

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDZR-J

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-01-17 14:45:55**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Nicola

Surname:

Palfrey

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):

Overall the objectives seem sensible but it will depend on how the exact wording of the policies to how these are going to be implemented. It would also be helpful to understand what the council mean by "agricultural transformation"?

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):

Again it depends how these work in practice.

"Protect best and most versatile agricultural land" - how does the land around Monkton Heathfield which is allocated for more housing not fall under this category when it is good arable land?

Many of the housing design requirements will essentially increase the cost of building so this needs to be taken into account otherwise developers will not be able to sell these houses at sensible prices.

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):

Tier 1 to 6 - I agree with but "Tier 7 - Other smaller settlements and communities" - needs to encompass a bigger remit. There are a number of traditional redundant agricultural buildings in the countryside which are falling into disrepair because the current policies under the current local plans aren't viable. They aren't listed but still have historic merit and are part of the landscape. The cost to convert these buildings sympathetically only becomes viable when it is an open market value house (not a holiday let restricted and many are unsuitable for business use). There aren't lots of buildings like this but the few that it does apply to should be given an allocation as this would help protect the buildings. Regarding the sustainability/travel issue, there are many that work in the countryside but wouldn't meet the agricultural worker criteria and due to the lack of housing in the countryside and varying sizes, house prices are high therefore people live in town and commute to the countryside daily.

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):

The two have nearly merged and this should be reflected as they are essentially one.

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):

I don't actually agree with any of the 3 options. Taunton needs to resolve its transport infrastructure before anymore is built. Blackbrook Business Park, if you leave after 5pm, you will not move until at least gone 6pm. Admittedly this is partly due to the road works but it was bad even before they commenced. It is reducing productivity because staff with children are now having to leave before 5pm to avoid the traffic issues. Currently the road network is not coping with the traffic so more houses with increase the problem. There is no allocation for Tier 7, which I assume should include barn conversions, rural workers dwellings etc. Admittedly it will be very small but it should also be considered.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I disagree with ii but 100% agree with iii - Taunton needs to resolve its transport infrastructure before anymore housing is built. I also disagree with vi, traffic around the M5 is chaos.

"Tier 7 - Other smaller settlements and communities" - needs to encompass a bigger remit. There are a number of traditional redundant agricultural buildings in the countryside which are falling into disrepair because the current policies under the current local plans aren't viable. They aren't listed but still have historic merit and are part of the landscape. The cost to convert these buildings sympathetically only becomes viable when it is an open market value house (not a holiday let restricted and many are unsuitable for business use). There aren't lots of buildings like this but the few that it does apply to should be given an allocation as this would help protect the buildings. Regarding the sustainability/travel issue, there are many that work in the countryside but wouldn't meet the agricultural worker criteria and due to the lack of housing in the countryside and varying sizes, house prices are high therefore people live in town and commute to the countryside daily.

Small scale development in/on the edges of villages/minor rural centres which help support local services in the village would be advantageous and wouldn't have a huge detrimental traffic impact.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I support all of these policy approaches.

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):

We shouldn't be picking up the issues from neighbouring local authorities for not meeting their requirements. Taunton and Wellington is already becoming very

developed.

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):

Traveller pitches and development sites do not really interact. Any sites will need to be managed as unfortunately the sites I have seen impact the landscape as there is often lots of rubbish etc but that is because there is no arrangement for waste collection etc.

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):

If there is a demonstrated need for these and they will be located in appropriate locations, then yes.

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):

Self build plots are still expensive to build for the individual so detrimentally impacting the overall value will mean people will not do it.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I agree with all the points except affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites as this may make any project unviable so therefore won't happen.

3e/7 will depend on the precise wording.

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):

To ensure the areas unemployment rates are kept down, we need to have jobs available to everyone including high value jobs.

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):

If the sites are no longer fit for purpose, flexibility needs to be available to ensure we don't have lots of redundant unused areas.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The policy seems sensible and appears to be trying to take a practical approach to vacant space and ensure change of use is available if more appropriate.

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:

2

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

4

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):

All of the factors are important but I consider the current infrastructure is already extremely stretched hence this should be the highest priority moving forward.

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):

Ensure there are safe routes that doesn't not interact with traffic. For example, I would cycle to Blackbrook but I have to cross Creech Castle with the traffic which puts me off or I have to carry my bike over the bridge.

Also provide safe parking for b kes.

Public transport in rural areas - community buses

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

"Full-f bre digital connections" can be a double edged sword as we have a new build house and the developer signed a deal with BT f bre and we now can't use any other provider except BT so they can just name their price.

Rural mobile connection should be a high priority as it is still very poor in places.

Although public transport is good, cycling and walking is best for the climate so should be the priority.

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):

Planting more trees but this needs to be incentivised. Ideally biodiversity plans should be joined up and not looked at in isolation so corridors link etc.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Some heritage assets will need to be able to adapt whilst maintaining their heritage to ensure they can viably be maintained otherwise they could fall into disrepair if used.

Some of these objects will need to be incentivised for the landowner.

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):

The finer detail of these policy approaches will be critical, particularly "criteria-based policy for when development in the countryside would be acceptable".

In addition there is no mention of a policy relating to the re-use of traditional agricultural buildings.

When referring to agricultural/forestry workers, I consider this should be addressed the same as in the NPPF as a "rural worker". Equestrian also applies to this.

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Supporting a healthy environment and lifestyle is key to good wellbeing.

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):

Taller buildings will increase density without the use of more land being required. "Car-free" is a great in concept but there are very few people without a car and

would lend itself more to student housing.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Generally they seem like good objectives but again all this development results in more vehicles and therefore the road network needs to be sufficient.

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

No comments

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):

All sound reasonable objectives but also have the necessary flood defences in place to protect residents.