

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDXF-4

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-14 19:19:07**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Neil

Surname:

Gaskin

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?

██████████
████████████████████

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):

I agree with the objectives in principle but I am interested to understand whether they have been placed in order of priority or whether they have equal weight. I say this because I believe objective is the most crucial of all. There is now so much inequality in our society that if we must rebalance our society in favour of its poorest, marginalised members. Without putting social justice first, we will not achieve the other objectives.

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?

Allocate sites for specific renewable energy development

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I believe it is crucial to move towards zero carbon as fast as we can. I believe that a lot of technologies already exist which ready for use and are not being used to the full, such as insulation, solar panels, ground source energy, etc. We need to exploit these technologies to the maximum immediately. It will make new developments more expensive but we need to accept and lower the profit margins that developers expect.

Renewable energy projects can be small-scale and are more efficient the closer they are placed to where energy is needed. This is an opportunity to be an

example of best practice.

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):

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):

Wellington needs a railway station and it could be built at relatively low cost. That would then make further development there more sustainable as more of the population could travel by train for work and leisure.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The most important issue for the highway network in Taunton and Wellington is how suitable it is for bus travel and cycling. With the closure of the bus station in Taunton, bus use will become even less attractive. The railway station needs to have a bus station attached to it and not just a huge car park. Currently, bus use is only going to diminish to the point where no private operator will be interested in running services .

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with these policy approaches, but the financial incentives have to be there if private developers are to be persuaded to follow them.

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 current figure is already having a huge impact on the whole area in terms of traffic generated, loss of green spaces and pressure on local services, such as the hospital and schools.

Question 3b: How should we proactively plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches?

Require a proportion of development sites to provide an area for residential Traveller pitches; and/or, Allocate sites specifically for pitches.

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

I do not feel well qualified to discuss this question, but I do know that Travellers have to have somewhere to live and will just occupy sites illegally if they do not have pitches where they can legitimately go.

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):

With an ageing population, the number of disabled residents will increase and their needs must be met.

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):

I prefer the latter as this option needs to be seen as equal to the others, subject to the usual building standards being followed.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

all good policies

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):

We need a lot more local jobs to cut down on commuting journeys and to improve the overall economic prosperity of the area.

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):

I said in my previous response that we need more employment locally to cut down on commuting. However, if current employment sites encourage car travel, then some of them could be given over to green space or leisure space.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The town centres in our area are desperately in need of economic renewal. Empty shops and office buildings are all too familiar a sight. Steps could be taken to encourage more people to live and work in the town centres where they would have less need of a car.

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:

1

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):

I do not in fact agree with the question as I do not see why they have to be placed in order of priority. They are equally important.

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):

Increase parking charges in the town centre and use the money to cross-subsidise Park and Ride. Introduce parking charges at out-of-town shopping sites and use that money to subsidise cheap bus travel. More traffic free zones in centre.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

agree with all of them

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):

Tree planting in new housing areas.
More wild flower areas

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

We must protect the AONBs such Blackdowns and Quantocks and give access to them which does not require car travel. The Levels will be increasingly important for flood water

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):

Settlement boundaries prevent sprawl. Sprawl leads to ever-increasing car use as public transport , walking and cycling work best when people are closer to work, shops and leisure facilities

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with them . Policies that must benefit the more disadvantaged members of our society .

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):

It is crucial to reduce car use in the town centre and increase pedestrianisation

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

We must reduce the amount of parking offered in the town centre and get people onto buses

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Absolutely crucial to build the railway station

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):

The coastal strip has to become more economically sustainable and not rely so much on tourism