

From: clerk@willitonpc.org.uk
To: [Strategy](#)
Subject: Williton Parish Council
Date: 11 March 2020 08:44:41

Dear Sirs

Please find attached a copy of Williton Parish Council's response to the Local Plan Consultation.

I will also deliver a copy to West Somerset House.

Kind regards



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WILLITON PARISH COUNCIL

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10th March 2020

Somerset West and Taunton Council
West Somerset House
Killick Way
Williton
Taunton
Somerset

Dear Sirs

Local Plan Consultation

Please find attached comments from Williton Parish Council regarding the Local Plan Consultation.

The Parish Council has decided to reply by letter to the consultation because the online form does not allow for explanation of some responses.

The Members have also asked for it to be noted that the consultation has been written in such a way that they were leading questions.

I trust this will be acceptable.

Yours faithfully



Michelle Francis (Mrs)
Clerk, Williton Parish Council

Enc

1a **Q: Should we aim to require that all new development 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?**

A: As soon as possible provided materials are available, but no later than 2030.

1b **Q: Should we allocate sites for specific renewable energy development or identify broad areas which we consider suitable?**

A: So that everyone knows where the sites are the sites should be allocated but it is considered that greenfield sites for solar panels is not acceptable as the solar panels should be incorporated into new build development and be retrofitted to existing buildings. The loss of agricultural land is not acceptable and such development can appear industrial in appearance which is to the detriment of the attractive countryside that we have and should be protecting for its own sake. Also, renewable energy, such as, Hydroelectricity, on sites that have already come forward to development

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

A: Support 1c/1,2,3,5,6 and 7.

1c/4 is too generalised, for example what is meant by decentralised?

2a **Q: Do you agree with the tiers that identifies Taunton followed by 6 tiers covering the other settlements? If not, what changes would you make and why?**

A: Agree with tiers 1-6 but not for tier 7 if these settlements have no facilities or amount to a very small hamlet such as Stream, near Williton.

2b **Q: 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)?**

A: Watchet and Williton are very different settlements and whilst they may appear to be close to each other on a map, the topography (ie a hill between the two) and lack of public transport means that they operate as two separate communities and so making it difficult for residents to use each settlement for different things will be difficult. It will lead to extra traffic and will not assist in reducing the carbon footprint. It is therefore considered that Williton and Watchet should not be put in a higher tier above Bishops Lydeard and Wiveliscombe especially if this would mean that more houses would be allocated to Williton and Watchet as the infrastructure is not here to cope.

In addition, approximately 2000 homes have been applied for and the existing infrastructure cannot cope with this as well as any extra.

2c ***Q: 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 above?***

A; Suggest that "Topic Paper 1 Option E - Taunton and Wellington increase, Minehead and Rural centres reduction. This retains some development to support the vibrancy of Tiers 5 and 6 but redistributes housing from Tiers 3 and 4 to Tiers 1 and 2" be the favoured option due to the lack of infrastructure including a poor road network in the former West Somerset area.

It is noted at point v) under Option 2c that, "Watchet and Williton, being closer to major employment towns of Taunton and Bridgwater and close to Hinkley Point C, should be more of a focus for housing development than Minehead which is further away and more remote"

It is considered that the logic applied is misdirected as Watchet and Williton look towards Minehead for facilities rather than Taunton and Bridgwater. Some do work in Taunton or Bridgwater but if they have to rely on public transport due to the timing of the limited service some cannot get either to or from work particularly if they are working unsociable hours. In addition, the roads to Bridgwater and Taunton are narrow and windy and if there is an accident that closes either of the roads, the trip to Bridgwater or Taunton is excessive. It has been known for Williton and Watchet to be cut off from Bridgwater and Taunton for this reason as well as when the roads are flooded or there are roadworks in place. With regard to point vi) "settlements closer to the M5 corridor should have a higher proportion of development (than those closer to the coast) due to their higher land values and ability to deliver new housing."

Agree that this is where the housing should be for accessibility reasons and for being able to deliver the houses.

