

6. Wider Planning Issues; Sustainability of Options

The land take paper recommends that a total land area of 190 ha should be identified to accommodate the proposed Urban Extension of 3,400 new homes and associated infrastructure. The land area is made up of 45 ha of open space provision, 25 ha of strategic landscaping and 119.17ha of built development. The Constraints Mapping Analysis has presented the three development options below (and identified in Constraints Maps 5 and 6.):

Option 1: South West Option

The development option now covers an area of approximately 240 ha which is above the required figure of 190ha. This excess will allow the subsequent master planning process the flexibility to remove fields from the site area to protect the separate identity of villages, reduce visual impact and prioritise land with the highest potential for built development.

Option 2: North West Option

This includes a 190ha parcel of land to the north west of Yeovil running from Thorne Lane to the south and extending north to Vagg Hill and out towards Windmill Farm to the west.

Option 3: Multi Site (Dispersed growth) Option

This Option combines the land identified in Options 1 and 2 above with the addition of 49 ha of land in West Dorset District between Babylon Hill and Compton Road Road and 75 ha of land to the north east of Yeovil extending north to Up Mudford and west toward Mudford Hill. It is clear that there is considerable excess potential in all of these sites over and above that required to meet the proposed level of growth.

The three site options are subject to a broad review of their pros and cons framed against the 14 objectives within the Council's Sustainability Appraisal scoping report and appraisal methodology. A more formal sustainability appraisal is to follow however for this stage of review and subject to any further points of emphasis emerging out of the formal sustainability appraisal the outcome of the assessment of pros and cons is considered sufficient to determine which option is to be pursued. The more significant issues are assessed in some more detail following the table 1 below of specific pros and cons before a final conclusion is drawn on which is the appropriate option for development.

Table 1; Pros and Cons of the three identified options (assessed against The Council’s identified Sustainability Criteria)

Option 1: South West Option	
A single Urban Extension to the South West of Yeovil.	
Sustainability Appraisal objective	Commentary
1. Improve access to essential services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would facilitate linkages to the National Cycle Network Route 26 ▪ Access to Town Centre facilities via Hendford Hill by foot or on cycle may be difficult for some ▪ Good access to existing superstores
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities to improve deprived town centre wards through regeneration
3. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is sufficient suitable, available and viable land for development ▪ Single site allows economies of scale to be applied
4. Improve health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Located in close proximity to Goldenstones Leisure Centre and the Yeovil Country Park maximising opportunities to encourage healthy living ▪ Good access to Yeovil Hospital ▪ Economies of scale mean a Doctors Surgeries can be onsite
5. Improve education and skills of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economies of scale mean good access to new Secondary and Primary education once these facilities are built on site ▪ Poor access to existing Secondary Schools
6. Reduce crime and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in the fear of crime
7. Support a strong, diverse and vibrant local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In close proximity to employment opportunities at Lynx Trading estate and AugustaWestland. ▪ Well related to Bunford Business Park. ▪ Scale of development mean that employment allocation can be onsite.
8. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In close proximity to Pen Mill Railway Station and may offer potential to improve links to Yeovil Junction strengthening the use of rail, economic development prospects and business case for bus links. ▪ Highways Agency & Highway Authority consider the option acceptable and viable ▪ Single ‘A’ road access (but multiple classified unclassified road links) ▪ Option presents an opportunity to establish high frequency figure of eight bus route between outlying stations, town centre and Urban extension
9. Protect and enhance the landscape and townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will impact of the separate identity of North /East Coker, West Coker and Barwick and Stoford. Note: settlement coalescence would be avoided. ▪ Constrained by some steep topography ▪ Largely located in an area of medium to high capacity to accommodate built development from a landscape perspective (includes small pockets of moderate to low capacity)
10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In close proximity to a number of listed and historic buildings and settlements therefore potential negative impacts may arise ▪ Western edge in close proximity to Brympton D’Evercy Manor House (Grade 1 listed)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Historic Environmental Assessment identified that growth could be accommodated without detriment to historic assets within the wider option ▪ Impact of archaeology – option includes site of Roman Villa but open space aspirations will allow this to be potentially protected from built development
11. Reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South facing slope maximising opportunities for passive solar gain ▪ Economies of scale maximise opportunity for renewable energy generation ▪
12. Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would result in loss of Grade 1 agricultural land ▪ Negative impact on air, water and light pollution
13. Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not unduly constrained by flooding
14. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Option is not constrained by biodiversity constraints

Conclusion:

As a single direction for growth, this option benefits from the economies of scale associated with a true sustainable community. The site is at a scale that would support a secondary school, a single employment site, community services, Combined Heat and Power Plant and a regular bus service. Eco-town standards can be met. This option performs well within the Parson Brinckerhoff Transport modelling report and is considered the most accessible, most able to promote sustainable development and the least expensive. It also performs well in relation to the Brooks Devlin / Font Energy renewable energy study. The South West option particularly at its eastern end is located in close proximity to the town centre and would maximise opportunities for walking and cycling. This option is deliverable as there are sufficient sites within this option that are suitable, available and viable and the estimated transport infrastructure costs are not considered restrictive. This option would result in the loss of a large area of grade 1 agricultural, impact on nearby rural settlements and the landscape of the area.

