

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KD8G-5

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

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Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Mark

Surname:

Wathen

Are you making an individual response or on behalf of an organisation?

Individual

If individual, please tell us what type:

Resident of elsewhere

Name of organisation:

Somerset West and Taunton District Council

Please choose one from the drop-down list:

Local Planning Authority

What is your (personal/organisational) address?

[REDACTED]
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What is your email address?

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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 economic development strategy needs to be responsive to the different needs of place and type of economy

Although historically West Somerset has been viewed as rural and not diverse, we need to really look to the future and across policy objectives to position West Somerset to be well placed for the future

therefore we need to ensure we dont approach this plan in a traditional too difficult to do view of life, we really need to think creatively about how we support West Somerset, not only Taunton, to seize its rightful place in the knowledge economy of the future

We do need to ensure that rather than considering Minehead and Watchet as expensive drains on infrastructure, we flip our thinking on its head to say right we will push for new climate change technologies, sensors, sustainable construction and flood mitigation measures using innovative, new technologies as Pilot demonstrators for the UK and internationally to harness the deployment of renewables, the exploitation of natural capital for future lifesciences discoveries (following the example of Biohm in Watchet using fungi to degrade plastic and leave a sustainable building material behind and potentially antibiotic resistance and future medicines) as well as new materials farming such as hemp for roofing, composite materials as well as carbon sinks etc)

In short, make West Somerset a centre for future emerging cluster opportunities to address climate change challenges and provide solutions for investment in R and D and demonstrator areas for new innovative technologies

Exmoor itself is creating world leading businesses in agritech and lifesciences that attract invest and are global - but because of planning rules on Exmoor are being driven out through small minded parochialism and given virtual no employment sites allocation around Minehead are being lost to Sedgemoor or other

areas - this is not sustainable and we need to be more imaginative in looking to rounded holistic approaches to employment especially in a digital age

2. Carbon neutrality

Question 1a: 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?

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):

Our rural and coastal places offer fantastic opportunities for developing action zones to attract government investment for future renewables and zero carbon investment, backed by the LEP industrial strategy - wind, solar, biomass, combined heat and power perhaps linked through to Hinkley C heat energy, sustainable materials and construction, new ways of farming using agritech technologies

Some of this is reflected in a LEP productivity paper submitted by all the heart of the south west coastal areas to be adopted as a lobbying document by the LEP to Government for growth incentives and beneficial loan rates and investments

3. Sustainable locations

Question 2a: Do you agree with the tiers that identifies Taunton followed by 6 tiers covering the other settlements?

No

If not, what changes would you make and why? (200 words max):

No

I think Minehead is underplayed as a significant market town with a greater hinterland and more self contained town than Wellington which has not featured highly on the economic development radar other than the fact that it is on the M5

In terms of the future scenarios of emerging industries and natural capital and sustainability and diversification potential, with the right incentives, Minehead in a new economy vision should no longer be seen as peripheral but vital and key to sustainable climate change technologies as well as quality of life and tourism which as well as eco tourism could be associated with business and scientific and technological tourism of future sustainable technologies

this would help Minehead be viewed differently by investors and connectivity could be improved by new modes of travel across the Bristol channel linking economies and industries of the future so it would be shortsighted and detrimental not to consider Minehead as a significant player in new economic futures

furthermore there is significant creative, cultural and craft makerspace opportunity linked to Exmoor and Minehead for artisan foods, craft, drinks, sports technology and leisure pursuits that could all be accommodated in Minehead and West Somerset especially taking advantage of digital connections and technology in the future

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):

Leave the same but given previous comments, find suitable sites around Williton Watchet and Taunton for self build sustainable communities which are becoming increasingly popular amongst retired people who want to be self reliant and give something back to the community in terms of creativity, innovation and skills and teach others in low carbon technologies and sustainable ways of living and also allocate sites in Taunton to become exemplar, like is already happening in Bristol and also to meet aspirations of social enterprises and provide opportunities for new construction techniques and apprenticeships in new construction techniques rather than just preserving old historical buildings

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Think about sites that follow scandinavian and dutch building models in sustainable manners and use them to incentivise innovation, future employment, attractor of high growth r and d companies that want to pilot new ideas

that would be really imaginative and innovative planning

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):

as per previous section think SELF BUILD

Question 3b: How should we proactively plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople 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):

YES BUT ALSO ENSURE IF THEY ARE FOR THE ELDERLY THEY ARE BIM TECHNOLOGY ENABLED SO WE CAN GROW THE FUTURE NURSING AND TELEHEALTH/TELEMEDICINE MARKET

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, 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, Include a requirement for all housing development sites over a threshold to include a proportion of plots as self-build plots; and/or, Allow self-build plots on Rural Exception sites provided that they are secured as affordable housing for ever

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):

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):

If they were allocated on a finger in the air rather than proper commercial viability criteria let them go for other uses but find alternative compensating employment land elsewhere more viable so there is no overall net loss but on sites much more likely to attract businesses in and support growth of existing businesses

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

we really should be looking to expand employment site provision and move on space in West Somerset in spite of flood issues

6. Infrastructure

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

IO - 5a - ranking - Affordable housing:

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

1

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

2

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

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):

Park and Ride

Use of waterways and taxis

cycling

running and cycle tracks including leisure type exercises along the running paths to encourage health and wellness and fitness trails

encourage shared on demand mobility and look to government funding streams for this

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

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):

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):

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):