

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KD5U-G

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-16 18:46:54**

### Your details

**What is your name?**

**Forename:**

Russell

**Surname:**

Crisp

**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?**

██████████  
██████████████████

### 1. Overview and objectives

**Do you agree that these are the right Objectives for the Local Plan?**

Agree

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

The council needs to ensure an adequate supply of housing and employment land while meeting the wider objectives of the plan and protecting the environment in a sustainable manner.

### 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?**

Slightly more time (e.g. by 2030)

**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):**

Question 1a.

The principle of carbon reduction is supported; however, the phased approach is preferred in order to allow for the adoption of a design approach, materials consideration with supply a chain which can deliver an achievable target. The 2030 target should therefore be used in order to prevent unviable and

unimplementable housing and employment delivery, which would stop development in the area and fail to achieve required housing and employment delivery objectives. Such a move would in itself be highly unsustainable and detrimental to the aims of the plan and area as a whole.

Question 1c/5

The issue of protecting best and most versatile agricultural land should be considered in the context of providing sustainable development. In order to enable development in sustainable locations the use of best and most versatile agricultural land should be allowed. The mitigation of such land when developed would be hard to deliver, therefore protection should occur to land in the best and most versatile quality, which is unlikely to form sustainable development, at this stage or in the future.

### 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):**

The settlement tiers are the appropriate way to deliver development across the district. Taunton is the most sustainable location, followed by Wellington and then other towns and villages. The sustainable and strategic location of both Taunton and Wellington are the correct ones to direct the most growth. Both locations are well located to deliver a combination of housing and employment growth in order to deliver the sustainability objectives of the district.

The higher-level tiers of both Taunton and Wellington reflect the significant difference between these two locations and the remainder of the area. Taunton and Wellington are well located with regards to public transport facilities, and have the ability to significantly promote walking, cycling and use of buses and in the case of Wellington the train with the potential to open the new station. In addition, the associated range of employment, retail and leisure activities provide the best opportunity to deliver the sustainability changes which the council are looking to achieve.

In line with the council's employment, retail, leisure study of 2018 the requirement of for smaller development units which have been delivered at Taunton and in particular Wellington due to their locational advantages over other parts of the district.

**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 settlements of Watchet and Williton should remain as separate settlements reflecting their independent nature and different need of the area.

**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?**

Increase housing in Taunton and Wellington; and reduce in Minehead and Rural Centres

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

Topic Paper 1 option E is the most appropriate way to distribute development with a higher growth at both Taunton and Wellington and a reduced growth in the rural district areas. This is the best way to support sustainable development and deliver the council's climate change agenda with a reduction in car travel and increase in walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Taunton and Wellington are highly sustainable locations with employment, retail and leisure facilities to support the population. In addition, both have very good public transport options available as alternatives to car-based modes. If the proposed rail station opens at Wellington the sustainability benefits will be further improved, but notwithstanding the station, Wellington remains a very sustainable location for development.

With regards to delivery considering the benefits of sustainable development at Wellington after Taunton the percentage of housing should be increased above the current distribution of 13.1%. An increase at Wellington would recognise not only the benefits of the settlement in delivering a sustainable development agenda, but also the role the town has played in delivering development over the plan period.

The housing requirement for Wellington should replicate the core strategy with 2,500 dwellings proposed to 2028, together with an increase to accommodate further growth to 2040 with an increase to attract a more diverse population. The Wellington target for the period to 2040 should therefore be closer to 3,500 dwellings over the plan period, which accommodates the current unmet requirement up to 2028 as yet to be constructed plus the annual requirement and allowance for growth.

The benefit of delivering a higher proportion of housing at both Taunton and Wellington will also enable a high proportion overall of affordable housing to be delivered, based on the higher housing demand and higher value housing in such locations. This will deliver a key target for the council.

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

The approach to housing delivery is supported. The settlement strategy should be supported with additional emphasis on development at high tier locations (Taunton and Wellington) and locations in proximity to transport corridors and employment locations.

### 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):**

It is noted that housing numbers are yet to be determined, however considering the need to deliver more affordable housing and a change to the population mix in the district, a new strategic mixed use development should also be proposed at Wellington in addition to those at Taunton.

