

Joint Local Plan Review for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland

EDGE OF YEOVIL BACKGROUND PAPER
PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION VERSION

AUGUST 2018

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
Purpose of Background Paper.....	1
Local Plan and the Review	1
2. Yeovil in Context.....	3
3. Background to growth of Yeovil.....	4
Travel	4
Employment	4
4. Current Local Plan for Yeovil	6
South Somerset Local Plan 2006 – 2028	6
West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2011 – 2031.....	7
5. Constraints	8
Landscape.....	8
Heritage Assets	8
Biodiversity	9
Flood Risk	9
Agricultural Land Classification.....	9
Transport & Infrastructure	10
6. Opportunities.....	12
7. Issues and Options Consultation	13
Inspector’s comments on Duty to cooperate	13
Approach to Initial Options.....	13
Refined Options	16
8. Issues and Options Consultation	20
Responses on site:	20
Option Y1 - East of Yeovil (within Bradford Abbas parish)	20
Option Y1 - East of Yeovil (within Bradford Abbas parish)	21
9. Evidence Gathering	24
10. Preferred Options Consultation	27
Options Considered.....	27
Preferred Options	27
Consultation	27

1. Introduction

PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND PAPER

- 1.1 This document is one of a number of background papers produced to support the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review.
- 1.2 This paper provides information about:
 - the approach taken to the future development on the edge of Yeovil;
 - details of current and previous development; and
 - rates of growth and how this might change in the future.
- 1.3 The paper also gives details of the site selection process including detailed considerations of environmental constraints in the area.

LOCAL PLAN AND THE REVIEW

- 1.4 In October 2015, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council adopted their Joint Local Plan¹. The Local Plan sets out a long term planning strategy for the area and includes detailed policies and site proposals for housing, employment, leisure and infrastructure. The adopted Local Plan is the main basis for making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.5 In his report on the examination of the Joint Local Plan², the Inspector indicated that he considered it to be *"imperative that an early review is undertaken"* and that the review should be in place by 2021. The objective of the review is to identify additional housing land capable of meeting housing need to 2036, identify a long-term strategy for development in the Dorchester area; and reappraise housing provision in Sherborne.
- 1.6 Although one of the key objectives is to identify a long-term strategy for development in the Dorchester area and reappraise housing provision in Sherborne, the Local Plan review will be considering available land to meet housing needs to 2036. There is therefore a need to ensure growth at other settlements including those in other local planning authority areas (South Somerset, East Dorset & Purbeck), is sufficient to meet needs over this longer-term period.
- 1.7 If a review is absent, or the Local Plan becomes silent or out of date because of a lack of progress, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and the councils would have less control in determining where development goes.

¹ <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/jointlocalplan/west/weymouth>

² <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/421782/West-Dorset-Weymouth--Portland-Adopted-Local-Plan-Inspectors-Report>

Failure to undertake a review or even start it promptly would be likely to increase the risk of developers submitting planning applications at an early stage.

- 1.8 At the same time as the review is underway there are opportunities to clarify the interpretation of existing policies.

2. Yeovil in Context

- 2.1 Yeovil is located within South Somerset District on the northern boundary of West Dorset. The town is approximately 5 miles west of Sherborne and surrounded by a large rural hinterland of smaller market towns and villages. The town has a population of around 45,000³. It is connected to Sherborne by the A30 and Dorchester by the A37, with the A303 just to the north. The town has two railway stations with Yeovil Pen Mill connecting to Weymouth and Dorchester to the South and Bristol and Yeovil Junction connecting to London (Waterloo) and Exeter.
- 2.2 Yeovil plays a significant economic role in Somerset with nearly half the jobs in South Somerset District located in the town. Yeovil has a relatively high proportion of manufacturing jobs with a high proportion in the defence and aerospace sectors.
- 2.3 Although Yeovil is a relatively large town, it sits in an attractive rural setting, within a sensitive landscape defined by escarpments to both the north and south. The River Yeo flood plain along the eastern edge of the town is also a defining feature.

³ 2011 Census

3. Background to growth of Yeovil

- 3.1 Yeovil is the largest population centre in South Somerset with a population of just over 45,000 in 2011 (Figure 3.1). The main cause of population growth in South Somerset is internal migration from elsewhere in the UK. South Somerset is an ageing district, with sharp growth in those aged over 60. This is linked with recent data showing significant losses in those aged 15 to 29. If this trend is to continue over the long term, South Somerset may face major challenges in providing a sufficiently large and competitive labour force.

Figure 3.1: Population - Yeovil (2001 - 2011)

SETTLEMENT	2001	2011	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Yeovil	40,282	45,339	5,057	12.55

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – Census

- 3.2 Between 2001 and 2011 the dwelling stock for Yeovil increased by 2,222 new homes, an annualised average change (2001 to 2011) of 222 dwellings (Figure 3.2). The number of empty homes in the district remains consistent and relatively static, although recent good work has reduced the overall number since 2012 / 2013. South Somerset has seen a steady rise in the number of households in the district between 2001 and 2011. The affordability of an average house in South Somerset is around 7.5 times the average income.

