

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDDU-Y

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-10 10:48:00**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Rob

Surname:

Hossell

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?

Disagree

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

The most crucial aspect to the Local Plan is to ensure rigorous protection of our villages, and prevent the settlement boundaries from being opened with "criteria-based policy", which will allow developers to abuse the system, and destroy the open countryside.

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):

Adopt the Future Homes Standard without delay for all SWT sites over 10 houses, where construction has not commenced. Major housebuilders must to be forced to adopt it by local authorities, rather than drag their heels. It is nonsensical to be continuously making the problem worse by allowing new homes to be built that will need to be retrofitted. Housebuilders receive billions of pounds in taxpayer support through the Help to Buy scheme. These funds should not be used to build dwellings that will need to be retrofitted later at up to five times the cost of designing-in appropriate standards from the start, such as the Future Homes

Standard.

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)?

Yes - Watchet and Williton should be seen as associated settlements

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

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):

Rural settlements should not be swamped by large developments on adjacent farmland.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The reference to the M5 corridor in item vi) should be removed, as we do not want Taunton to be a town divided by a Motorway. The M5 must remain as the eastern and southern boundary of Taunton, maintaining this land in the Blackdown Vale as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

As part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) new sites are put forward as part of the "call for sites". The current process classes these sites as "potentially developable" or "non-developable", when a much more accountable and rigorous approach is required, particularly given many potentially developable sites are not adjacent to existing settlement boundaries. How long does this status last for non-developable sites?

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):

This figure of 702 units/yr is far too high for the requirements of Taunton, so this should be treated as an absolute maximum. This figure should be driven by the economic growth of Taunton. We need more affordable housing, which needs to be managed directly by the Council, rather than developers, who regularly renegotiate their targets as being uneconomic, even when they still deliver around 20% net profit! (much higher than any other UK businesses).

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):

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):

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

Identify and allocate specific sites for self-build plots in locations related to where people want to live according to our self-build register; and/or

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

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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?

Develop bespoke and realistic growth ambitions linked to the Council's Economic Development (Prosperity) Strategy (i.e. increase the proportion of higher value jobs within existing overall job numbers and not pursue a significant increase in job numbers overall); or

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

Quality not quantity of jobs is required. Ignore the Heart of the South West 20 year unrealistic growth plan. Focus on a specific field, such as green energy.

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?

Allow the loss of specific sites for alternative uses – with a high flexibility buffer (i.e. fewer sites lost); or

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

Develop more specific strategies, such as focussing upon green energy development. If there are excessive unused sites, allow some limited change of use to prevent derelict sites.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Drive the growth of clean energy businesses, with communal hubs for start ups.

6. Infrastructure

Question 5a: On what infrastructure should we prioritise developer contributions? (Please rank in order of priority)

IO - 5a - ranking - Affordable housing:

1

IO - 5a - ranking - Designing for the Climate Change Emergency:

3

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

4

IO - 5a - ranking - Strategic Infrastructure (schools, transport, community facilities):

2

Question 5b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?

Please provide comments (250 words max):

The Council needs to deliver affordable housing direct, separate from the developers.

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):

Provide greater focus upon dedicated cycleways, and cycle parking in town. Develop brownfield sites in town, so people live close to facilities and employment.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Encourage working from home with enhanced fibre broadband/mobile networks.

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):

Ensure existing habitats are protected from urban sprawl, so developments are focussed upon brownfield sites, rather than greenfield.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Preserve the Green Wedges, and designate an Area of Great Landscape Value. The valley covered by the parishes of Stoke St Mary, Neroche, Corfe and Pitminster – the Blackdown Vale - is the largest of these valleys in the district and the one under the most pressure from development, which must remain protected.

9. Thriving coastal and rural communities

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

Have settlement boundaries across the District; or

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Settlement boundaries must be tightly controlled across Taunton Deane to prevent developer led housing from building upon open countryside. Criteria-based planning is open to abuse, as developers will force their applications via planning inspectors against the Council with limited resources to prevent them. Do NOT permit any development outside settlement boundaries. They have been around since 1215 and must be maintained.

10. Wellbeing of our residents

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Ref item 9a/7, the view from the Blackdown Hills is of open countryside before the Taunton Skyline appears. This view must be maintained without the parishes of Stoke St Mary, Neroche, Corfe and Pitminster – the Blackdown Vale, being swallowed by development. Keep the M5 as the Taunton boundary.

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):

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):