



Somerset
Council

Yeovil Town Centre Draft Masterplan

Executive Summary

You Said, We Did

January 2026



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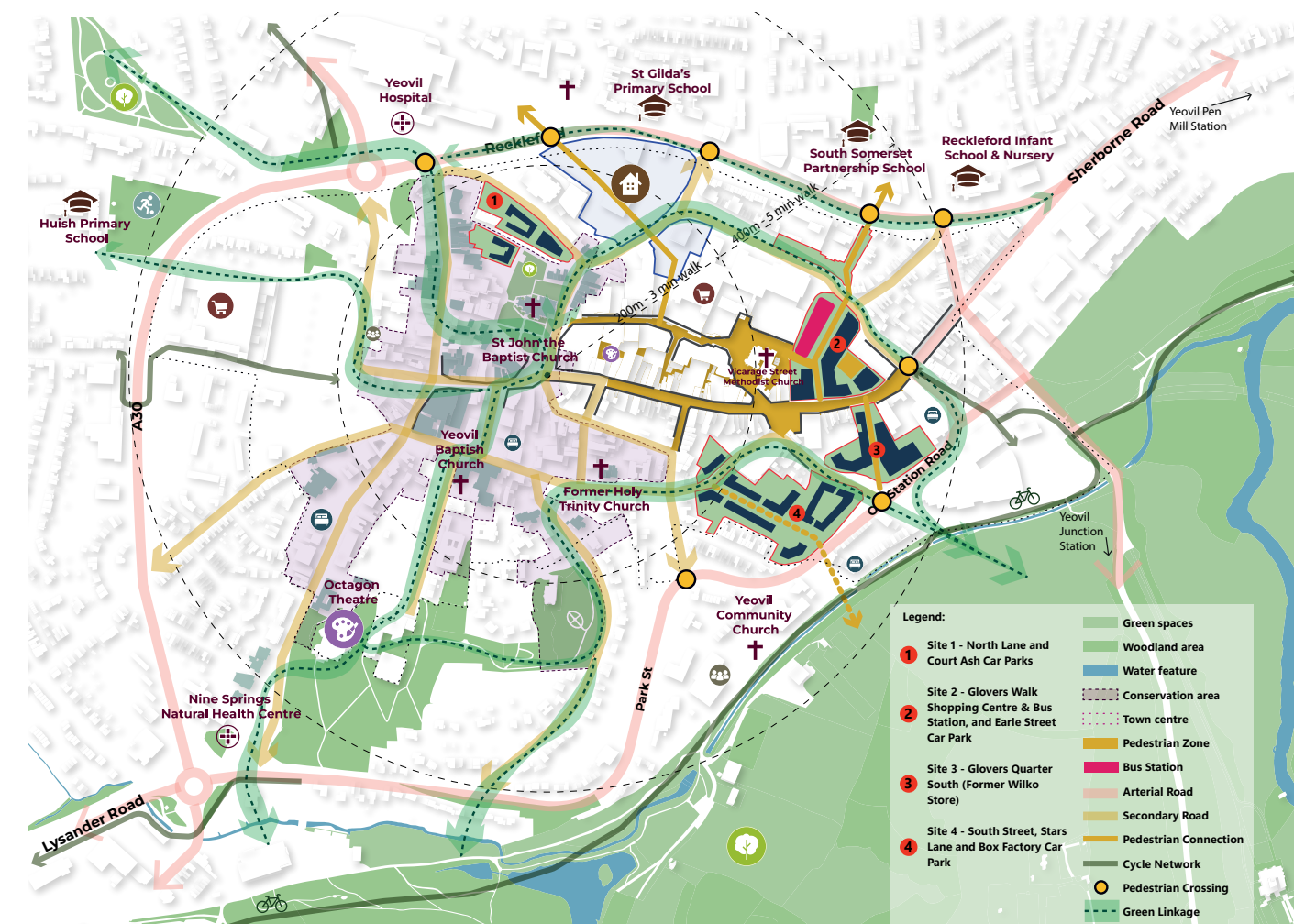


1. Introduction

Somerset Council are in the process of developing a Masterplan for Yeovil town centre, which aims to:

- Understand the town centre's role in meeting the needs of the residents.
- Facilitate the delivery of an increased numbers of homes within the town centre on a range of sites.
- Create opportunities for activating the town centre.
- Define development opportunities that are viable and deliverable.

