

From: [Transition Town Wellington](#)
To: [Strategy](#)
Subject: Transition Town Wellington
Date: 15 March 2020 11:27:30

I am submitting our responses to the Local Plan 2040 document on behalf of Transition Town Wellington, a local environmental community group based in Wellington, Somerset. We have focused on questions 1, 2, 6, 7 and 11 of section 5 as these are of most relevance.

Thank you for the opportunity of sharing our thoughts, comments and feedback with you.

Sincerely,

Anita Roy
On behalf of Transition Town Wellington

SWAT LOCAL PLAN 2040



Section 5.2 Sustainable Locations

Transition Town Wellington's response:

2a. Settlement tiers

We don't agree with the tiers being loaded on urban development, as it isn't necessarily more sustainable. You cannot guarantee that people would be working in Taunton.

Don't always presume that a bigger urban area is more sustainable. One of the biggest causes of global green house gas emissions (**44-57%** according to grain.org) is from intensive agriculture. In order to get away from this we need smaller and more numerous farms – large farms mean fewer people and larger machines. Small farms, with an organic basis, mixed arable and pastoral and less mechanisation will need more people per acre. This means that in the future more people are going to be needed in agriculture and therefore living in rural areas. Huge housing estates with large houses and tiny gardens are neither good for the environment nor for people.

Building on the class 1 agricultural land that surrounds our towns will not meet the 2030 net zero emissions target, and undermines our future food security.

Small, isolated villages are not sustainable human settlements. Having a few more people would increase their resilience and viability. Therefore, adding a small quantity of new homes in smaller villages and hamlets would be a far better way forward for our county. Self-build houses, or small houses, eco-houses: these are all far, far less damaging than huge single-design housing developments.

We would like to see a progressive planning policy designed to encourage widely distributed, small, organic food producers and off-grid homes, rather than more intensive urban conglomerations.

We also highlight the importance of leaving some brownfield sites free of building/development: they represent vital green spaces within and around our towns and existing housing estates, and are crucial for the creation of community gardens, orchards and wildlife habitats.

Transition Town Wellington

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Section 5.6 Connecting people

Transition Town Wellington's response:

6a. Transport

Public transport has to be far cheaper than it currently is, incentivising people to choose to get around by bus or train rather than by private car.

Bus services need to be far more more regular, less noisy and less polluting:

switch all buses to electric vehicles

Bus stops and stations need to be more user-friendly and comfortable

Services need to run later into the evening

Smaller more frequent buses would better meet the needs of many

Off-road cycle paths are essential.

More places to lock and leave your bike.

Shared electric bike schemes

Transition Town Wellington supports the opening of the railway station in the town to connect to Bristol, London and the Midlands/North and westwards down to Devon and Cornwall.

All these measures would help reduce traffic congestion and pollution on our roads.

6b Digital connectivity

TTW strongly supports waiting for further more detailed scientific research and studies on the potential effects of 5G networks on wildlife, migration, human health, insects etc.

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Section 5.7 Natural and Historic Environment Objectives

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

Response from TTW:

- The planting and maintenance of all roadside verges for wildflowers to significantly increase pollinator habitat. We would urge the council to ban the use of all pesticides and herbicides in their kerbside maintenance programmes. Wider margins of 'wild' green space left around playing fields, school grounds, sports clubs, recreation areas: eg Rugby club, Court Fields School, Wellington football club pitch etc.
- We strongly recommend establishing a 'wildlife corridor' approach in order to enhance the biodiversity in and around Wellington: stitching together the open spaces from ToneWorks & Tonedale Mill along the leat and river courses through the basins and up to Rockwell Green; along the railway embankments, and interconnecting/permeable gardens and encouraging wildlife gardening.
- When roads are dug up, wildlife tunnels should be incorporated as standard. Hedgerows and large trees should be incorporated into housing estate design – as per Cades Farm – and not dug up wherever possible.
- In all new houses, there should be sufficiently large gardens allocated to incorporate at least one tree, and space to grow your own food.
- Swift boxes should be incorporated as standard into house design.
- Promoting wildflower planting & wild areas for insects: not 'tidying up' dead wood and fallen trees, brambles and long grasses – as these are vital habitats for all manner of creatures.
- The TTW Street Tree Project will help to not only beautify the centre of town, but create shade, draw down water, and clean the air. Create a wildlife corridor through the centre of Wellington west to east; provide food/perches/shelter and homes for pollinators and birds, so helping to meet proposed policy approaches 7b/1, 7b/2, 7b/5, 7b/7 and 7b/12. Tree planting on suitable sites all over the town is a very high priority – as is protecting and maintaining those we already have! We would like to support the council adopting a Tree Policy, with greater protection for the mature trees in and around the town, and in the surrounding areas.
- 7b/12: Tree planting needed to draw down water, improve soil fertility, to lower flood risks and to lessen run-off from fields is vital (see work done by Reimagining the Levels group), in addition to their crucial role in carbon capture and in providing wildlife habitat. Mass tree planting is needed vis a vis– Wellington has unacceptably low tree cover according to the govt urban tree map. Trees in the town's central area and car parks would:
 1. create wildlife corridor
 2. clean the air and absorb noise pollution

3. create shade for people
 4. enhance beauty and promote well-being
- We wish to see a greater collaboration between the council, environmental groups, local people and farmers and landowners to enhance the amount of wildlife habitat that we have: increasing the width and extent of existing hedgerows and planting new ones; incentives for farmers to leave wider margins around their fields.
 - In addition to the existing community orchards and herb beds etc that TTW look after, we would like to see more land for growing organic food crops, and the adoption of forest garden principles where possible in open spaces. Promoting smallholdings, local organic farming, and local food is vital to all of the above.
 - Forest Gardens (for example at Fox's Field/Tonedale mill site), food growing spaces and allotments we see as absolutely crucial in the sustainable and biodiverse future of the town and surrounding areas.

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Section 5.11 Policies for our places: Wellington



Transition Town Wellington's response:

We broadly support the policy approaches outlined, specifically to do with opening the railway station, and protecting the historic character of the town's built environment.

In addition, we would like to propose Tonedale Mill/Tone Works as potential sites for alternative energy production, as well as offering a huge opportunity to renovate, restore and bring back to life one of the most important sites in our area. Any development here should, we think, aspire to the highest environmental standards – in terms of water recycling, low emissions, 'passive' buildings, low waste, upcycling building materials etc. The area adjoining the mill, known as Fox's Field and the whole 'green' corridor that runs through the field, under the railway line and into the Basins is a vital habitat for wildlife and must be conserved and enhanced, with native trees, footpaths, wild areas, riparian woodland etc.