Option 2: North West Option

A single Urban Extension in the North West of Yeovil.

SA objective	Commentary
1. Improve access to essential services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor links with Town Centre and associated facilities ▪ Opportunities to improve access to public transport ▪ Poor access to existing superstores
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Few opportunities to reduce poverty and social exclusion
3. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No evidence that the majority of the site is suitable, available or viable for development ▪ Single site allows economies of scale to be applied
4. Improve health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Option poorly related to Hospital ▪ Economies of scale mean a Doctors Surgeries can be onsite
5. Improve education and skills of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economies of scale mean good access to new Secondary and Primary education ▪ Poor access to existing Secondary Schools ▪ Good access to Yeovil Innovation Centre
6. Reduce crime and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in the fear if crime.

7. Support a strong, diverse and vibrant local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well related to employment opportunities at Houndstone Business Park & Lufton Trading Estate. ▪ Scale of development mean that employment allocation can be onsite.
8. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Costs of highway infrastructure prohibitive – supported by Parson Brinckerhoff Transport Assessment ▪ Poorly related to Pen Mill and Yeovil Junction Railway stations
9. Protect and enhance the landscape and townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Located on land with moderate and moderate-low capacity to accommodate built development from a landscape perspective ▪ Will impact of the separate identity of Chilthorne Domer and Thorne Coffin
10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In close proximity to a number of listed and historic buildings and settlements therefore potential negative impacts may arise ▪ Impact of archaeology – option includes site of Roman Villa
11. Reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economies of scale maximise opportunity for renewable energy generation
12. Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would not involve the loss of Grade 1 agricultural land ▪ Significant loss of Grade 2 agricultural land ▪ Negative impact on air, water and light pollution
13. Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not unduly constrained by flooding
14. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Option is not constrained by biodiversity constraints

Conclusion:

Whilst this option benefits from being a single direction for growth and the economies of scale that this brings, it can not be considered a true sustainable development as it is not as well related to the town centre and existing facilities within the town making sustainable transport difficult to achieve. The site is at a scale that would support a secondary school, a single employment allocation, community services, CHP Plant and a regular bus service. Eco-town standards could be largely met with the exception of sustainable transport. This option is not considered deliverable, as there is no evidence that the land is suitable, available and viable and the County Council have raised concerns regarding transport infrastructure costs.

The recent review of the Parson's Brinkerhoff report on various transport options including the North west presents a more favourable view in sustainability terms for transport to and from the north west option but still recommends the south west option. However the County Council go on to assert in response to receipt of the revised report that The performance of the options (south west and North west) in terms of traffic impact is such that if a preferential case could be made on planning grounds for development in the north-west, this would also be supported by the County Council provided that it was demonstrated that the likely significant extra cost of transport infrastructure necessary to develop in this location could be met.

The north west option would result in the loss of a large area of grade 2 agricultural land and could impact on the setting of Montacute House and Gardens. Given the scale of development in this location, coalesces of the settlements of Thorn Coffin and Chilthorne Domer would be difficult to prevent. It is also considered that this option would delay the progress of the Core Strategy as the community has not been previously consulted.

Option 3: Multi Site Option	
Several Urban Extension(s) around Yeovil. Potential site in the North West, North East, South East, South and South West.	
SA objective	Commentary
1. Improve access to essential services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally poor links with Town Centre and associated facilities ▪ Poor access to existing superstores
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Few opportunities to reduce poverty and social exclusion
3. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is sufficient land that is suitable, available and viable for development. ▪ Does not offer the advantage of economies of scale ▪ Deliverability of land located in West Dorset uncertain without formal agreement between two District Councils
4. Improve health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sites likely to be poorly related to health provision including Hospital and Doctors Surgeries
5. Improve education and skills of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor access to new Secondary and Primary education, not all sites will have access to new facilities
6. Reduce crime and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in the fear of crime
7. Support a strong, diverse and vibrant local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sites poorly related to employment opportunities around Yeovil ▪ The scale of development means that employment allocation will be scattered more and less able to offer a full range of opportunities and likely to be more costly with more essential infrastructure required to service more sites
8. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities for improvements to public transport opportunities reduced ▪ Eco town standards for sustainable transport could not be achieved
9. Protect and enhance the landscape and townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sites located in areas of high, moderate to high and moderate capacity to accommodate built development
10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cumulatively the impact on the villages surrounding Yeovil would be greater
11. Reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eco town standards for renewable energy can not be achieved ▪ Dispersed option reduces success of renewable energy generation
12. Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant loss of Grade 1 & 2 agricultural land ▪ Minor loss of Grade 1 agricultural land ▪ Negative impact on air, water and light pollution
13. Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South East option constrained by flooding
14. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Options can avoid areas of highest biodiversity