Figure 3.2: Number of Dwellings – Yeovil (2001 – 2011)

SETTLEMENT	2001	2011	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Yeovil	19,469	21,691	2,222	11.41

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – Census – All Dwellings

TRAVEL

- 3.3 South Somerset (Yeovil) has a high level of in commuting from towns and villages across Somerset and Dorset and has a particularly strong relationship with Sherborne. In 2011 half of Sherborne's 1,690 out commuters travelled to work in South Somerset. The 2011 census also confirmed half of Sherborne's in-commuters travelled from locations in South Somerset.

EMPLOYMENT

- 3.4 In total South Somerset has delivered 49 hectares of net additional land since 2006 or 300,000 sqm of net additional floor space.
- 3.5 Further analysis shows that the vast majority of the net additional land has occurred outside the main settlements.

- 3.6 The table below shows that despite the supply of 10ha of employment land in Yeovil there has only been a total net gain of 1.14ha in the last 10 years. Against the Yeovil employment land requirement of 50ha there is still therefore a residual employment land requirement of 48.86ha. Looking forward there are sizable Local Plan allocations at Bunford Park, Lufton Business Park (Phase III) and Land south of Yeovil Airfield.

Figure 3.3: Supply of employment land – Yeovil (2006-2015)

YEAR	GROSS (HA)	LOSSES (HA)	NET (HA)
2006	1.81	0.01	1.8
2007	1.18	0.03	1.15
2008	0.2	0.1	0.1
2009	0.19	0.58	-0.39
2010	1.18	0.43	0.75
2011	0.65	0.02	0.63
2012	3.61	3.93	-0.32
2013	0.03	0.09	-0.06
2014	0.97	0.03	0.94
2015	0.6	4.06	-3.46
Total	10.42	9.28	1.14

Source: Economic Development Monitoring Report: Land and Floorspace Delivered in South Somerset (December 2016)

- 3.7 The table below shows the total number of jobs in South Somerset fell in the years following the recession, but is now recovering and is at around 82,000 in 2014.

Figure 3.4: Total Jobs – South Somerset (2001 – 2014)

YEAR	SOUTH SOMERSET
2001	77,000
2002	76,000
2003	78,000
2004	80,000
2005	81,000
2006	81,000
2007	84,000
2008	82,000
2009	80,000
2010	81,000
2011	85,000
2012	80,000
2013	83,000
2014	82,000

Source: NOMIS / ONS

4. Current Local Plan for Yeovil

SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN 2006 – 2028

- 4.1 The South Somerset Local Plan 2006 – 2028 (CD/OCP6) identifies Yeovil as a strategically significant town and the prime focus for development in South Somerset.
- 4.2 The plan recognises that the “evidence base relating to the size and scale of housing supply and economic activity; the extent of travel to work patterns and retail catchments; and the extent of leisure, cultural, and transport services highlights that Yeovil remains the principal settlement within South Somerset. Accordingly, most new development is proposed at Yeovil”.
- 4.3 The adopted local plan notes that “Yeovil can deliver further development sustainably and promote a better balance between jobs growth and where people choose to live. A critical mass, economies of scale and better use of existing infrastructure can be secured through Yeovil's continued designation as the primary focus for growth in this local plan”.
- 4.4 Policy SS5 sets out the strategic approach for new housing growth in the District which will make provision for at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period 2006 – 2028. With at least 7,441 dwellings located within the Urban Framework of Yeovil and via two Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- 4.5 The local plan also carries forward a number of employment and housing sites from the South Somerset Local Plan (1991 – 2011). They are:

Figure 4.1: Current allocated sites in Yeovil

ALLOCATION	USE/UNITS	STATUS	DELIVERY
Land at Lufton (KS/BRYM/1)	696 Residential Units	Planning consent issued, under construction	Completed by 2030
Land East of Lyde Road (KS/YEWI/1)	637 Residential Units	Planning consent issued, under construction	Completed by 2021
Land North of Thorne Lane (Brimsmore) (KS/YEWI/2)	830 Residential Units	Planning consent issued, under construction	Completed by 2030
Land at Lufton – Phase 3 (KS/BRYM/1)	4.98ha employment land	Planning consent issued	Completed by 2028
Land off Bunford Lane (ME/WECO/1)	20.3ha Employment land	Planning consent issued	Completed by 2028
Land South of Yeovil Airfield (ME/YEOV/4)	4.8ha Employment land	Planning consent issued	Completed by 2028

- 4.6 Saved employment sites continue to form part of the strategy set out in Policy SS3 and Policy EP1 for employment land delivery through to 2028. Saved housing sites remain part of the strategy for housing delivery in the district, and are captured within objectives of Policy SS4 and Policy SS5.
- 4.7 Policy YV2: Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions identifies two strategic growth locations for the provision of 1,565 dwellings and accompanying employment land, community facilities and services on the edge of Yeovil. The evidence indicated that two Sustainable Urban Extensions, to the south and north east provide a sound approach. The scale of growth being proposed is similar at each SUE, with approximately 800 dwellings in the south area and 765 dwellings in the north east.

