

SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN 2006-2028

EXAMINATION – POST SUSPENSION

BOYER PLANNING LTD ON BEHALF OF ABBEY MANOR GROUP

ISSUE 3: SOUTH YEOVIL SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION (PMM2)

1. Abbey Manor Group (AMG) appeared at the 2013 Examination at Issue 6 in respect of the (then) Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension. Part of its representations at that stage, and whilst supporting the identification of this proposed direction of growth, was that the extent of the East Coker and North Coker buffer zone was too great and included areas of land that did not need to be afforded the protection of this designation. The fact that this buffer zone has been retained without modification whilst the area and capacity of the (now) South Yeovil Urban Extension has been reduced in the Proposed Main Modification remains a matter which AMG are opposed to.
2. The East Coker and North Coker Buffer was originally delineated to the west of the direction of growth shown on the Proposals Map for the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension. In essence, this designation was as a consequence of the proposal to extend the town's urban area in a south and south western direction.
3. Its purpose, as defined in Policy YV3 and para 5.50 in particular, was, and remains, twofold.
4. The first purpose is to prevent development that would result in coalescence between the new urban edge formed by the urban extension and these settlements.
5. Secondly, it is to prevent new development that would have an adverse effect on the setting of historic assets. In this regard it is intended to “preserve” the character of these settlements from the cumulative effect of the urban extension and any further new development.
6. Accordingly, it is not conceivable that such a designation would be required were it not for the urban extension proposal.
7. It is undeniable that the built form of Yeovil will extend further south as a consequence of the South Yeovil Urban Extension. However as a consequence of the reduction in the area identified as the future direction of growth, the extent of the urban extension is materially different from the Submission version of the plan. It is no longer the case that the urban area will move closer towards these settlements. If the boundary of the Buffer Zone as delineated represents the extent of land required to remain free from development, the reduced extent of the South Yeovil Urban Extension is further separated from these settlements.
8. The remaining justification would relate to the perceived need to retain an area of undeveloped land to preserve the character of East Coker and North Coker. Again, as was the case previously, the edge treatment that will be applied to the development along the southwestern boundary of any urban extension through the masterplanning process is a wholly appropriate measure to provide a suitable interface between built development, the countryside beyond and settlements which will be a considerable distance away.

9. It simply is not the case that development in the area now shown on the Proposals Map as the South Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension can reasonably or justifiably be said to lead to coalescence with, or give rise to, harm to the character of East Coker and North Coker.
10. Therefore, with the amendment to the extent of the South Yeovil Urban Extension, there no longer exists any justification in the terms defined by the Submission Plan for the Buffer Zone to be retained as a policy or as annotated on the Proposals Map.
11. With this change in circumstance it is untenable for this designation to be retained and it conflicts to a greater extent with para 77 of the NPPF than previously.
12. AMG therefore propose a further amendment to the Proposal Map and the deletion of the Buffer Zone which has continued to be shown. Policy YV3 should similarly be deleted.
13. In the event that the principle of the Buffer Zone is retained, it remains the case that the restriction that this designation imposes on existing premises and the requirement for 'special justification' to permit additional development is unreasonable and unnecessary. The same is true of the way in which the buffer washes over of undeveloped land that adjoins these existing settlements. It remains that there is no basis for applying the restriction of this designation to areas of the existing settlements that are not in any way related to the urban extension and where development could be accommodated without resulting in coalescence. Similarly, normal development management policies govern the extent to which historic assets are protected from new development (in this instance Policy EQ3).

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