Conclusion:

This option does not offer the economies of scale associated as with a single urban extension so would no longer be able to generate the scale necessary to support a community centre, CHP Plant or regular bus service. Employment allocations could no longer be contained on one site and would instead need to be split between several sites. Eco-town standards would no longer be possible. The dispersed pattern of development would still generate a need for a secondary school and primary schools but good accessibility to these services would no longer be guaranteed. Transport modelling for this option has not been undertaken and would need to be carried out. There is no guarantee that sites will be located near the town centre or other local facilities. The option will minimise the impact of development on the historic and natural environment in one area. Disadvantages with each option remain. The South East Option is located on a flood plain and in West Dorset warranting significant cross boarding working. Option to the South is located on Grade 1 agricultural land. The North West option is located on an area of high landscape value. It is also considered that this option would delay the progress of the Core Strategy as additional work will be required to determine whether some or all of the potential sites should be developed, the relative advantage of one site over another and how best to achieve sustainable urban extential growth. Furthermore as the community has not been previously formally consulted upon some of the options there may well be a requirement to undertake further consultation.

Wider Planning Issues

The purpose of this section of the report is to consider wider planning issues beyond immediate constraints on the proposed direction for growth for Yeovil taking into account representations made to the Draft Core Strategy (issues and options). The representations submitted raise a number of objections regarding the weight given regarding individual planning issues and their impact on Yeovil's preferred direction for growth. These issues can be summarised as:

Issues:

- Accessibility to Services
- Traffic Congestion
- Market Capacity
- Deliverability
- Land Availability
- Infrastructure Costs

Accessibility to Services

A key consideration in determining the location of a new Urban Extension for a town is the accessibility to existing services and the degree to which the new development can be absorbed into the Urban Area.

Key facilities serve a wider catchment than the immediate neighbourhood in which they are situated. Examples include exmployment centres, hospitals, education institutions, leisure centres and cultural attractions. The accessibility of key facilities is therefore of particular importance because they form major travel generators (for both employees and patrons) and wider access has strong additional social benefits.

In order to proactively encourage sustainable travel, the aim should be to locate and manage key facilities so that they will:

- be conveniently accessible by public transport by users and employees within their planned catchment area.
- Reduce average travel time and distance.

- Maximise the proportion of travel by non-car modes, and
- complement land-use and transport policies, traffic demand management strategies and investment programmes that are being pursued in the area more generally.

Given the spatial distribution of existing services in Yeovil, various observations and conclusions can be made about how well each site would link into the existing service network.

The Southwest development option in the direction of Brympton / West Coker / East Coker / Keyford / Barwick benefits from being a short distance from the town centre via Hendford Hill (albeit this is a steep hill). This direction for growth is well related to existing employment provision to the Bunford Business Park, Lynx West Trading Estate and AugustaWestland's complex and is therefore well served with employment opportunities. The nearest superstores are Morrisons on Lysander Road and Tesco in the Town Centre. This direction for growth also benefits from its proximity to the Yeovil Country Park, which could be incorporated into the design of the development to maximise open space provision. This development option has good access to Yeovil Police Station, Pen Hill & Hendford Lodge Medical Practices, Goldenstones Leisure Centre, Yeovil Hospital and town centre Bus Station (again access is via Hendford Hill). This option has the potential to bring Yeovil Junction Station partially back into better use if a more frequent bus service could be introduced through the Urban Extension and onto the Station. The South of the town is not well served by Secondary education institutions and would therefore be less likely to benefit from existing provision should none be provided within the site. Conversely, if a new Secondary School could be funded in this area it would fill a gap in catchment areas and complement existing provision. This option does not present any opportunities to link with the towns train Stations.

The Northwest option between the A3088 and Thorne Coffin is located much further geographically from the town centre than the South West option and would therefore be the least likely to encourage sustainable travel options by either walking or cycling. This option benefits from good access to the Lufton and Houndstone employment areas (including the Yeovil Innovation Centre) and to the AugustaWestland's site. The nearest local shops and medical practice are at Abbey Manor and the closest superstore is ASDA located on the corner of Preston Road. The north of Yeovil is well served by Secondary Schools, the nearest being Preston Community School. This option is not well related to Yeovil College, Yeovil Hospital, Goldenstones Leisure Centre or any natural features that could form part of the open space contribution. Both Yeovil Junction and Pen Mill station are located on opposite ends of the town and have no functional relationship.

