

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDS9-J

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-13 17:21:14**

### Your details

**What is your name?**

**Forename:**

Andrew

**Surname:**

Fido

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

Organisation

**If individual, please tell us what type:**

**Name of organisation:**

Viridor (c/o Pennon Group)

**Please choose one from the drop-down list:**

Business

**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?**

Agree

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

(Please note - We have submitted a covering letter and plans via email to [strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk). This online submission utilises extracts from that letter. Please refer to the email submission for a more comprehensive response.)

Whilst in broad agreement with all of the nine objectives set out, we believe that objective 2, 'to enhance the role of Taunton town centre in the sub-region' should be broadened out to include reference to enhancing the role of the whole town through further growth, including for employment uses.

This should include enhancing the role of key employment locations such as the Crown/Priorswood industrial estate at Venture Way and the associated adjoining land to the east which is owned by Viridor. This location already provides an important existing employment site and employment allocation, and it is important that the emerging Local Plan is supportive of its retention and appropriate expansion further eastwards.

Similarly, although Wellington is not at the top tier of the settlement hierarchy it is identified as the sole second tier settlement, with the role of a sub-strategic town. It would therefore also be appropriate to specify the growth of Wellington, including for employment purposes, within a new objective.

### 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?**

Not Answered

**Question 1b: Should we allocate sites for specific renewable energy development or identify broad areas which we consider suitable?**

Identify suitable areas through criteria based policies

**Question 1c: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

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

Please see the attached covering letter for additional comments. Viridor has no further comments.

**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)?**

Not Answered

**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):**

Viridor are supportive of the proposed settlement tiers set out in the consultation that identify Taunton at the top tier of the settlement hierarchy, where most growth and development should be focussed; and also agree that housing should continue to primarily be distributed with a priority to Taunton. This is right as Taunton is clearly the largest settlement with the widest range of facilities, and hence a sustainable location on which to focus most housing but also employment development. The role of other towns should be considered on a case by case basis. Viridor are also supportive of the identification of Wellington as being a second tier settlement, with the role of a sub-strategic town. This is supported given the range of services and facilities available, including the aspiration to reopen the railway station. Again, Viridor support the existing distribution of housing which identifies Wellington as an important priority after Taunton, and seek that this distribution priority is extended to employment uses.

**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):**

Please see the attached covering letter for additional comments.

Viridor are supportive of all three options for housing distribution given that they include a focus on Wellington and Taunton. As set out above, Viridor seek that this approach is extended to the distribution of employment allocations.

**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?**

Not Answered

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

**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?**

Not Answered

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

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

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?**

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):

Viridor are supportive of pursuing an ambitious increase in job numbers across the board. Whilst any increase in high value jobs is supported, it is important not to over specialise or focus exclusively on the higher value sector and to recognise that there continues to be a need for a range of employment types. The surplus Viridor land at Poole (Wellington) and Priorswood (Taunton) is considered compatible with both approaches, and thus should have an employment allocation in the new Local Plan.

**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?**

Develop flexible policy allowing for the loss of any existing/ proposed employment site subject to specific criteria

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

Viridor are supportive of the retention of existing employment allocations, with a flexible policy allowing for the loss of employment sites in accordance with relevant criteria, but would reserve their full support until the actual proposed policy wording is known.

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

Please provide comments (250 words max):

Please see the attached covering letter for additional comments.

Viridor do not have any comments on the options stated, but seek that these are expanded to recognise the importance of locating employment sites at sustainable locations, including previously used land such as the Viridor surplus landholdings at Poole (Wellington) and Priorswood (Taunton).

## 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:

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

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):

Please see the attached covering letter for additional comments.

Viridor do not have any comments, other than to highlight that their surplus land at Priorswood (Taunton) is sustainably located being approximately 2km to the north east of Taunton town centre, and has direct access via the canal towpath/River Tone for pedestrians and there are nearby bus stops. It is thus well located in sustainability terms, and should be considered appropriate for an expanded employment allocation.

**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):**

Please see the attached covering letter for additional comments.

Viridor consider that the merits of each green wedge/open break/local green space designation should be closely considered on a case by case basis and only designated in those locations that have clear supportive evidence. When considering the potential allocation of such areas, it will be important to first assess whether they could contribute to other sustainability objectives, for example they may be partly appropriate for development on the basis that they comprise previously developed land or are sustainably located in relation to a settlement or due to their accessibility by non-car modes. Consideration should also be given to whether smaller, but well managed areas of green space could provide a greater contribution to wider sustainability policy objectives, particularly if positive management regimes could be introduced to increase biodiversity net gain, for example.

Overall a flexible policy basis is considered most appropriate, and Viridor intend to make further representations on this issue as the Local Plan evidence base is made available, with particular reference to their landholdings at Priorswood (Taunton).

## **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):**

Viridor are supportive of not having settlement boundaries, but instead having a criteria based policy to determine development proposals against. This will allow the merits of each particular site to be considered on a case by case basis.

Viridor are also supportive of policy approach 8b/1 – setting a criteria-based policy for when development in the countryside (outside of settlement limits) would be acceptable. Again this will allow the merits of each particular site to be considered on a case by case basis.

## **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?**

Not Answered

**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):**

Please see the attached covering letter for additional comments.

Viridor are supportive of the Local Plan objective of pursuing an ambitious increase in job numbers across the board with delivery focussed at Taunton. In order to contribute towards this goal it is important that the full range of employment sites are allocated. In particular the surplus Viridor land at Priorswood (Taunton), which has an employment allocation in the existing Core Strategy remains a suitable, sustainably located employment site. This site should continue to be allocated, and extended eastwards, in the new Local Plan.

In terms of policy approach 10/b Viridor consider that the merits of each green wedge/open break/local green space designation should be closely considered on a case by case basis and only designated in those locations that have clear supportive evidence. When considering the potential allocation of such areas, it will be important to first assess whether they could contribute to other sustainability objectives, for example they may be partly appropriate for development on the basis that they comprise previously developed land or are sustainably located in relation to a settlement or due to their accessibility by non-car modes. Consideration should also be given to whether smaller, but well managed areas of green space could provide a greater contribution to wider sustainability policy objectives, particularly if positive management regimes could be introduced to increase biodiversity net gain, for example.

Overall a flexible policy basis is considered most appropriate, and Viridor intend to make further representations on this issue as the Local Plan evidence base is made available, with particular reference to their landholding at Priorswood (Taunton).

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

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

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

Please see the attached covering letter for additional comments.

-11a/1 supporting new employment uses

-11a/4 allocating land of sufficient size and scale to enable the employers at Tonedale Mill and Toneworks to relocate, whilst remaining within Wellington as well as maintaining a Strategic Employment Site near Junction 26 and an employment site at Longforth.

It is relevant in the above context that Viridor own surplus land located at Poole, Wellington which is considered suitable for employment allocations through the emerging Local Plan.

We look forward to contributing further to the Local Plan process as matters evolve.