WEST DORSET, WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2031

- 4.8 The adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2011 – 2031) does not contain a specific policy on the future growth at Yeovil (within West Dorset). The functional edge of Yeovil extends into West Dorset in an area known as Babylon Hill, which includes an out-of-town retail centre. The Planning Inspectors report noted that *“development options within West Dorset adjacent to Yeovil were investigated during the formative stages of the South Somerset Local Plan but not pursued”*. Concluding that *“I am satisfied the Councils have complied with the Duty to Cooperate.”*
- 4.9 The Local Plan includes a duty to cooperate statement which expects Councils and other public bodies to work together across administrative boundaries to plan for the housing, transport and infrastructure that local people need. The statement commits West Dorset District Council to liaise on cross-boundary on the edge of Yeovil working with South Somerset District Council to bring forward the right development for that area.

5. Constraints

- 5.1 Close to the West Dorset boundary, Yeovil is constrained by:
- the River Yeo floodplain;
 - Registered Park and Gardens of Barwick Park & Newton Surmaville;
 - Landscape sensitivity;
 - High grade agricultural land; and
 - Scheduled ancient monuments.

LANDSCAPE

- 5.2 National policy puts an emphasis on the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes.
- 5.3 To the east of Yeovil is the River Yeo which has been classified as Valley Pasture Landscape Character Area before rising steeply into the Limestone Hills.
- 5.4 The valley pasture landscape type is found along the lower reaches of the Stour and Frome, formed from alluvial deposits. They have wide, open meandering floodplains that historically support transport routes and market towns around the fringes. A series of wet woodlands, large pastures and water meadows are typical of this landscape type. The key characteristics of the area are:
- Meandering flat river floodplain with small wet woodlands, wet winter flooded grasslands and extensive pattern of water meadows;
 - Extensive reedbeds and coastal grazing marsh towards Poole Harbour;
 - Large open regular fields with dense copses of oak, hazel, holly ancient woodlands and occasional individual trees;
 - Linear and nucleated settlements of local stone along the river terrace margins;
 - Long open views with a tranquil experience; and
 - Historic bridges, mills and ecclesiastical remains.

HERITAGE ASSETTS

- 5.5 In relation to the historic environment, the 2018 NPPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 5.6 To the east of Yeovil in West Dorset there are concentrations of listed buildings in the villages of Trent, Nether Compton and Over Compton. Trent and Nether Compton have defined conservation areas. Located on the river crossing at the County boundary there is a Toll-house: a grade II listed building.

BIODIVERSITY

- 5.7 National policy highlights the importance of safeguarding local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity. It also indicates that plans should identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains in biodiversity.
- 5.8 The Babylon Hill (geological) SSSI is located at the top of Babylon Hill and along Underdown / Bradford Hollow and have been designated for their earth science heritage.

FLOOD RISK

- 5.9 National policy states that "...inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk..." through the application of the Sequential Test.
- 5.10 The River Yeo flood plain (Flood zones 2 & 3) restrict development on Yeovil's eastern side within West Dorset.