The several sites options has not been geographically defined, therefore no direct comparison can be made with the North West and South West options in terms of access to services. In broad terms however it could reasonably be assumed that access to services will be compromised as some sites will inevitable be located away from existing services meaning that a number of residents will lack one or more basic services. A key strategic point being both sites are unfavourably located in relation top the main employment area in the centre and west of the town. Should this option be perused, further work will be needed to identify the best locations for development that maximise existing service framework.

Conclusion

For Yeovil, access to the town centre and the towns major employment sites forms one for the main considerations given the number of trips that they generate. The town centre is very important because of the number of services and business that operate from in its vicinity including the bus station, Tesco's Superstore, Yeovil Police Station, Yeovil Hospital and several medical practices.

It is considered that the South West Option at Brympton / West Coker / East Coker / Barwick / Keyford is the area best related to the town centre and the towns existing services. This option also has the potential to link with the Yeovil Country Park and Yeovil Junction Train Station. This option lacks good access to any existing Secondary School catchment areas and to address these

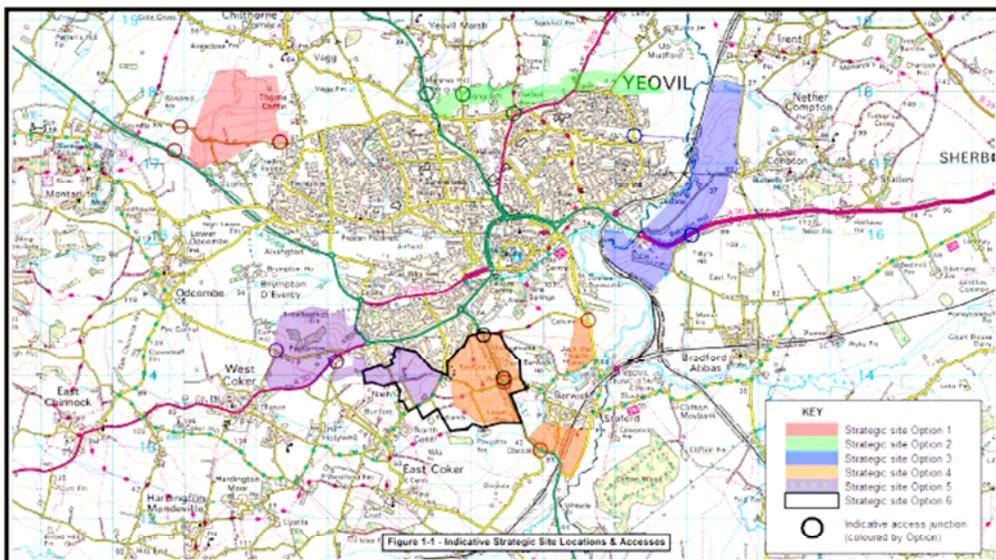
deficiencies would be a key requirement in developing this option. For these reasons, the Southern West option should be the Council's preferred direction for growth on accessibility reasons.

Traffic Congestion

Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd has been appointed by Somerset County Council (SCC) to assess the likely transport impacts of the six potential development sites on the road network in and around Yeovil. The Yeovil Transport Report (February 2011) includes a brief qualitative analysis of the suitability of the sites to meet eco development targets for transport, SATURN modeling of the sites and an initial assessment of associated infrastructure requirements. An Addendum Report (June 2011) was produced at the request of the County Council in order to ensure a full and complete picture of future transport impacts and has been undertaken to address concerns raised locally about the extent of modelling undertaken for the first report. (Which the broad outline within this report has yet to be seen at the time of drafting).

Report: The report considers six possible options.

- Option 1: Lufton
- Option 2: Combe Street Lane
- Option 3: East Yeovil and Over Compton
- Option 4: East Coker, Keyford and Barwick
- Option 5: Brympton and Coker
- Option 6: East Coker and Keyford



The 6 transport options can be considered to broadly relate to the Council's three preferred options to the North West, South West and multi-sites. The North West option is represented by transport option 1: Lufton. The South West Option is represented by transport options 3, 4 & 5 which model various scenarios in the same direction. The multi-site option has not been modelled.

Eco-success or Eco Failure: The report modelled each transport 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 to the south and west. Options 1 to 3 were thought to be too remote from Yeovil town centre, making driving too attractive. All development options have been modelled for comparative purposes.

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.

Impact on A3088 / A303 Cartgate Roundabout: In the 2026 Reference Case this junction suffers severe congestion along the A303 arms in the morning peak hour, and the A3088 in the evening peak hour. Impacts on the Cartgate roundabout junction are similar for most of the development options, although noticeably less for option 3 and 5(c). Thus, Option 5 and 1 with Eco-success become the forerunners.(i.e the South West Option 1 and North West Option 2).

