

Response ID ANON-8CC9-KD58-K

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-16 17:27:50**

Your details

What is your name?

Forename:

Matthew

Surname:

Wright

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

Organisation

If individual, please tell us what type:

Name of organisation:

TAUNTON DEANE COMMUNITY SELF BUILD GROUP

Please choose one from the drop-down list:

Community Group

What is your (personal/organisational) address?

██████████
████████████████████

██████████
████████████████████

What is your email address?

██████████
██

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):

House prices reflect demand and supply. The affordability housing for bottom quartile households in the Taunton Deane area has declined in recent years. The property price to household income ratio has increase most markedly for the lowest income earners in Taunton Deane and West Somerset. If local residents are to have a prospect of being able to afford a dwelling that they may purchase, then more houses meeting their needs need to be built, in order to gradually make houses affordable to first time buyers and lower income households.

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

Apply rural exceptions criteria for small scale residential sites where pitches which would be affordable in perpetuity; and/or, Allocate sites specifically for pitches.

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

The increasing urbanisation of the UK countryside, and its intensive use means that specific provision should be made, as very few traditional pitch sites are available. Rural exception sites may help relieve the growing pressure on car parks, and temporarily unused open spaces that the Gypsy community increasing descend upon.

The community is by definition mobile, so normal transport sustainability considerations may be able to be relaxed to some extent.

Provisions for use and abuse are likely to be needed, as not all of the travelling community ascribe to the same traditions or ethos, and abuse of provisions for a traditional lifestyle may occur.

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?

Not Answered

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

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):

These policies will help meet self build needs for differing groups.

General policy encouragement is good, and should be done, but will not be enough on its own. This is similar to affordable rented or sale properties that are not generally produced by market forces in the UK. Market forces can produce a small number of expensive plots more suited to high income buyers. The other policies are needed for other income groups.

Rural exception sites with secured affordability are excellent for skilled trade and lower income groups to gain a foothold on the property ladder through 'sweat equity'. This can also be useful for community self build and will overlap with the other two categories.

Requiring a developer to provide sites will encourage middle income self builders to purchase more expensive plots than the exception sites, but will need detail mechanisms in place to cope with the potential clash between volume and bespoke build.

The identification and allocation of specific sites, linked to the register would work once a realistic prospect of acquiring sites is in view, as self build groups could help more people to register, and reflect demand more accurately in scope and place.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Self build groups should be allowed to self select and assemble, in the manner of similar German "Baugruppen". These groups sometimes look more like traditional 'community groups', and at other times more like extended family groups, or even ecological and sustainability charities. These groups are based on network relationships and not on the immediate geographical neighbourhoods. This model has much to recommend it, as very few modern urban communities are based solely or even mainly on a tight street or parish council area.

"Stroud District Local Plan Review Draft Plan for Consultation," seem to have useful policy considerations in place. In the consultation document several sections consider self-build: Section 2.18; 2.12 Core Policy CP3 (self-build in settlement hierarchy); 4.12 Delivery Policy HC3 and a specific community led self build policy in 4.16 DHC4. This last policy is grounded in "democratic structure" which is defined broadly enough should cover the suggested community model above.

Section 4.12 suggests meeting a percentage allocation of dwellings to self build, and lays 'Life Time Homes' style requirements on the self build designs.

Section 4.16 includes community groups being able to include recreational space, community buildings and "space for growing food" and also for wildlife as possible inclusions in a group application.

Lastly, a reasonable route through the complexities of planning should be in view, with a practical hope of finding land. Self builders are not able, nor often willing, to go to appeal to secure a plot.