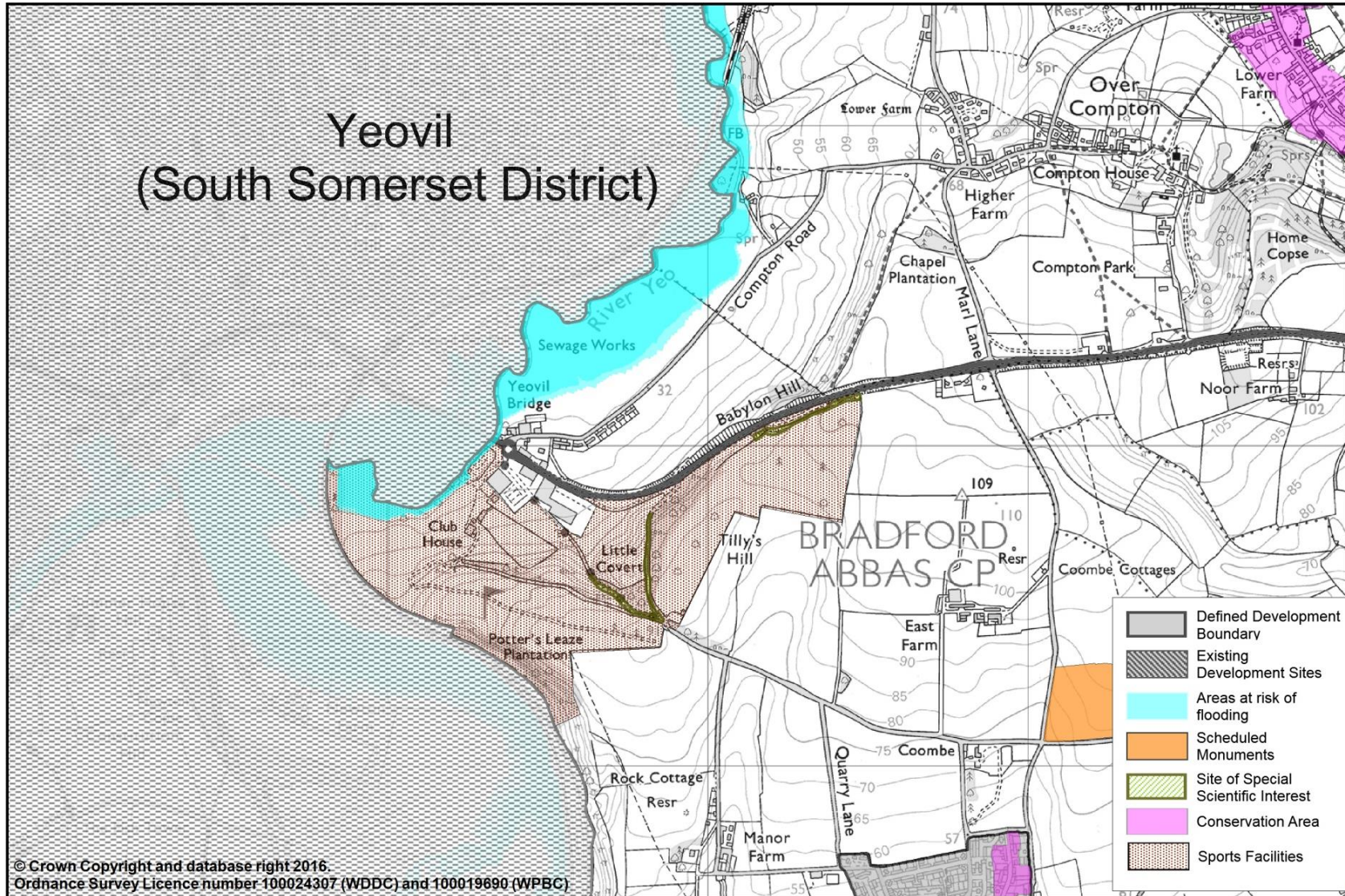
AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

- 5.11 Agricultural land is an important resource that needs to be managed in an appropriate way to underpin sustainable development. The agricultural land is important for the production of food, biomass, water storage and biodiversity.
- 5.12 National policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Policy Guidance indicates that agricultural land classification is a material consideration when making planning decisions and that development should be steered away from the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3).
- 5.13 The Planning Policy Guidance expands on the text within the NPPF stating that national policy "*...expects local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is particularly important in plan making when decisions are made on which land should be allocated for development. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.*"
- 5.14 Constraints mapping shows that Yeovil is surrounded by high quality agricultural land. There is a large band of the highest grade of agricultural land (Grade 1) to the east of Yeovil / north of the A30 (Babylon Hill) within the river valley. Further north towards Over Compton the land has been classified as Grade 2. South of the A30 (Babylon Hill) land has been classified as Grade 3.

TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.15 The access to everyday facilities by sustainable modes of transport is an important factor in considering the location of new development.
- 5.16 Yeovil has excellent access to the A303 the main trunk road serving the southwest via the A3088, A37 or A359. Yeovil is directly connected to Sherborne to the east and Crewkerne to the west by the A30. Dorchester can be reached to the south by the A37 which crosses the Dorset AONB.
- 5.17 Yeovil is unusual for a settlement of its size with seven different bus operators providing services at the town. Parts of Yeovil are not well served by bus, notably the employment sites on the western side including the town's major employer AgustaWestland. This is partly because the routes have traditionally terminated in the town centre and deviating would detract from the existing customer base.
- 5.18 Yeovil has two mainline trains stations, Yeovil Pen Mill located on the Bristol to Weymouth line and Yeovil Junction which connects Exeter with London Waterloo.
- 5.19 The South Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2015/16 identifies enhancement schemes around Yeovil including those associated with the Yeovil Western Corridor and Yeovil Eastern Corridor works. The Infrastructure Plan also discusses water, waste, electricity, gas and telecommunications.

MAP 1: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AROUND YEOVIL



6. Opportunities

6.1 Future growth at Yeovil will help:

- To maintain Yeovil as the focus for growth in the South Somerset economy;
- To meet housing need identified in the Yeovil housing market;
- To support a vibrant retail, leisure and service base for the town and wider area;
- To ensure that Yeovil delivers its growth in a way that is as sustainable as possible to reduce the need for reliance on car movements, the main cause of poor air quality; and
- Deliver development in a sustainable location.

7. Issues and Options Consultation

- 7.1 This section explains how the initial options at Yeovil were developed for the issues and options consultation in February 2017. Yeovil is identified by South Somerset District Council as a focus for growth and an important sub-regional centre offering a wide range of services and shopping facilities not available elsewhere. It is a focal point for industry with a large number of people commuting into the town for work. Yeovil is adjacent to the district boundary and has strong commuting links with Sherborne. Development in the Yeovil area is a sustainable option for meeting growth needs of this part of the district as well as for meeting the need arising from the town itself.
- 7.2 Land to the east of Yeovil (in West Dorset) is located near to the existing built up area of the town and has previously been considered as an option for future growth in the production of the South Somerset Local Plan as part of their 360 degree search for sites. Although this direction for growth was discounted, both Councils have embarked upon reviews of their respective Local Plans and the opportunity arises to reappraise future development opportunities.
- 7.3 South Somerset District Council is reviewing its Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), a document that considers future housing need. In the event that future large scale housing need is identified in the Yeovil area, a growth option in West Dorset would need to be considered.