The formal Highways Agency response to the Yeovil transport study confirms 'modelling undertaken is satisfactory' and that as expected 'the modelling shows that development to the south of Yeovil is preferable'. The Highways Agency also reassured that negative impacts of the proposed Urban Extension on the A303 are likely to be limited to the Cartgate Roundabout' and support the need for further analysis of the Cartgate Roundabout. Somerset County Council acknowledge that the report was insufficiently detailed in this area and have commissioned Parsons Brinckerhoff to undertake more detailed junction testing at the Cartgate roundabout for the preferred option. The output from this work is expected in October and may have a material impact on any overall conclusion from the transport recommendation.

Associated Infrastructure Requirements: It is likely that additional modifications to the existing highway infrastructure will be required, regardless of which option is pursued. Within this report cost estimates related to access infrastructure have been developed on the basis of generic junction layouts. Cost estimations for other schemes have also been developed where possible but more detailed assessment will be required to determine the true extent and scale of any associated network modifications. Therefore, cost estimates in this report should be considered as minimum figures at this stage.

In terms of order of magnitude of costs, Option 1 is likely to be most expensive to deliver and Option 5 least expensive. However, Option 6 is similar in quantum to Option 5 so should not be excluded on the basis of cost. The range of costs is such that Option 1 is more than twice as expensive as Option 5. The development options above generally lead to small increases in congestion on the Yeovil road network in 2026. However, due to the high levels of baseline congestion modeled for some of the key routes and junctions in the 2026 Reference Case, even these small impacts are likely to lead to a requirement for junction mitigation. This includes the Horsey roundabout, Hospital roundabout, Fiveways roundabout, Lyde Road mini roundabout and Combe Street Lane mini roundabout. This is the case for all the traffic scenarios, because even when eco success is achieved, congestion is often still greater than that of the Reference Case scenario on some of the key local junctions.

Conclusion

After comprehensively testing the six options for strategic growth, it is clear from the technical work that two options perform significantly better than the others with regards to these policy aims. Across the range of parameters, the north-west and south-west options are consistently ranked as the two best options in terms of minimising traffic impact with minimal difference between them across the selected test journey times or on the junctions adversely affected.

It is the conclusion of Somerset County Council that the south-west option appears to offer the greatest potential to meet our transport policy aims based on the evidence in the reports and the desire to develop future growth in Yeovil along more sustainable principles associated with the standards set out in 'Planning Policy Statement 1 Eco Towns, a supplement to PPS1' dated July 2009.

The performance of the options in terms of traffic impact is such that if a preferential case could be made on planning grounds for development in the north-west, this would also be supported by the

County Council provided that it was demonstrated that the likely significant extra cost of transport infrastructure necessary to develop in this location could be met.

Whichever option is chosen the County Council will require the developer to provide infrastructure improvements that strive to ensure that the development does not make traffic conditions worse at congested locations, and to put in place robust travel plans to maximise movement by more sustainable means of travel.

Market Capacity and Deliverability

The capacity of the market is the level of housing that can be sold or rented by developers, thereby determining the potential rate of house building that can occur. The proposal for 8,600 dwellings in Yeovil from 2006 – 2028 needs to be checked for realism against the likely market capacity and its deliverability by developers. The proposal for 3,400 dwellings in an urban extension needs to be affirmed as deliverable as a key specific part of that total build.

The Baker Associates report on Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil (Survey 2011) presented a detailed appraisal of market capacity and a specific Housing Trajectory for the District and within it for Yeovil. This is based on discussions with developers, past build rates and anticipated future rates from a number of site sources.

The original report and Trajectory went to 2026 only and hence interpretation is required to achieve a view to 2028. The Baker Study concludes that the deliverable housing supply for Yeovil 2006 – 2026 is 7219. The projection of this figure forward to further years on the basis of the Housing Trajectory build rate for Yeovil in the end years of the Plan period (200 pa windfall and 260 pa for the urban extension) yields a further 920 dwellings and a total for Yeovil of 8,139 dw and for the urban extension of 3,160 dw to be built from 2006 to 2028.

On the basis of the above assessment the overall scale of growth for Yeovil and for the urban extension specifically is close to being achieved but not achieved in full. The Baker report, however, indicates a higher market capacity for Yeovil should the urban extension be spread across more quadrants of the town. They indicated that additional extensions beyond the 1 location would enable a further 120 dwellings pa to be built (based on a perception that 2 developers would be active in an additional extension delivering 40 dwellings each pa with a further 40 affordable houses).

It is considered that the urban extension now being proposed is effectively an amalgamation of the preferred strategic direction for growth to the south and the South West option presented in the draft Core Strategy. Two distinct market areas are considered to be offered by the new proposal, namely to the south along the A37 and to the south west along the A30. On this basis it is considered that a further 120 dwellings per annum over and above the development rate presented by the Baker Associates report can be achieved. This would ensure that the entire 3,400 dwelling urban extension could be achieved and add a further 240 dwellings to the overall Yeovil total, bringing this in real terms to 8,400 dw and within 3% of the overall requirement. This is considered to be effectively full delivery.

