

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDXC-1

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

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Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Marcus

Surname:

Kravis

Are you making an individual response or on behalf of an organisation?

Individual

If individual, please tell us what type:

Elected Member

Name of organisation:

Sometset West and Taunton

Please choose one from the drop-down list:

Other

What is your (personal/organisational) address?

[REDACTED]
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What is your email address?

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[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):

Although and elected member, I would add that any responses are given are from my own long held views and my specific knowledge of the actual areas involved. This knowledge may be greater for specific areas. Please see the members register of interests an please excuse any typos or spelling errors.

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?

Identify suitable areas through criteria based policies

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The long term use of the Bristol Channel for tidal energy should be activity encourage by SWaT, and indeed driven by the Council. This should be done in collaboration with South Wales as the preference would be something that spans across the channel rather than a lagoon. SWaT needs to think big.

3. Sustainable locations

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

No

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

There is an argument that Minehead should be or at least the aspiration should be for it to be a sub strategic town. Although the lack of available land may make this more difficult to achieve. The numbers of visitors it draws to the area and the benefits to the economy should not be underestimated. The need for further employment land allocation is essential and it maybe that this needs to stretch from the tradition boundary of the town towards Dunster. If Minehead wants to be a second tier town then this must be considered.

Blue Anchor is currently classed as open countryside, when it obviously isn't, especially when combined with Chapple Cleeve, and indeed old Cleeve and the tourism offer is taken into account. See answer to later question.

The village of Washford is strategically placed as a good location between Williton, Watchet and Minehead. It is slightly closer to Taunton than Minehead and should be considered suitable for further housing and employment land, as long as there can be a defined area between it and Bibrook and Washford Cross. Hungerford should also be viewed as a minor settlement capable of more housing / tourism uses.

Washford is the ideal place for a future public swimming pool, for the residents of the former West Somerset Area. Land also needs to be allocated for some sort of supermarket as currently the people of Watchet and Williton are penalised as not having a cheaper supermarket in the vicinity.

(Please see declarations of interests.)

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):

Absolutely, and like Minehead, Watchet's draw and potential ability to draw in visitors should not be under estimated, as well as its suitability for housing and employment land.

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?

Not Answered

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

None of the above, Countryside living has obvious benefits to some and by restricting development in Minor Rural Settlements we are taking this option away from many people.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

v) agree with Watchet and Williton being more suitable for development than Minehead both for housing and employment land, for reasons of location and the availability of suitable land. There needs to be significantly more employment land allocated in Williton, probably around the Roughmoor Industrial estate.

vi) The coastline of West Somerset is under utilised, especially for potential tourism uses. Indeed the land between Blue Anchor and Watchet should be allocated for Tourism use. (Please see Declarations of interests). Also freeing up land for development in West Somerset, could result in a churn in the housing stock freeing up housing in Taunton for people who need or want to live in Taunton and not by the coast.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Concerned that lack of public transport is a reason not to encourage people to be able to live and work on the coastal strip, when improvements to public transport would be easy to achieve.

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 higher than 702 dwellings per year and determined by economic growth strategies, infrastructure improvements and unmet need from neighbouring planning authorities

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

This is especially so for affordable 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):

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):

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

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

Although I understand the reason or the last point, I do not see how it would work in practice, and maybe a time limit for sale may be a better option.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

3e The minimum size of a development before the criteria kicks in should be reduce to 3.

The housing needs assessments should also take into account people from surrounding villages and towns. that may be able, willing or want to live there. For example people requiring affordable housing in Minehead may be able or want to move to a village closer to Taunton, but not be included in any local housing need.

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?

Align with the Heart of the South West growth ambitions (deliver a shift towards a significant increase in overall job numbers including higher value jobs)

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

The SWaT area, with the new council, is in an ideal position for Economic Growth, in all areas of 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?

Allow the loss of specific sites for alternative uses – with a low flexibility buffer (i.e. more sites lost); or

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

The aim must be to deliver more employment sites and ensure that the sites allocated have a reasonable chance of being delivered. But also more land needs to be allocated for employment land. Eg: expansion of rough or in Williton, allocation of land between Minehead and Dunster, Allocation of land at Junction 26 of the M5.

The and at Culvercliff in Minehead could be allocated for Tourism use as well as making it available for transportation infrastructure use.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Agree with all.

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:

2

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

4

IO - 5a - ranking - Strategic Infrastructure (schools, transport, community facilities):

3

Question 5b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Agree with all

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):

Regular and reliable public transport is needed at a cost that will discourage people from using their cars.

Safe cycling and walking routes need to be created and included in future developments.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

agree with all. A Bristol Channel Ferry service should also be included in 6b/3

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):

5.7.2 - Please see earlier answer.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

7b / 8 - Developments should be allowed if they can be seen to be able to mitigate any flooding impact or improve the current situation through an engineered solution.

9. Thriving coastal and rural communities

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

Not have settlement boundaries but instead have a criteria based policy to determine development proposals against; or

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Although settlement boundaries can be seen as beneficial they can unnecessarily act as a barrier to development. Development that may lead to Economic growth should not necessarily be restricted to areas closer to the M5 and development boundaries around Taunton and Wellington may help enable this.

Please see notes on employment land in Minehead and Williton, made to a previous question.

8b / 7 - Please see answers to previous questions re the coastal area between Blue Anchor and Watchet - and St.Audries. An updated coastal management plan should take into account the future long term economic interest of the the former West Somerset Council area. (Please see members register of interests.)

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

With regard to 9a/4 - Things like Pubs should not be protected through planning policies but only by financial assistant. Attempting to protect through planning will simply not work and result in a pub that no one wants to visit. Agree with the community leisure facilities and recreational open space.

9a/7 Very subjective, and the Taunton Skyline is in the eye of the beholder. This almost assumes that the current skyline is something to be protected. I would argue that the new Flood lights at the cricket ground enhance the skyline of Taunton. In fact it is now difficult to imagine Taunton without them.

11. Policies for our places: Taunton

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

Positively encouraging taller buildings (subject to impact upon the skyline); or

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

Agree with all of the above, but there is a unique opportunity to do something exciting with Taunton's skyline.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Agree with all of the above, but Taunton needs something for small start up businesses such as a 'box' park'. A reviewed street trading policy should be put implemented to ensure that any such trading enhances the offer of the Town Centre and does not detract from what is already available. A town centre that has a variety of offers is needed.

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Agree with all but the allocation of the land beside Junction 26, towards Taunton could be allocated for employment use, for innovation and 'hi tech' industries. The strategic location of the land should be kept for economic development and growth.

11a /7, Although I understand protecting the historic character of the high street, unsure the current uses of the whole high street are sustainable in the long term and that maybe the high street offer should be allowed to change.

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):

Agree with all of the above. As previously said the coastal strip is under utilised. The land between Blue Anchor and Watchet should be allocated for tourism uses, although some thought needs to be placed on what sort of Tourism use, to maximise the amount of visitors per year, and the coastal erosion issues need to be solved.

Although there is, and always will be, an emphasis on Watchet and Minehead, the strength of Blue Anchor and current tourism provision between Watchet and Blue Anchor, and of Doniford / West Quantoxhead & St.Audries, should not be under estimated. It is not all about Minehead and Watchet. The whole costal strip feeds into the economies of Watchet, Minehead and Exmoor.

Possible Sransport links to South Wales should be investigate.