INSPECTOR'S COMMENTS ON DUTY TO COOPERATE

- 7.4 The local plan inspector highlighted three specific locations where cross boundary planning considerations were necessary including the Yeovil area. He noted that options had been explored during the early stages of the production of the South Somerset Local Plan but had not been pursued.
- 7.5 The inspector stated that "it is not unreasonable to suggest that peripheral areas of West Dorset could offer opportunities for more effective plan-making if administrative boundaries were ignored because there is potential overlap with Housing Market Areas in adjacent authorities." It is therefore considered appropriate to consider development options within West Dorset adjacent to the Yeovil urban area.

APPROACH TO INITIAL OPTIONS

- 7.6 In considering the initial future growth options at Yeovil (within West Dorset) the councils explored all possible options on the edge of Yeovil within the West Dorset administrative area (Map 2). Unsuitable options were discounted at an early stage through an initial site sieving exercise and sustainability appraisal.

MAP 2: BROAD AREAS OF SEARCH – YEOVIL

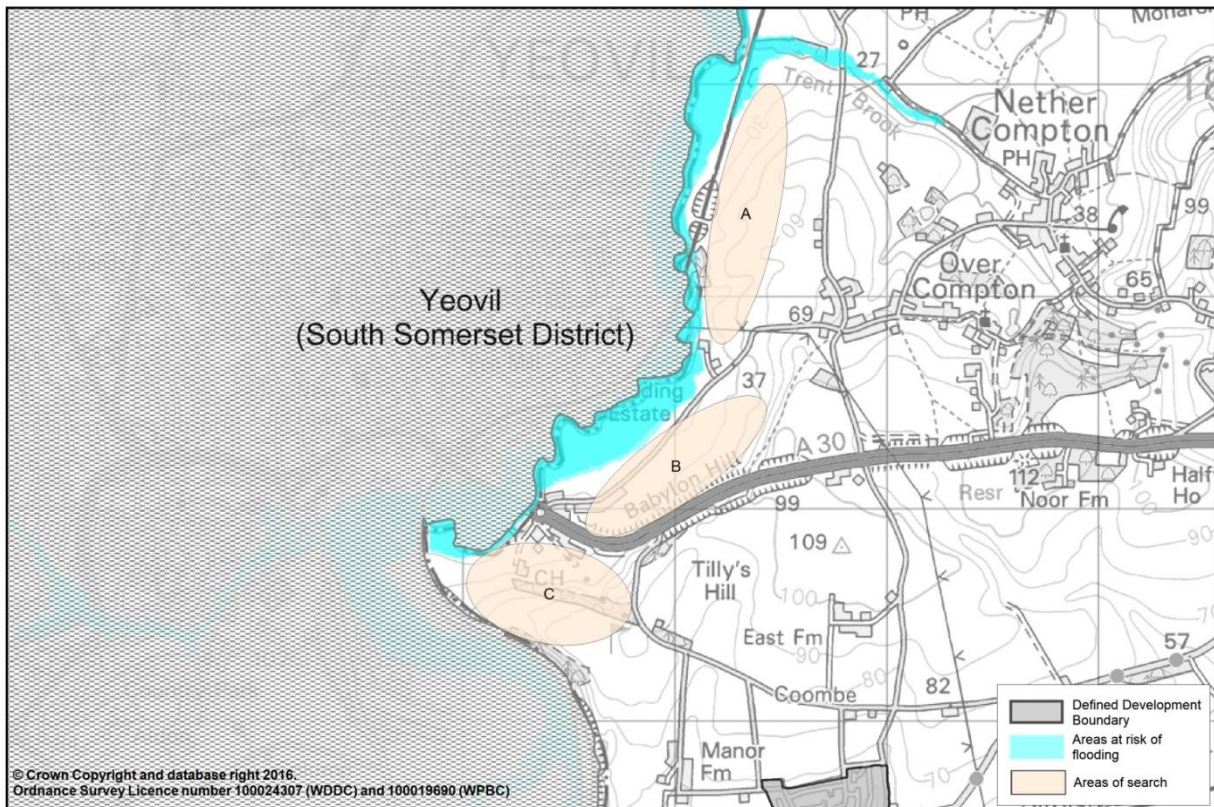


Figure 7.1: Details of each broad search area

AREA A - LAND WEST OF OVER COMPTON	
Landscape	The area of search is located on an exposed ridge facing west towards Yeovil.
Heritage	Some potential impact on the listed buildings at Lower and Higher Farm house, and setting of Trent Conservation Area.
Biodiversity	None.
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1.
Agricultural Land	Largely grade 2 agricultural land with some grade 3 land adjacent the railway line.
Transport	The site option is severed from Yeovil by the railway line and river Yeo which act as significant barriers to the urban area. Development in this location would require the formation of new access routes.
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.