This basic analysis in market capacity and deliverability applies similarly to the North West Option 2 and the Multi site Option 3.

Conclusion

The overall identified planning permission for Yeovil of 8,600 dwellings to 2028 and 3,400 for the urban extension are capable of being delivered and realistic in market terms.

Land availability

National policy¹ emphasises that Core Strategies must be deliverable, which includes ensuring that partners who are essential to the delivery of the plan, such as landowners and developers, are signed up to it. The key piece of evidence in terms of deliverable and developable housing sites is the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The need for the SHLAA to provide such evidence is highlighted in the Planning Inspectorate's note of her frontloading visit to South Somerset District Council (November 2009). This note states that in relation to potential housing sites around the edge of Yeovil in the (then draft) SHLAA "...in individual sectors around Yeovil there is some difficulty in identifying contiguous areas of land of sufficient size for the required urban extension. Therefore a call for sites is likely to be required. This must be given a high priority."

The potential for sites in the SHLAA (published March 2010) for each of the emerging site options for the Yeovil urban extension(s) are set out in the following table:

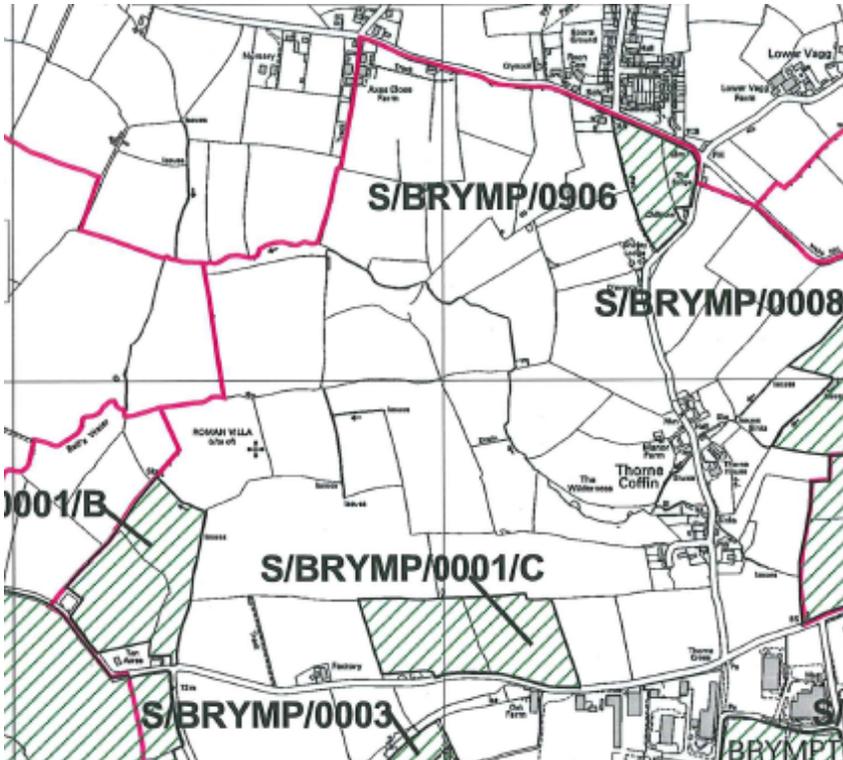
Table 2: potential land availability within the development option

Site Option	SHLAA site ref.	Site size	Estimated maximum yield
North West (Two relatively small sites are identified within the south and north east of this option)	S/BRYM/0001/C	8.4 ha	152 dw.
	S/BRYM/0906	3.5 ha	63 dw.
			NW total: 215 dwellings
North East	N/MUDF/0003 (eastern half)	15 ha	271 dw.
	N/MUDF/0002	25 ha	447 dw.
			NE total: 718 dwellings.
East	Southern half of site option excluded from West Dorset SHLAA due to adverse landscape impact and part of the site is in flood zone 3.	37 ha	
			E total: 0 dwellings
South	S/EACO/0014 considered with S/EACO/0015	35.5 ha 61.5 ha	1107 dw.
	S/EACO/0003	24.7 ha	445 dw.
	S/EACO/0001/D	21.4 ha	39 dw. (less as overlaps with S/EACO/0003)
			S total: 1604 dwellings.
South West	S/WECO/0010	4 ha	74 dw.
			SW total: 74 dwellings.

The following are extracts from the SHLAA maps at each of the site options (excluding West Dorset)

¹ PPS12: Local Spatial Planning, 2008.

