

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDDA-B

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-04 14:29:44**

### Your details

**What is your name?**

**Forename:**

Sally

**Surname:**

Bainbridge

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

Organisation

**If individual, please tell us what type:**

**Name of organisation:**

Minehead Conservation Society

**Please choose one from the drop-down list:**

Other

**What is your (personal/organisational) address?**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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[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?**

Not Answered

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

Some are and some are more questionable. It seems perverse to have a consultation telling the public that the Council has all the right answers but you can comment on them. What faith can anyone have that the time and effort they expend in replying is in anyway taken seriously ? Yet these are the views of those who live in the area and know it better than most of those preparing the plan.

### 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):**

Provision of electric car charging points.

Power cables put underground to protect against power cuts caused by extreme weather events .

### 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):**

Would put 4 above 3. Minehead has obvious constraints. ENP, the coastline, low lying land in flood plain and is the farthest from the M5. Its setting has a higher landscape value which is vital to its appeal as a tourist centre. Despite claims by some to the contrary it is not suitable or sustainable as a commercial centre. To bring heavy polluting traffic all the way from the major road network to Minehead is pointless and expensive. .

Should be tastefully enhancing Minehead's assets -its peace and old world charm, its LB's, and CA's , its green spaces, its harbour, its tree lined streets and seafront . This is what will bring people to the town. Building more houses on unsustainable sites where there is little potential for work seems to lack joined up thinking. There is no desire for Minehead to become a Weston-Super-Mare.

**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):**

Both villages have a very different character and identity. Watchet is a seaside village with a strong community bond. It attracts tourists because of its setting . Williton is inland and at the junction of the roads serving Bridgwater and Taunton. It is larger and being more urban in feel attracts a very different clientele. Its draw is based on shopping by locals.

Both are served by the heritage railway as distinct entities . Both have their own playing fields and are administered by their own councils.

Once you start making a case to join these two on the pretext that they are close you could apply this to numerous places, as nowhere in England is that far from the next settlement. There are disastrous examples of the joining of one settlement to the next by ribbon development to the detriment of both.

**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 is the county town close to major road systems. Has the potential for work and the major services ie Hospitals, schools, leisure facilities, good range of shops , shopping centres, and transport links. More attractive and vibrant as a place to live for families. Has easy access to London, Reading and Bristol. Offers potential for commuting. More likely to attract key workers.

Wellington too is better situated for access to major roads.

Both places are more sustainable as they have less constraints than Minehead and other rural centres (which offer a different life style). Rural roads are narrow and not conducive to cycling. Many do not have pavements which limits safe walking. Services are limited and already stretched.

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

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

As previously stated feel Minehead is the least sustainable given its constraints and remoteness from major facilities. Most people who buy here are retired. They choose it because of its less frenetic way of life. Not looking for jobs or garish attractions. Few residents commute to Taunton or Bridgwater to work. A vociferous minority want the road improved but the majority know that if that were to happen crime would increase 100%. Easy access has its drawbacks! The road is fine it is the drivers who are the problem.

Remote places have difficulty in recruiting key workers in GP surgeries, care homes , schools etc. so to keep building more homes in such places without being able to offer sufficient services seems perverse.

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

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

Brown field sites should always be used first.

Not keen on mixed use sites, depending on the definition of 'mixed use.' Can cause friction through noise( if commercial element) anti social behaviour unless there is provision for younger people. Older people often want a quieter life style to the young. Need to be sustainable.

Have seen examples of impoverished single ladies living in blocks of flats alongside alcoholics and drug addicts being afraid to go out and suffering mentally as a result.

Do not think that every little space in towns should be covered in concrete it destroys their attractiveness. All urban areas need green spaces and gaps that afford longer views and to protect the individual character of their buildings

Thought planning was about trying to preserve the character of places so that they remain pleasant places to live and work.

#### **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):**

It is important not to provide an excuse for Councils to push for more land to be built over which may not be needed and infrastructure measures that are not necessarily in the local interest. Certainly not to provide for another authorities unmet needs. It is up to them to provide for their own needs. This was something

WS was very worried about when the merger was first mooted. Fear that Taunton would start pushing more housing into WS and Minehead in particular to alleviate its own housing needs. Thus ruining / changing the very character of Minehead as an outstanding heritage settlement and as a tourist destination.

**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):**

These could then be enforced and if people pitched up somewhere else appropriate action could be taken to remove them

**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):**

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

**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):**

## **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):**

One reason why jobs have not increased is because of the pre-occupation of trying to create the wrong type of jobs in unsustainable places. Far more people are going to be working from home. This is being encouraged to limit unnecessary travel and combat climate change. It is important to look at what this county is best at producing. and capitalise on that. It would damage the appeal of the place to introduce alien activity just for the sake of it.