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

A. Agree with all the approaches.

3a ***Q: Should our housing requirement figure match the Government's minimum figure of 702 dwellings per year or should we have a higher figure?***

A: It should match the Government's figures and not exceed them

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

A: Sites should be allocated where the sites will meet a proven need and demand and are in the places that are suitable for the intended users

3c ***Q: Should we require all new housing developments to make sure that a percentage of the new homes are designed to be accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible?***

A: We should be looking for lifetime homes that can take these points into account when building so all homes have doors that can take wheelchairs and all staircases can take lifts

3d ***Q: Should we allocate sites and/or make sure a percentage of housing developments are for self-built plots for people wanting to build their own homes? Should we allow self-build plots on Rural Exceptions sites provided that they are affordable?***

A: Do not consider that specific sites should be allocated but developers could be encouraged to provide self-build plots. There does not appear to be any logic as to why self-build affordable homes should be on exception sites as living in such areas often has a higher cost than elsewhere.

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

A: Support all policies except 3e/1. Many sites are under 10 houses and it is considered that any site over 5 houses should contribute to affordable housing, if there is a proven need where the houses are proposed. This is even more important in villages where the sites are often smaller than in towns. Without a lower threshold the villages may not get any affordable houses. Any development under 5 should do offsite contribution for affordable housing if proven need.

4a **Q: 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?**

A: Agree should be an increase of higher value jobs, however, we should have a wide variety of jobs on offer to reflect the diversity of people.

4b **Q: 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?**

A: No to the loss of sites – more sites needed

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

A: Encourage better use of premises, flats and offices above shops, mixed use shop and online activity from same premises.

5a **Q: On what infrastructure should we prioritise developer contributions?**

A: Highways, Health and Education

5b **Q: Do you have any comments of these policy approaches?**

A: Broadly support but insufficient information to answer constructively

6a **Q: 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?**

A: Provide extension to bus services to include earlier start and later finishes, together with a better service provided at weekends. We should recognise that people do use their cars and put into place PARK AND SHARE systems on motorway entrances/exits. PARK AND RIDE systems in towns including our coastal towns. PARK AND RIDE near local bus stops so that people can leave their cars and travel in on the local bus routes. An example of this could be use the car park in Williton on a cheaper all day ticket to take the bus into Taunton, instead of charging more in the car parks that fulfil this requirement so that they are used to capacity (or have a deal with the Bus company that you can buy a parking / riding ticket) Also have Bus Rise for local schools so that a circular bus picks up the children off new/large estates and takes them to school.

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

A: Again, not enough detail, but broadly support

7a **Q: Are there any specific measures that you would like to see new developments deliver to improve biodiversity locally?**

A: Increase tree planting with TPO's for existing and new tree planting, plant hedges and wildlife corridors

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

A: Great set of approaches, we need a partnership with the highway's authority for tree planting on new roads and enhancing our estates with planting of hedges and encouragement of wildflower areas, less cutting of grass and more planting of trees and shrubs

8a Q: Should we keep or remove settlement boundaries? Or should we have settlement boundaries in areas where there is higher pressure from development i.e. closer to Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe but remove them in more remote areas to provide more options for development?

A: Should retain boundaries. Settlement boundaries should be used so that it is clear where development is acceptable in principle and is not piece meal as is being seen in Williton and Watchet with the 250 houses at Liddymore and 136 houses at Doniford. This has meant that the infrastructure has not been taken into account in these decisions which is to the detriment of the residents and the appearance of the area.

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

A: 8b/4 Policy to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land. 8b/5 Criteria-based policy for the removal of agricultural/forestry occupancy conditions would be acceptable – these policies contradict each other.

As do policies 8b/6 and 8b/7.

Too many contradictions for us to be able to draw correct conclusions

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

A: Walking and cycling routes should be encouraged. Plus, 9a/7 – why just Taunton skyline? Broadly support, but not enough information

10 Not our area, so cannot comment

11 Not our area, so cannot comment

12a Q: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?

A: It is hoped shoppers car parks for local residents are protected. Broadly support, but again, not enough information. Park and ride for Watchet would be a great idea – perhaps encouragement of bus journeys as part of the tourist events. The Blue Anchor bus route should be enhanced and extended for visit use as well as local, with a ticket for dropping off and on at places like Holford (for walking), Stogursey (for lunch) this could be advertised for the Quantock area, Day out on the Quantocks)

Additional Comments:

- Page 46 – entire coast in West Somerset should be included.
- 5.12 severe coastal erosion
- Williton Parish Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss coastal erosion within our parish, not covered by the set questions
- Would also welcome the opportunity to discuss flooding problems within the Parish, especially after recent road closures due to flooding