SHLAA sites in North West option



SHLAA sites in North East option



7. Review of Eco Town Status

The purpose of this section of the report is to consider the feasibility of achieving Eco-town standards within the Yeovil Urban Extension in the light of representations received and changes in Government policy. The Council is seeking to explore these higher standards for development for two principal reasons:

- the Eco-towns programme fulfils Council aspirations to achieve the highest environmental standards within new development; and
- the standards meet the Council's commitment to tackle climate change head on.

In March 2010 a joint bid between South Somerset District Council (SSDC) and the County Council (SCC) was successful in securing funding to explore Eco-town status at Yeovil. Funding was split between upgraded sustainability features at the Foundry House development and a series of four studies that explore eco-town standards on renewable energy, a waste & resource plan and Masterplanning of the Yeovil Urban Village and Yeovil Urban Extension.

A summary of Eco-town standards is presented below for information however a full list of the Eco-town standards can be found in PPS: Eco-towns, a supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1.

- Achieving zero carbon status across the development, including commercial and public buildings as well as homes - a significantly tougher threshold than any existing or agreed targets;
- Raising the threshold for individual homes so that they must all achieve at least level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH), which includes standards for household waste recycling, construction waste, water efficiency measures and reduced pollution.
- Requiring individual homes to reach the Building for Life silver standard and also achieve 70 per cent carbon savings above current building regulations in terms of heating, hot water and lighting;
- Providing a minimum of 30 per cent affordable housing to provide more homes for social rent and assist those struggling to get on the housing ladder;
- Ensuring a minimum of one job per house can be reached by walking, cycling or public transport to reduce dependence on the car;
- Creating more options for travel so that residents are able to make the majority of their journeys without a car, such as by public transport, walking and cycling;
- Locating homes within ten minutes walk of frequent public transport, a primary school, and everyday neighbourhood services (allowing for the natural geography of the sites).
- Allocating 40 per cent of the area within the 'town' to be green space, at least half of which should be open to the public as parks or recreation areas;

The Government has indicated that the Eco Towns Supplement to PPS1 is to be withdrawn and have announced an intended change to the definition of level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Each of the above Eco Town Standards are re-assessed and other relevant standards considered and conclusions are then drawn.

Zero Carbon Homes

The energy requirements – as measured in carbon emissions – for CSH level 6 has recently been redefined following consultation with the industry to ensure that it is deliverable. All homes constructed after 2016 will be required to meet a 50% carbon emissions saving per dwelling as compared to the Part L requirement of 2006 Building Regulations, which only relate to regulated emissions (from space and water heating, lighting, pumps and fans, leaving cooking, appliances

and lighting of communal areas unquantified and outside the scope of the definition of sustainability for level 6.)

In March 2010 South Somerset District Council secured funding to help plan a Yeovil Eco town extension. It is intended to appoint master planners in late 2011/12. To ascertain the viability of renewable energy for a Yeovil Eco Town extension, consultants Brooks Devlin and Font Energy were appointed to consider baseline energy demand, building embedded small-scale renewables and Decentralised Energy & Combined Heat and Power.

They conclude that the Eco town standard “that over a year the net carbon-dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the eco-town development as a whole are zero or below’ can be met using the following measures;

- Use of positive standard for all building construction
- A biomass (wood) CHP system with district heat main
- Installation of photovoltaics on all available roof space
- Installation of wind turbines up to 25 kW at gateway points and commercial sites
- No construction before 2016

Despite this, however, it is felt that Government's review of the level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes effectively set the ceiling for the achievement of sustainability in house building. There appears to be little rationale in providing more aggressive standards in the urban extension that would be at a cost to occupiers and developers alike (and vulnerable in the case of white goods to occupier preferences over time). This aspect of the proposed Yeovil Eco Town should not be pursued. The commencement of the proposal urban extension in 2015/16 means the achievement of level 6 will be required and interim standards relating to “staircasing” to level 6 beforehand are irrelevant.

Building for Life

The uncertainties relating to this standard mean that it should not be pursued at present. In relation to both the above standards (Zero Homes and Building for Life) clarity is expected to be forthcoming on the withdrawal of the PPS1 Supplement.

Providing a minimum of 30% affordable housing

Development would be expected to provide 30% affordable housing. Given the current Draft Core Strategy seeks 35% affordable housing inline with evidence within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) this target is considered highly achievable and should be pursued.

Ensuring a minimum of 1 job per house

Developments within Eco-towns are expected to be ‘genuine mixed-use communities’ enabling unsustainable commuter trips to be kept to a minimum. The strategy should set out facilities to support job creation in the town and as a minimum there should be access to one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and public transport. If the Urban Extension(s) was to follow Eco Town principle's the aim would be to provide sufficient land to provide jobs for all the potential economically active residents in B Use activities. Baker Associates identify that Yeovil has the economic capacity to deliver 6,250 jobs over the plan period (to 2028). If this were the case, based on 3,400 houses, 18.37 hectares of employment land would be required for the Urban Extension(s) and the Urban Framework would require a further 8.84 hectares of land. Given that the land take section has factored in this provision and that development options have sufficient capacity to contain this provision there is no local reason to prevent this standard from being achieved and indeed it should be promoted for its own sake.