Other	Site option would require cross border working with South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council through the duty to cooperate.	
Conclusion	Separated from urban area of Yeovil by railway line and River Yeo with no obvious crossing point.	Little or no potential in this area – not taken forward

AREA B - LAND NORTH OF A30		
Landscape	The western half of the area of search is located in the river valley and is largely flat. The eastern half of the search area rises steeply up the Babylon Hill escarpment and development in this location would be highly visible.	
Heritage	Toll House, Yeovil Road, Bradford Abbas a listed building is located on the river crossing point of the county boundary.	
Biodiversity	The Babylon Hill SSSI is located at the top of Babylon Hill and along Underdown / Bradford Hollow designated for their earth heritage.	
Flooding	The north/western half of the area of search is located in Flood zone 2 & 3; the remaining site is located in flood zone 1.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 1 agricultural land.	
Transport	The site option can use the existing Compton Road as the main access route to Yeovil although this road and the Babylon Hill roundabout would likely require further upgrading. This site option has reasonable access to Yeovil Pen Mill Station which also connects with the local bus network.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	Site option would require cross border working with South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council through the duty to cooperate.	
Conclusion	Potential for some development between area at risk of flooding and steep ground of Babylon Hill. Development within landscape constraints.	Some potential in this area (Y1 Land north of A30)

AREA C - LAND SOUTH OF A30		
Landscape	The area of search is occupied by Yeovil Golf Course and Peel Retail Park. The northern half of the site around the existing retail centre and club house is largely level and self contained within the landscape but further south the land rises up the escarpment and the land become more prominent.	
Heritage	The location is in close proximity to Newton Surmaville Registered Park & Garden.	
Biodiversity	The Babylon Hill SSSI is located at the top of Babylon Hill and along Underdown / Bradford Hollow designated for their earth heritage.	
Flooding	The area of search is largely located in flood zone 1. The northern edge of the area of site includes some land in flood zone 2 & 3.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	This site option has no existing road infrastructure however a road connection could be achieved onto the Babylon Hill roundabout. This site option has reasonable access to Yeovil Pen Mill Station which also connects with the local bus network.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	Site option would require cross border working with South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council through the duty to cooperate. The site option is currently in use as a Golf Course.	
Conclusion	Potential impact on SSSI. Steep and wooded and currently in use as a golf course.	Little or no potential in this area – not taken forward

REFINED OPTIONS

- 7.7 Having considered the constraints associated with each broad area, a refined development option was identified. This area formed the basis for the Issues and Options consultation for the future growth of Yeovil within West Dorset (Bradford Abbas Parish).

- 7.8 The conclusion of the first high level filter of site options identified a single option as outlined in Map 3. For this option, an indicative capacity was calculated and possible development issues were identified.
- 7.9 Further information about the potential initial option was sought through the Issues and Options consultation, which started in February 2017. Additional work would need to be undertaken to refine its suitability and fully establish infrastructure and employment land requirements as well as constraints to development such as landscape or heritage impacts.

Figure 7.2: Details of refined options for growth at Yeovil

REFINED OPTION	CAPACITY / MAIN USE	DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
Y1: East of Yeovil	425 homes residential	<p>The site option is located on the eastern edge of Yeovil (within Bradford Abbas Parish) and to the north of Babylon Hill.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there is the potential for surface water flooding on the site options southwestern end.</p> <p>The site option is located on Grade 1 agricultural land.</p> <p>The site is located between the river Yeo flood plain and the slopes of Babylon Hill. Development opportunities on the higher slopes will require an assessment of the potential for any landscape impact on wider views. The sites higher slopes are steep and preclude development.</p> <p>The site is located in close proximity to the Babylon Hill SSSI which should be taken into account.</p> <p>The site has direct access along Compton Road to the A30 directly onto the roundabout opposite the Peel Centre. Further transport work to assess junction capacity and the impact on the wider transport network would be required. Pedestrian and cycle links would need to be improved across the river and along Sherborne Road.</p> <p>No conflict with safeguarded mineral resources.</p>

8. Issues and Options Consultation

- 8.1 The Issues and Options consultation provided an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to give their views on the initial development options. Ten public consultation events were held between 20th February and 9th March 2017. It is estimated that 1,172 people attended these events.

LOCATION	DATE	ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE
Sherborne	20 February 2017	92
Weymouth	21 February 2017	72
Portland	23 February 2017	48
Charminster	24 February 2017	244
Dorchester	27 February 2017	86
Beaminster	28 February 2017	105
Lyme Regis	1 March 2017	54
Bridport	2 March 2017	127
Crossways	7 March 2017	230
Chickerell	9 March 2017	114
Total		1,172

- 8.2 For the Yeovil (in Bradford Abbas parish) chapter, a total of 48 responses were received as part of the consultation on the Issues and Options Local Plan review document specifically relating to development on the edge of Yeovil.
- 8.3 The questions asked at the issues and options stage relating to Yeovil are set out below. A summary of issues raised by the public and stakeholders has been added under each question.