Where ever you live youngsters want to move to pastures new to study, work of whatever. It is not unique to this authority. This is a good thing. The problem is work for the less highly educated which is not mentioned in the equation.

**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):**

Whilst we accept that some industrial buildings are no longer fit for purpose and that some businesses are no longer viable nevertheless we believe that a) some of the buildings could be adapted for alternative businesses and b) that the site could be cleared and re-used. This would prevent green field and other environmentally sensitive areas being approved for commercial use. It has been all too easy to relocate to the detriment of the landscape. New sites create the potential for yet more polluted and contaminated land in the future. They put more of our land under concrete, because the original sites are rarely returned to agriculture or green spaces, even when there were conditions that this should happen. They are used to create more money for the relevant authority with little regard for the blighting of the immediate setting.

Training facilities could be provided on all existing sites to promote the skills needed for new technological jobs. Small offices spaces could be provided for those wanting to

work from home but find it easier to work in a separate space locally.

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

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

## **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:**

3

**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):**

Whilst we are fully aware of the climate change challenges we feel that developers are contributing to this by complying with planning policies requirements. Therefore any additional money through 106 should go towards additional community needs.

Energy and other companies plus individuals must be forced to face up to climate change challenges. It has to be a collective approach.

## **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):**

Running services the times that people need them. Looking at the routes and in some cases altering them.

Increasing Dial & Ride services especially in areas where there is a predominance of older people who may not be able to walk very far.

Encouraging car sharing. Putting up more secure cycle racks. Provide safe walkways.

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

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

## **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):**

Use of vernacular materials in new builds. Quality design. Local peoples' views taken into consideration especially those of conservation and environmental societies.

Good landscaping schemes including use of native species of trees and hedging. Replacing of street trees that have been removed. Use of hedges and walls rather than fencing in new developments especially along roads.

If a building application which includes an existing period property is approved subject to the building being retained it should not be possible for that to be overturned later by the developers. This happened at Dunster Marsh when an old farmhouse which was to be included in the scheme was later allowed to be demolished. The development is much poorer as a result. It lacks any context to the past. It just looks like a modern development of unattractive houses stuck in open countryside.

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

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

Minehead Conservation Society suggested to WSC that the former waste site owned by the council at Culvercliffe beyond Minehead Harbour which is bordered by the SW Coast Path, should be ploughed up from the play area to the end and sown as a wildflower meadow with paths cut through it. This would not only be a tourist attraction but educational too. If there was a small hut where families and others could pick up leaflets/record sheets they could record the insects, butterflies, birds, flowers they see.

The land is contaminated and poor. Close to the sea. Totally unsuitable for anything but amenity use but ideal for wildflowers.

MCS also suggested that land at Dunster Marsh should become a Nature Reserve. It is much visited by migrating and other winter birds. If a large lake was created with boardwalks around it and maybe a log cabin café it could become a big tourist attraction with people alighting off the train at Dunster Station.

Radipole and Lodmoor (RSPB site) in Weymouth are fine examples.

North Hill is Minehead's crowning glory with its extensive tree cover and must be protected from inappropriate development such as that recently refused in Beacon Road.

## **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):**

Agree with 8b/7. Also 8b/4 and 8b/2

Essential that farming is protected especially in a county like Somerset that produces so much high quality food. We need to be more self-sufficient.

Oppose building on green field sites and in the Green Belt.

Should be planting trees in suitable sites along the coast to help prevent erosion and also to help combat flooding. Many coastal locations have flood problems as well as erosion.

## 10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

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

Need high quality design of buildings and open spaces including the planting of trees in suitable locations

Combined sports and community facilities.

Protection of our heritage. Protection of pubs and hotels.

Improved air quality.

Quality public art.

Addressing needs of the less mobile.

## 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):**

As previously stated Minehead is a tourist destination not suitable for industry or more commercial ventures.

Tasteful improvements are what would improve its appeal not things that will change its character from a quiet seaside town in beautiful surroundings . Residents were highly dismayed at the suggestion by the new chief executive that

Minehead could become the venue for an attraction that would swamp it with cars and people and open it up to all and sundry. This is not what people moved here for. If they had wanted that they would have chosen to live in Weston -Super-Mare. Residents have many good ideas on how to promote appropriate heritage tourism if only those in power would bother to listen. Minehead needs to cater for all people not just Butlins. But it does not want to be spoilt by flash in the pan suggestions that have not been consulted on by persons who do not even live here.