This Executive Summary has been developed in support of the Yeovil Town Centre Draft Masterplan Consultation Report. It provides a concise overview of the public engagement process undertaken between September and November 2025, summarising key community feedback themes and outlining how Somerset Council has responded to residents' concerns and aspirations in shaping the masterplan proposals.



2. Engagement Overview & Methodology

The consultation formed part of a wider programme of engagement, which was focused on establishing a shared vision that has strong support and buy-in from the community, stakeholders, project partners, and the relevant local authorities.

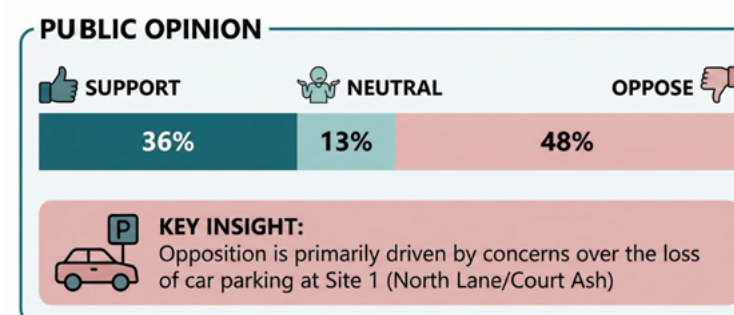
The consultation lasted over six weeks, and was conducted from Thursday, 18 September 2025, to midnight on Sunday, 2 November 2025. During this time, details on the Yeovil Town Centre Masterplan were made available online, alongside an online questionnaire, which asked people to provide their feedback on the Yeovil Town Centre Masterplan and answer optional demographic questions. A total of 575 responses were received via the online questionnaire. Some feedback was also received via emails submitted to the consultation team. A full summary of the engagement activities undertaken throughout the consultation process can be found in the Yeovil Town Centre Draft Masterplan Consultation Report.

Representations to the consultation were also made via two petitions. A summary of these petitions can be found in Yeovil Town Centre Draft Masterplan Consultation Report.

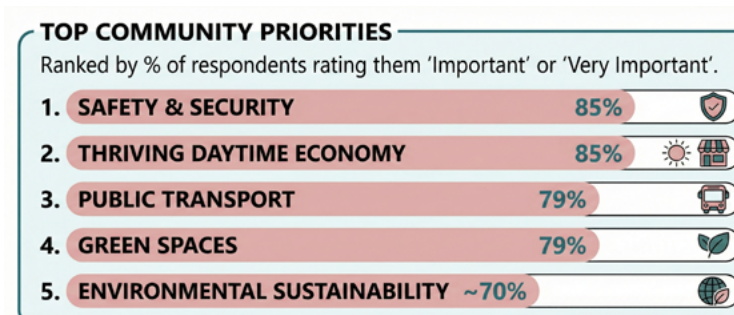


3. Sentiment Toward the Vision

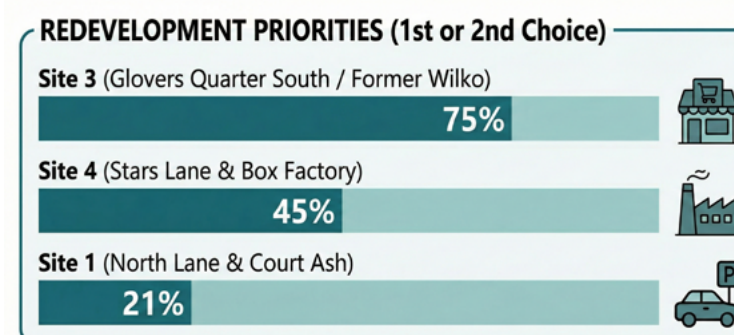
In summary, responses to the consultation survey revealed strong support for the principle of regeneration and its necessity to protect the economic future of Yeovil town centre. Respondents expressed support for the redevelopment of Site 2 (Glovers Walk Shopping Centre and Bus Station) and Site 3 (Glovers Quarter South), identifying a number of potential uses for these sites, including retail, hospitality, community facilities and housing.



