

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDQX-F

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-02-14 20:31:14**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Mimi

Surname:

Palmer

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?

Disagree

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

1. That's probably the most unlikely thing to happen.
2. Without at least one more motorway junction, people will start to avoid Taunton's gridlock and go elsewhere if they possibly can.
3. Affordable homes are not being provided. Each planning application is being passed with lower and lower percentages of them. What we really need is social housing for people to rent.
4. Just because you build thousands of houses, doesn't mean businesses will relocate. I'll refer you back to the answer at # 2.
5. Again, refer back to #2. Also, you can build as many schools and doctors' surgeries as you want but that does not mean they will get the staff needed to run them.
6. This is probably one of the most utterly ridiculous ideas! Unless people live very close to where they need to go, they will continue to drive. Especially in the more rural parts of the district where bus services are either infrequent or non-existent and riding a bicycle is impossible and dangerous.
7. Then don't build thousands of new houses all over the district.
8. Not likely if people can't get here due to gridlocked roads. Building on green field won't help either.
9. Please see all of the above responses.

2. Carbon neutrality

Question 1a: Should we aim to require that all new development 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):

I was forced to make a choice I did not want to make.

It is a pie-in-the-sky idea that we can be carbon neutral in five or even ten years. But the option to say so was not there.

You don't say what kind of 'renewable' energy development you are talking about?

Turbines all over Exmoor? Fields of solar panels?

Neither is suitable. Neither is acceptable.

So the answer to both questions is "none of the above".

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):

This proposal does not take need into account.

What we do need is a district wide housing needs survey.

What type of housing is most needed?

Where are those houses most needed?

Is there the local infrastructure in place in areas which need more housing?

Can the existing infrastructure handle increased housing/residents?

It would appear that, once again, none of this has been considered.

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):

Neither Watchet nor Williton have the infrastructure for such a massive increase in housing.

Roads are inadequate.

Public transportation is near non-existent.

Schools are inadequate.

Medical services are inadequate.

You can not just build without having the proper infrastructure in place before hand. Building does not beget infrastructure; the West Somerset district has suffered for years due to the lack of essential workers, building houses is not going to make them suddenly, miraculously appear.

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):

None of the above is an ideal solution.

However, the percentage for Minehead in particular, would amount to approximately 885 new houses in the proposed period. There is no building space in Minehead for this many new houses.

Minehead has recently lost one of its doctors' surgeries because of retirement and inability to attract younger doctors to the area. The hospital can't find enough nurses to staff the wards which have suffered periods of closure.

Minehead is also one of the locations which has been identified as potentially suffering regular and severe flooding incidents by 2050. Increased housing will also cause increased flooding of the main shopping and business areas.

Public transportation in Minehead is poor. The town bus is mostly funded by the town council and some other western parishes, it runs three times a day.

The bus to Taunton runs every 30 minutes. There is no other public transport service.

Due to its hilly nature and high elderly population, Minehead's neighbourhoods are not particularly suited to cycling.

There are empty properties in Minehead which could be turned over to social housing.

Minehead currently has more than 200 properties for sale suggesting there is not a huge housing need.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

i) No

ii) Depends on infrastructure

iii) Yes unless you get the government to spend some money outside the 'northern powerhouse' and London.

iv) Yes

v) No. They don't have the infrastructure/road network/ capacity.

vi) Yes however, surely this goes against your carbon neutral by 2025 policy? Or are you just building housing for people who work in Bristol and Exeter?

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

2b/1. Goes against (vi) in the question above. You can't have it both ways.

2b/2. Effective use of land is NOT building all over green field, much of which is some of the best agricultural land in the word. There is plenty of ex-industrial land across the district which should be be the first use priority.

2b/3. This seems a no brainer.

2b/4. What does this question actually mean?

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):

NONE OF THE ABOVE.

Once again you have forced a response that I did not want to give.

Instead of forcing 702 dwellings on the district, do a housing needs survey.

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):

Don't know. Look at cases on a needs basis.

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):

Again you have not given a proper series of options.

Question 3d: How should we provide for custom self-build plots? Should we:

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):

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

You have not enforced the 'affordable housing' policy. Instead both districts have persistently permitted much reduced numbers of affordable housing to be built. It's time the district stood up to to builders and did what is best for the communities and not what brings in the most amount of CIL/106 monies.

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):

And yet another forced option choice.

The former Taunton Deane district had a plan very similar to this, new jobs did not just magically appear so what makes you think they'll appear this time?

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):

This question, and its options, say absolutely nothing and mean absolutely nothing.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Have you actually read this meaningless drivel? If anyone believes this rubbish, it's no wonder we're in the mess we're in.

6. Infrastructure

Question 5a: On what infrastructure should we prioritise developer contributions? (Please rank in order of priority)

IO - 5a - ranking - Affordable housing:

2

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):

1

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

What on earth does this mean?

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):

We don't have public transport in rural areas!!!

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

If they are not walking/cycling now, they aren't suddenly going to start; it's a very long and dangerous 30 miles from Minehead to Taunton and even longer and more dangerous from Porlock.

There are parts of the district still on dial up. There are also parts of the district where there is no mobile signal so simple broadband and a mobile signal would be an improvement. However, Connecting Somerset and Devon has failed miserably so far.

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):

Stop allowing willy-nilly development. Planting a few trees and flowers at the edge of a housing development does not make up for centuries of habitat. Better not to destroy habitat in the first place.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

You are worsening not improving. Every new house you build on a green field site, every tree you chop down, every stream you reroute causes irreparable damage.

Chop down a tree, build on a field, cause a flood somewhere else.

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):

Given that you currently have settlement boundaries but are permitting development outside them, how are we to trust any proposals?

I suggest you actually consult with the inhabitants and councils in the coastal areas and ask them what THEY want.

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

It's a bit of an oxymoron to say "provide open spaces" and to then build on green field sites.

The rest would all be pretty amusing if it didn't have the potential for being so damaging.

District has already proved that CIL/106 funding is more important than people's wellbeing.

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):

Plenty of wasted space in Taunton. Use it for housing instead of paving over the countryside.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Given the number of houses you are planning on building, I'll be surprised if you manage even 10% of that.

You might also want to start being green by charging for parking 7 days a week in the former Taunton Deane part of the district.

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

No

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):

12a/1. Without proper infrastructure such as regular busses, medical services, where is this employment going to come from?

12a/2. Have you taken into consideration for the lack of good public transportation and poor roads? Minehead has some of the highest parking charges in the district, and they are about to rise again, this will put people off visiting, sending them to easier to get to locations such as Burnham.

12a/3. If what's been done to Minehead's esplanade is considered an "enhancement" then there's no hope.