RESPONSES ON SITE:

OPTION Y1 - EAST OF YEOVIL (WITHIN BRADFORD ABBAS PARISH)

- 8.4 The general public identified a variety of constraints on and around the site that could preclude future development in this location including; loss of high grade agricultural land, loss of wildlife, flood plain and coalescence issues. Residents were particularly concerned with traffic congestion issues at the bottom of Babylon Hill and rat running through rural lanes. Traffic concerns were also expressed by two Parish Councils: Queen Thorne; and Bradford Abbas. There were some general

concerns regarding the impact on local services such as schools and medical facilities as well as infrastructure such as sewerage capacity. The Battlefields Trust identified the site as the location of the Battle of Babylon Hill during the English Civil War. South Somerset District Council added that Yeovil was an AQMA and requested further flood assessment work be undertaken. The landowner confirmed that the site was located in a sustainable location in close proximity to Yeovil services and that the site was capable of early delivery.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

8.5 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact on wider views, proximity to the Babylon Hill SSSI and access concerns (junction capacity and the impact on the wider transport network). Part of the site is also unsuitable for residential development as it is located in the flood zone.

PETITION:

OPTION Y₁ - EAST OF YEOVIL (WITHIN BRADFORD ABBAS PARISH)

8.6 In addition to responses made to the Initial Issues and Options Consultation document, a petition was also submitted opposing the development of Option Y₁: East of Yeovil. 41 people signed the petition (hard copy only). The petition in principle raised concerns in respect of flooding and transport noting the option site is a recognised area of flooding and this occurs not only in periods of heavy rain. Placing a development of this size would have major repercussions given the dramatic increase in hard surface and loss of natural drainage involved.

8.7 The road access to the site (along Compton Road from the roundabout at Babylon Hill on the A30), is already unable to cope with the current traffic levels. It is already recognised by South Somerset District Council that the road system servicing Yeovil at this point is dysfunctional.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

8.8 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact on wider views, proximity to the Babylon Hill SSSI and access concerns (junction capacity and the impact on the wider transport network). Part of the site is also unsuitable for residential development as it is located in the flood zone.

6-i Is it appropriate to develop adjacent to the urban area of Yeovil but within Bradford Abbas Parish, West Dorset?

RESPONSES ON QUESTION 16-I:

8.9 South Somerset District Council sought clarification on the justification of the site option in relation to what need it seeks to fulfil - Yeovil or West Dorset? Should this

site option be intended to meet Yeovil’s future need then the housing numbers should be distributed towards South Somerset housing targets. Sherborne Town Council have argued that future housing numbers should be attributed towards West Dorset figures by virtue of the administrative boundary. Any site option should be justified by need and clearly state how the housing provision will be distributed.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.10 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact on wider views, proximity to the Babylon Hill SSSI and access concerns (junction capacity and the impact on the wider transport network). Part of the site is also unsuitable for residential development as it is located in the flood zone.

6-ii Are there any additional issues related to the development of the site option?

RESPONSES ON QUESTION 16-II:

- 8.11 The Home Builders Federation made the following standard response. When allocating sites the Councils should be mindful that to maximize housing supply the widest possible range of sites, by size and market location are required so that house builders of all types and sizes have access to suitable land in order to offer the widest range of products. The key to increased housing supply is the number of sales outlets. The maximum delivery is achieved not just because there are more sales outlets but because the widest range of products and locations are available to meet the widest range of demand.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.12 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact on wider views, proximity to the Babylon Hill SSSI and access concerns (junction capacity and the impact on the wider transport network). Part of the site is also unsuitable for residential development as it is located in the flood zone.

6-iii What are the infrastructure requirements for the development of the site option?

RESPONSES ON QUESTION 16-III:

- 8.13 Local residents were concerned that Compton Road is in large parts a single track road with few passing places. A development of 425 dwellings would create enormous additional traffic and put unacceptable hazards on the people using this lane for driving or walking. The additional traffic through Over Compton would be

dangerous for the residents as there are no speed limits or footpaths in the village. There was also concern that new development would contribute to traffic congestion at the bottom of Babylon Hill.

8.14 Yetminster & Ryme Intrinsic Parish Council raised concerns regarding access to health, education and employment facilities. Dorset Local Nature Partnership have made a standard response advising opportunities should be taken to enhance biodiversity and to create a high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

8.15 Both the general public and South Somerset District Council have expressed concerns relating to the impact of future development on traffic flows within Yeovil and nearby villages. Any future development in this location should be supported by further traffic modelling jointly prepared by Somerset and Dorset Highways Authorities.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

8.16 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact on wider views, proximity to the Babylon Hill SSSI and access concerns (junction capacity and the impact on the wider transport network). Part of the site is also unsuitable for residential development as it is located in the flood zone.