The overall housing numbers for the area should be increased above the projected previous and proposed annual average in order to enable employment growth throughout the area as recognised in the employment land study of 2018. An increase in overall housing numbers will also enable the delivery to counter the ever-aging population. With regards to housing numbers previous requirements for the Taunton Dean housing area should be increased in order to establish a younger more diverse population. The delivery rate for the former Taunton area should therefore be increased above that proposed under the Governments Standard Methodology of 702 dpa. The previous housing target set out in the Core Strategy of 2012 of 645 dwellings has been achieved and therefore there is the ability to increase the level of housing available in the district.

The higher target of 19,900 dwellings should be accommodated over the period 2020 to 2040 in order to achieve the councils economic strategy of increasing the employment availability, and the social strategy of achieving sufficient affordable housing for the residents and diversifying the population mix away from the significantly aging population. An increase will also enable the infrastructure required in particular public transport infrastructure requirement to be delivered.

**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):**

The delivery of traveller sites should not be tied into housing sites. There are significant problems with such an approach with mortgage lenders not providing mortgages on any site with a planning consent for housing and traveller sites.

Traveller sites should be treated separately and allocated and identified in the local plan in suitable locations.

**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):**

There should be a proportion of lifetime homes provided on sites where a need is demonstrated. This would normally be in smaller houses, which can cater for such requirements. Any such requirement to provide housing which is of high standard than required should be tested against a viability assessment or be discounted from other requirements on the planning package.

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

Include a positive encouragement policy, including for community-led projects, and leave the housing market to deliver plots as and when demand arises; and/or

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

The council is meeting its self-build requirement therefore the need to provide additional self-build plots on site is questioned. A proportion could be accommodated provided that if they were not taken up they could be converted back to housing with the lifetime of the development site.

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Affordable housing targets need to be set out at within the plan in order to provide developers with confidence in assessing a site. The failure to do so would potentially prevent development through the uncertainty of the viability of a site. The failure to set a target would also lead to delays while the information was assessed and debated and potentially appealed.

## **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):**

The employment needs of the district should be met through a range of policy approaches. There should a focus on high value employment in order to increase the overall economy. The other sectors of the economy should not, however be overlooked with small scale businesses playing a significant role in providing jobs in the area. Sectors requiring good road networks should be accommodated recognising the two motorway junctions at Taunton and Wellington play a significant role in the provision of jobs the business and other parks.

Junction 25 of the M5 is recognised as playing a significant employment location and attracts businesses, which now has the Nexus 5 business park proposal.

The Wellington junction should equally be recognised as a significant employment attractor, which a growing range of businesses. It has the benefits of being uncongested and located in an excellent semi-rural setting. The junction should be considered for a high-quality business park together with another distribution and smaller scale employment business location.

**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):**

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

## 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:**

3

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

4

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

1

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

## 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):**

Through the provision of suitably located housing development in conjunction with employment land which is well located to serve business needs with access to public transport.

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

The delivery of suitable development designed to enable safe cycling and walking is supported. Likewise s106 requirements to enable the delivery of suitable public transport improvements are sensible and supported. In addition, the delivery of full fibre digital connections are supported.

## 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):**

The physical and visual impact on the AONB's should be minimised, in order to maintain their quality and diversity.

Residential development should not be build on any area susceptible to flooding and only allowed in flood zone 1 due to climate change.

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Due to climate change, development should not be build on any flood risk area and only allowed on flood zone 1.

## 9. Thriving coastal and rural communities

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

Not have settlement boundaries but instead have a criteria based policy to determine development proposals against; or

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

## **10. Wellbeing of our residents**

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

## **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):**

## **12. Policies for our places: Wellington**

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

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

The policies to support Wellington and encourage growth and prosperity in the town are fully supported.

Junction 26 of the M5 is recognised as playing a significant employment location and attracts businesses. The area is suitable to provide the change the council is looking for in both high quality and increased employment land in order to deliver the economic changes the required. Junction 26 has the benefits of being uncongested and located in an excellent semi-rural setting. A high quality business park together with a range of other businesses combined with housing development in this location will provide a sustainable settlement pattern, which will deliver the councils carbon neutral approach to development be 2030, whilst maintaining the economic prosperity of the area.

The relocation of Relyon and Swallowfield needs to be carefully considered in order to maintain the employment prospects in the district.

## **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):**