

LDF Project Management Board 4th March 2011
Transport Review of Yeovil Eco-Urban Extension –
Non-Technical Forecasting Report

Purpose of report: To make Members aware of the recently completed Transport Review of Yeovil Eco-Urban Extension and its main findings and recommendations.

Recommendation: That Members acknowledge the reports findings.

Background: South Somerset District Council has identified the need for an Urban Extension to be built in Yeovil within the Draft Core Strategy for 3,700 dwellings, 23 hectares of employment land and associated infrastructure. Three potential strategic locations for the Urban Extension have been identified by SSDC and were presented within the Draft Core Strategy for public consideration. As an outcome of the consultation process the Council received, criticism regarding the level of detailed information the Council held in respect of potential transport impact. This topic was considered particularly important, as it was a major issue in the determination of the Council's preferred direction for growth.

This report by Parsons Brinkerhoff was commissioned by Somerset County Council on behalf of SSDC to address these concerns and present in highways and transport terms the most appropriate location for growth. The County Council were asked to consider three additional options, two to the north and one to the south, effectively an amalgamation of the southern and south-western options. These options emerged from early engagement of Town & Parish Councils in the 'cluster workshops', and the amalgamation option was considered a pragmatic approach reflecting emerging evidence on location.

In order to model traffic generated by the options, working assumption were required by the County Council of the more specific locations for housing, employment and open space and these were provided by the Spatial Policy Manager.

Report:

The report considers six possible options, which are shown in map form in Appendix 1. Key points emerging from the report findings are as below.

Eco-success or Eco Failure: The report modelled each option against three possible scenarios; Eco-success (c), partial success (b) and eco-failure (a). The report concluded that eco-success could only be achieved at options 5 & 6 and partial success at option 4. Options 1 to 3 were thought to be too remote from Yeovil town centre, making driving too attractive.

The eco-success scenario was proven to visibly improve the road network conditions by reducing the overall number of queues, increasing average vehicle speed and reducing delays per vehicle. However in absolute terms these improvements are small given the baseline congestion. Achievement of Eco-success is likely to require a full 'Smarter Choices' programme being successfully introduced by the Highways Authority with District Council support i.e. more effective travel planning, "teleworking" and improvements in public transport and walking / cycling networks.

Impact on A3088 / A303 Cartgate Roundabout: Impacts on the Cartgate roundabout junction are similar for most of the development options, although noticeable less for option 3 and 5(c). Report modelling is insufficiently detailed in this area and it is recommended that more detailed junction testing be undertaken at the Cartgate

roundabout for any of the development options being progressed especially for option 1 which has the most impact. The view of the Highways Agency will be sought as part of the consultation and will be a key factor to weigh in consideration of this report.

Associated Infrastructure Requirements: Within the report, cost estimates related to access infrastructure have been developed based on generic junction layouts (Appendix 7). However more detailed assessment work will be required to determine the true extent and scale of any associated network modifications. Option 1 is likely to be most expensive and option 5 the least. The range is such that that option 1 is more than twice as expensive as option 5.

The development options generally lead to small increases in congestion on the Yeovil road network. However, due to the high levels of baseline congestion, even a small impact is likely to lead to a requirement for junction mitigation.

Recommendation: The report recommends that Option 5(c) (Brympton / Coker) be taken forward as the most favourable site in transportation terms given it has the greatest potential for eco-success and the lowest infrastructure costs estimated at £1.54 million.

It is suggested that options 5 is tested in more detail, including the impact of development on additional problematic junctions. It is also suggested that more detailed assessment work is undertaken on the infrastructure and access design requirement to deliver this option.

Next Steps:

This short report is intended to give an early view for members of what will be key evidence influencing the location of the proposed urban extension. A more detailed report is to be produced for members consideration as part of the workshop programme presented earlier at this meeting. This further report will include the outcome of the consultation process now underway on the Transport Review.

The full Transport Review of Yeovil is available to view on the District Councils website.