

From: [Andrew Reading](#)
To: [Strategy](#)
Subject: Sedgemoor District Council - Local Plan 2040 - Issues and Option Document - Sedgemoor District Council response
Date: 16 March 2020 16:09:35

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for consulting Sedgemoor District Council in relation to the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan issues and options document.

Please find our comments attached.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me on the number below.

kind regards,

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Gill Littlewood
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Dear Ms. Littlewood

Somerset West and Taunton Council Local Plan (2040) Issues and Options Consultation

Thank you for consulting Sedgemoor District Council on the Local Plan Issues and Options document. We have set out our comments below which are intended to guide further discussion between the two authorities as you progress to the draft plan stage later in 2020. As the strategy team will be aware, having adopted our most recent Local Plan in 2019 Sedgemoor District Council intend to embark on the initial stages of its next Local Plan from October 2020, with public consultation (reg. 18) programmed for 2021. Consequently continuing an on-going dialogue on relevant cross-boundary matters will be important to both authorities.

Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality

The Local Plan sets out the objective to ensure all new development works towards the District's target for carbon neutrality by 2030, including a Local Plan policy option to require a stepped carbon reduction improvement over Building Regulations. We support this objective and its alignment with the Somerset's emerging Climate Change Strategy with the aim of being carbon neutral by 2030. We are engaged with yourselves and the other Somerset Authorities in the relevant work streams to develop the strategy and key actions to achieve this aim, including actions in relation to the built environment. This will no doubt be a key strategic issue between the authorities going forward. With regard to new Local Plan policy approaches we consider there is need to ensure as far as possible that a consistent approach is taken to energy efficiency standards in new Local Plans across all the Somerset Authorities, if not at a regional/national level. With Somerset West and Taunton being the first Somerset Local Plan to be taken forward following the introduction of the 2030 carbon neutrality objective, we would therefore be keen

to work closely with the Council as this policy approach is developed further; particularly in terms of what effective policies can be taken forward in terms of stepped carbon reduction requirements above building regulation, once issues of development viability and affordability are taken into account.

Housing Requirement and Distribution

We understand that with the standard method minimum figure of 702 dwellings per annum the Council can already demonstrate a healthy supply of housing against this figure, but may explore planning for more for other reasons (e.g. to support economic development or infrastructure improvements). It is understood on this basis that the Council would not be looking to adjacent authorities (e.g. Sedgemoor) to accommodate any unmet housing need. Nevertheless Local Plan housing requirements is a key strategic issue and Sedgemoor will continue a close dialogue with Somerset West and Taunton as your plan progresses to the Reg 19 stage, and as we begin the early stages of our next Local Plan review. This will be important in the context of the next release of household projections and Governments plans to review the standard method calculation later this year.

In relation to the distribution of development, previous joint work between the Somerset Authorities has previously identified that each Local Authority can be considered too broadly have their own individual housing market areas (i.e. aligning with local authority boundaries), when travel to work areas are considered. Nevertheless at the local level there is still a clear functional relationship between the districts, particularly between the north Taunton and the South Bridgwater/North Petherton areas that fall within Sedgemoor. One of the options considered in the reg 18 document regarding the distribution of housing is whether Taunton, as the most sustainable settlement, should take a higher proportion of new housings compared to other settlements. If such an option is taken forward dialogue with Sedgemoor will be critical in order to understand any potential for cross boundary impacts (e.g. in relation to transport). This will be particularly important if any additional growth over and above that already committed/allocated is identified north of Taunton (e.g. Monkton Healthfield area).

Economy and Employment Development

We note the ambitions set out in the consultation document with regard to the economy, including seeking to increase the proportion of high value jobs in the areas. There is a clear relationship between the two districts on this matter, with a functional economic area aligned with the M5 transport corridor. We are happy to continue to work with Somerset West and Taunton to ensure a complementary approach to attracting inward investment to the area.

Future Joint Working

Sedgemoor District would welcome the opportunity to commission further joint evidence base work where this complements both our Local Plan preparation timescales. As well as ensuring a consistent evidence base and helping to satisfy duty to cooperate requirements this also has the

potential to provide efficiencies and cost savings for both Councils. We look forward to working closely on this and relevant strategic/cross-boundary matters as your plan progresses.

Kind regards,



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