Creating more options for travel/locating homes within 10 minutes walking distance of frequent public transport.

Given that Yeovil's existing baseline congestion is such that even the relatively small traffic saving impacts of an eco-town approach to traffic generation are important to achieve should be sought after.

Furthermore there is a clear need to promote more expansive and more viable public transport for Yeovil and this can be given a positive boost by promotion of an eco-town providing the focus and opportunity to deliver a better bus service for the town.

Allocating 40% of the area as open space.

Forty per cent of the Eco-towns total area should be allocated green space, of which at least half should be public and consist of a network of well managed, high quality green/open spaces which are linked to the wider network. Given that the total area of built development (housing, employment, community facilities, health, education and energy centre) equates to 113 ha, the open space provision would be 45 ha ($113\text{ha}/100*40 = 45 \text{ ha}$) of which half (22.5 ha) would be expected to be publically accessible.

Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden or used for purposes of public recreation. The Annex in PPG17 seeks to illustrate the broad range of open spaces that may be of public value and demonstrates the true diversity of spaces that would contribute towards this target. The following typologies are listed; parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural urban green spaces (including for example woodland, urban forests, grasslands, open and running water, derelict open land), Green corridors (River banks & cycle ways), outdoor sports facilities (including for example tennis courts, sports pitches, golf courses, school and other institutional fields), Amenity space (including domestic gardens and village greens), provision for children and teenagers (including play areas), allotments, churchyards, accessible countryside in urban fringe areas, civic spaces.

Given the range of open space typologies it is considered that this target is highly achievable, indeed the land take section identifies a need for 25 ha of strategic landscaping that would exceed the public target on its own notwithstanding all the other typologies.

The proximity to the Yeovil Country Park and Barwick and Newton Sturmyville Historic Parklands may allow, at the subsequent masterplanning stage, positive linkage and usage of these areas associated with development of the urban extension.

Other Eco Town Standards and Aspirations

Eco-towns should demonstrate a net gain in local biodiversity. Somerset County Council have prepared a baseline scoping report for the Yeovil Urban Extension and concludes that all three options presented in the draft Core Strategy have sufficient land capacity to locate development area from sensitive species and habitats. It is important to note that this view was informed in the context of a 40% open space requirement which would ensure the necessary space was reserved for wildlife assets. The report also provides guidance for master planning in terms of which features need to be conserved, enhanced and possibly extended, in order to maintain current populations of the species. At this strategic planning stage no issues have been identified that would prevent this standard from being met.

Flood risk should be effectively managed in Eco terms and this would be done as a matter of course with the urban extension.

Planning applications within Eco-towns should include a sustainable waste and resources plan, covering both domestic and non-domestic waste. Eco-town funding has been used by Somerset County Council to commission Parsons Brinkerhoff to prepare advice on sustainable waste and resource planning for the urban extension planned for Yeovil.

Conclusion

With the exception of the Sustainable Construction and Building for Life Standards where proposed changes proposed by Government will dilute the Council's policy basis for achieving the original eco-town standard, it is concluded that the Council's development options for Yeovil can in principle, all be achieved as Eco Town and should be for sound reasons specific to Yeovil. This conclusion is of course subject to further viability work in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as will apply to other obligations and planning standards.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction – Yeovil’s scale of Growth

A decision has already been made at the Scale of Growth & Settlement Hierarchy Workshop 1 to accept the Yeovil requirement for 8,600 dwellings to 2028.

Potential Land Availability within the Urban Framework

Endorse an assessment of 5,204 dwellings within the Yeovil Urban Framework and consequently a requirement for 3,400 dwellings (rounded) in an Urban Extension(s).

Urban Extension Potential Land Take

Endorse land take figure (190 ha) and use to help determine potential options for the Urban Extension (by ensuring locations have sufficient land in principle to accommodate the extension).

Advantages of scale; one extension or several

Endorse preference for one site over a multi-site option.

Constraints Mapping Analysis

Pursue the three options (North West, South West and multi-site) for delivery through a wider planning appraisal and Sustainability Appraisal. options.

Wider Planning Issues: Sustainability Appraisal of Options

Endorse South West Option 1 as the location of the urban extension subject to final confirmation following consideration of infrastructure costs after delivery of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Review of Eco Town Status

Maintain aspirations to achieve Eco Town Standards in the urban extension with the exception of construction standards beyond the Government’s newly proposed Code 6.