9. Evidence Gathering

- 9.1 To support the selection of preferred options, evidence has been gathered to investigate further relevant issues. A summary of the results of the evidence is included here.

LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 9.2 A joint landscape and heritage assessment has been prepared which appraises the sensitivity of the land at the main centres of growth to the effects of development. The assessment is formed of two stages, stage one is an independent review of the landscape/heritage constraints considered at Issues and Options stage. This stage also recommends which broad areas of search should be scoped in or out of a further detailed level two assessment, the findings of which are summarised below.
- 9.3 Stage one recommended the following areas of search be scoped out on landscape and heritage grounds:
- C: Land south of A30 - The whole of this area is to be excluded from the Stage 2 assessment due to its current use as a recreational facility (golf course)
- 9.4 The broad areas taken forward to stage two included:
- Yeovil 1: Land west of Over Compton - Stage two notes that the landscape and heritage sensitivity are both moderate-high. The landscape's open aspect affording expansive views (including to the Mendip Hills AONB) and largely undeveloped, elevated skylines, provides the rural setting to Yeovil and the historic vernacular villages of Over Compton and Trent. Development within the assessment area could result in setting change to Lower Farm farmhouse. Trent Conservation Area (and particularly the landmark Grade I-Listed Parish Church of St. Andrew) are susceptible to setting change.
 - Yeovil 2: Land north of A30 - Stage two notes that the landscape sensitivity is moderate-high and the heritage sensitivity is moderate. The prominent steeply sloping landform, broadleaved woodland, setting and sense of separation provided to existing settlements (Yeovil and the historic village of Over Compton), rural qualities and long views out from higher ground result in overall landscape sensitivity. The setting of the toll-house has already been significantly changed by the proximity of the industrial estate and roundabout; the key element of its setting is the relationship with the road itself and this would be unlikely to change as a consequence of development.

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.5 A Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared which replaces the previous Level 1 assessments for West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland. The updated SFRA provides up to date guidance on flood risk taking into account the

latest flood risk information, it identifies the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments and the application of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). It provides a basis for applying the flood risk Sequential and Exception Tests. A comprehensive set of maps accompanies the Level 1 assessment.

- 9.6 There are a number of documented flood events around Yeovil, with flooding recorded to the north of the A30 from overtopping of fluvial defences on the River Yeo in 2009 and 2014. The development in Bradford Abbas parish is at risk of flooding from the River Yeo. The north of the area is in Flood Zone 3.
- 9.7 There is limited risk for surface water flooding, the risk sites being scattered and primarily in the north of the area. There is a risk of flooding from reservoirs in the north-west in the vicinity of the River Yeo.
- 9.8 The majority of the development area is shown to have limited potential for groundwater flooding, however in the north of the area, there is potential for groundwater flooding of property situated below ground level and at the surface.
- 9.9 The study recommends that development should preferably be located outside of areas shown to be at a current or future risk of flooding where possible. Development in areas where surface water flooding occurs could provide an opportunity to reduce risk through reduction in impermeable surfaces and the use of SuDS.

Figure 9.1: Flood risk map of Yeovil



SPORT & LEISURE FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 9.10 This study provides a detailed assessment of the current provision of indoor and built sports facilities for West Dorset identifying needs and gaps in provision. It also provides detail as to what exists in the District, its condition, location, availability

and overall quality and considers demand for facilities based on population distribution, planned growth etc.

- 9.11 The evidence underpinning the assessment will be used to both identify and justify the provision of developer contributions.
- 9.12 Key strategic recommendations from the assessment include:
- For Town Councils to actively work with key partners, including leisure providers, to ensure the sports offer addresses the needs of the whole community, particularly around an aging population;
 - To encourage all state schools in the District to develop a joint use agreement which will ensure additional funding to individual schools from the Department of Education. This funding will assist with the upgrade of sports facilities;
 - To identify ongoing investment, maintenance and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities;
 - Work with key partners to support workforce development and volunteer recruitment across the club network within the District; and
 - Work with management on education sites and local Sports Trust to encourage more community use for local clubs, which could increase local participation rates across certain sports.
- 9.13 Where appropriate, this evidence has and will be used to help identify possible planning obligations or on-site provision on development options.

10. Preferred Options Consultation

- 10.1 The responses to the Issues and Options consultation along with the evidence gathered and changes to National Policy have helped to establish the preferred options for the Local Plan Review.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 10.2 One option was considered at I&O stage and the reasons for rejecting it and not taking it forward to Preferred Options are set out in the table below.

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS	CONCLUSION	REASON FOR DECISION
Y1: East of Yeovil	x	The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact on wider views, proximity to the Babylon Hill SSSI and access concerns (Junction capacity and the impact on the wider transport network). Part of the site is also unsuitable for residential development as it is located in the flood zone.

PREFERRED OPTIONS

- 10.3 No site options in the Yeovil area have been taken forward into the Preferred Options consultation.

CONSULTATION

- 10.4 The Preferred Options consultation provides an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to give their views on the preferred development options. There is no specific question on development opportunities on the edge of Yeovil (in West Dorset).