

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDNV-A

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-01-20 17:11:50**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Paul

Surname:

Birch

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?

██████████
██
██████████

██████████
██████████

What is your email address?

██████████
██

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):

Far too many of the objectives say, or include more detail that says, "moving towards" or "work towards" rather than, "achieve" or "do". The detail doesn't focus nearly enough on the need for a huge shift in regional transportation such as significant improvements to walking and cycling networks, regional investment in green mass transportation such as electric buses, trams and trains or excluding or reducing fossil fuel traffic from town centres. This region has a history of promising green and affordable housing construction policies and then capitulating to threats from developers and producing compromised results. There must be firm and binding commitments that deliver.

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?

A combination of both of the above

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

If developers were offered the prospect of earning more money from a specific change in design, materials and suppliers they'd have it ready in days. The 2025 deadline for carbon neutral development is eminently achievable. Should any developers say it isn't possible they should risk exclusion from development. If they

back away from this target after having committed they should face penalties. This approach would be essential to avoid the traditional plea of developers that they've tried but it was all too hard so they need to be allowed to fall short of their original commitment.

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)?

No - Watchet and Williton should be seen as separate settlements

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

The breakdown of the tiers seems reasonable. Starting to combine separate communities would lead to other possible combinations such as combining Taunton and Wellington with an aim to significantly improve connectivity. Many of the smaller communities could have similar connective combinations

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 would suggest a change that is not listed which is to increase housing in all areas at the same time as increasing linking transportation options. Smaller increases in smaller communities but significant changes in connectivity (on foot, on bikes and on cheap, green public transport).

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Housing development is closely linked to transportation which is closely linked to climate initiatives. More work on green transportation such as cycle paths, footpaths, green public transport and low emission zones. This would mean secure cycle parking in new housing developments, weather independent footpaths, investment in greener public transport and banning of high emission vehicles from some areas. It would also mean that transport planning should be more closely linked to housing developments and should lead to infrastructure plans that prioritise greener transportation rather than including it as afterthoughts

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Many are predictable and have been around for a long while. Some radical thinking that takes climate chaos seriously would be harder to sell to many but is already an essential step

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 should be a requirement and should be set high to combat young people never being able to afford to rent or buy their own homes. This is particularly true at the, "affordable" level.

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):

This is a question I find harder to answer as I am not a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson. I trust they're being consulted.

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):

Not to do this is a discrimination against those who require adapted access to housing.

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

Allow self-build plots on Rural Exception sites provided that they are secured as affordable housing for ever

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

I like the idea of affordable housing for ever. A drawback is that those who most need affordable housing are not necessarily able to afford travelling to and from rural areas

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

There isn't a specific question on affordable housing. Affordable housing should be a requirement for developers working here, rather than a promise made by developers who then claim they can't afford to offer houses at the agreed affordable level

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):

More jobs are important for the need to attract all economic sections of society, not just higher value or lower value. One aim for a greener area would be to link this to transportation. e.g. green public transport as replacement for private vehicles, genuinely secure off-road cycle routes, limiting access for high emission vehicles linked to increased alternative transportation options

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?

Retain all existing and currently allocated employment sites; or

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

If the large employment growth option, rather than the selective employment growth option, is selected, many employment sites will be needed

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Nothing not covered above

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):

The question above is based on a false premise. Green housing can be developed for no more money (or little more) than wasteful housing. Developers often use the argument of increased costs to allow them to agree to a plan and then, once committed to, argue that they cannot afford it. Affordable housing can be paid for by charging slightly more for the rest of the housing development. Transport infrastructure is a given with any development and making it cycle friendly need cost no more or little more than ignoring this.

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):

Charge more for parking whilst investing in cheaper and more frequent (and green) public transport. Invest in public transport later into the evening to stop town

and village centres dying at night. Have an emissions charge for all town centres.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Yes, I can see arguments in favour of all of these points

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):

It is possible to have very high levels of biodiversity in urban areas as well as rural ones. Given the garden town focus we should be developing this. There is a trade off between locally grown food and biodiversity so there need to be plans that cover ways of maximising local food provision whilst decreasing monocultures

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Reasonable objectives to which I would stress the need for urban areas to be included in planning for all of these objectives

9. Thriving coastal and rural communities

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

Have a policy which is a hybrid of (i) and (ii) where there are settlement boundaries only in areas of greater development pressure i.e. parts of the District that are more accessible - closer to the M5, Taunton and Wellington areas.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Again all reasonable proposals but I would include getting rid of the pointless, incredibly expensive development at Hinkley Point. I would also accept that changing this isn't possible for local authorities.

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Again, all reasonable objectives

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):

These are not either/or questions. There is a place for all three proposals for increasing housing.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

All of the policy approaches make sense

12. Policies for our places: Wellington

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

I'll leave Wellington proposals to be commented on by Wellington residents

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):

More focus on sea level rises might be useful