to be transparent about the costs involved, and to weigh those against the economic opportunities of green technologies and other cash savings.

### 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):**

Prioritising settlements that are close together contributes to reducing travel

**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):**

Although increasing in Taunton and Wellington relative to minor rural settlements makes sense, it would also seem important to increase development in Minor Rural Centres relative to villages

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

I strongly believe that consideration i) is the most important. I don't think Hinkley Point C is a consideration at this stage as we don't know that it will be completed (the cost is outrageous). Even if you accept nuclear power, the main factor for choosing sites is distance from population centres!

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

I strongly support these policy approaches, they are well thought out and strategic

#### **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):**

The existing housing developments are already having a significant environmental impact and I would prefer if it was reduced. Certainly don't go for a higher figure

**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):**

It seems to me the third option gives maximum flexibility for selecting suitable sites

**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):**

Isn't it obvious?

**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):**

The first option seems the most flexible here

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

I agree with the policy to require affordable housing in new developments, but also you should look at repurposing existing buildings to include this. I am

suspicious about 'tenure mix' where it could mean losing the affordable character in future - there are examples of housing associations selling on their properties and gaming the system in other ways. I don't agree with using affordable housing as an excuse to break the rules on Rural Exception sites - the primary objective needs to be sustainability in all cases.

## 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):**

Given that unemployment is relatively low, increasing job numbers is not the priority  
It would be good if jobs in the future sectors (e.g. green technology) could be encouraged in the district

**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):**

I'm all for flexibility and assessing on a case by case basis

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

These policies look sensible. The last two seem a bit over-prescriptive

## 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):**

Seems a bit technical for layperson comment

## 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):**

PROVIDE A BUS SERVICE

Over the last few years the bus services have declined sharply. There is no regular bus in Hatch Beauchamp for example.

Its ridiculous to ask this kind of question in the context of recent local government actions

Even the park and ride schemes are not well designed (e.g much more expensive for families to use)

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

All right as far as it goes. The provision of electric car chargepoints is very poor in this area and there have been many lost opportunities. Recently car parks were given new pay machines and barriers - why wasn't the money used to install charge points instead?

In the last few years Asda built a service station on their site - did they need planning permission? If so why wasn't installation of charge points a condition?

## 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):**

Make Rural Exceptions much more stringent. For sites identified by Natural England, have policies to protect and extend them. Encourage landowners to plant trees, or use their land in other ways to support wildlife.

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

All good

## 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):**

There is no need for development in the countryside, the plan already identifies the strategic areas where development can take place. Come on, you have to take sustainability and biodiversity seriously

## 10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

All agreed

## 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):**

You could do both of the last 2 options. Also how about converting multistorey car parks into blocks of flats?

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Seems sensible

## 12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

I don't know enough about Wellington to comment

## 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 guess car parking is inevitable due to the poor transport infrastructure but how about encouraging electric cars and providing better public transport.