Respondents were, however, less supportive of the redevelopment of Site 1 (North Lane and Court Ash Car Parks) and Site 4 (Stars Lane & Box Factory Car Park). The concerns about the redevelopment of these sites focused on the reduction in parking provision, which respondents felt might have a negative impact on the town centre economy, and in particular on small independent businesses. Some respondents also felt that the loss of parking could have negative social repercussions, such as isolation and access challenges for the town's elderly and disabled communities.



With regard to community facilities, respondents were keen to see further delivery of facilities for children and young people, more sports and leisure facilities and more public conveniences, such as public toilets.



Respondents were very interested in opportunities for businesses, with many respondents expressing a desire for more varied retail and hospitality provision, and in particular more independent and local businesses. Respondents provided several suggestions for sites that could be redeveloped to provide an enhanced business offer, such as the old Cattle Market, Denners building and Beales department store, as well as existing empty business units in the town centre.

Respondents felt that to improve the local economy, more should be done to incentivise businesses by making the area more attractive and offering financial incentives and business advice and support. Respondents also felt that the provision of free or affordable parking, as well as improvements to the road network and public transport, were essential to support visitors and business employees accessing the town centre.

4. Key Changes After Consultation

REMOVAL OF NORTH LANE AND COURT ASH CAR PARKS AS DEVELOPMENT SITES

Your main objection to the masterplan was inclusion of North Lane and Court Ash car parks, with responses against these proposals being shared across all channels, including two petitions representing nearly 5,000 signatures. Business owners worried about reduced footfall, while residents highlighted accessibility needs for elderly and disabled visitors. We have removed these sites entirely from the Masterplan.

Rationale: These sites were identified through rigorous analysis. Both sites were allocated in the Local Plan and are council-owned, enabling direct delivery. The 2019 parking survey indicated 55% average utilisation, suggesting spare capacity. However, consultation revealed that utilisation averages may not reflect peak demand or location-specific importance to businesses and residents.

REINFORCED SITE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND DESIGN QUALITY

You expressed an aspiration for getting development right, not just getting development done. The revised Masterplan now clearly articulates design principles guiding all opportunity sites—including the 360-degree approach to building frontages, requirements for active ground floors, and expectations for high-quality public realm that contributes to cohesive placemaking.

Rationale: The draft masterplan contained design objectives around connecting urban fabric and celebrating heritage, which emerged from detailed urban analysis, stakeholder engagement, and our understanding of what makes successful town centres thrive. The consultation confirmed community support for these principles whilst highlighting the need for more explicit articulation of expectations.

STRENGTHENED EMPHASIS ON BROWNFIELD SITE PRIORITISATION

You identified numerous vacant and derelict sites requiring attention, the old Cattle Market, Denners building, Beales department store, and empty retail units. You expressed concern for the impact of these buildings, on Yeovil's image. The revised Masterplan now emphasises brownfield redevelopment, encouraging developers to bring forward these underutilised sites alongside council-owned opportunities.

Rationale: The draft masterplan focused on council-owned sites because these represented assets we could directly influence without complex land negotiations. However, consultation feedback highlighted that comprehensive town centre renewal requires consideration towards all centrally located sites, including those under private ownership. The revised emphasis aligns with national planning policy whilst responding to local regeneration aspirations.

COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND ACTIVATION EMBEDDED INTO KEY SITES

Your aspirations extended beyond housing and retail. You called for children's facilities, community spaces, cultural venues, and practical amenities including public toilets. The revised Masterplan now explicitly embeds community facilities into opportunity sites, with Glovers Walk incorporating public amenities and Glovers Quarter South identified for family-oriented uses.

Rationale: The draft masterplan prioritised residential-led development because Somerset faces significant housing supply challenges. However, housing without social infrastructure risks creating dormitory spaces rather than vibrant neighbourhoods. Consultation feedback sharpened our understanding of which community facilities matter most, ensuring placemaking is embedded from the outset.

Theme 1: Parking

“ YOU SAID

“Loss of parking at North Lane and Court Ash car parks will have a negative impact on local, particularly independent businesses.”

“The loss of parking in town will have a negative impact on the local economy, as less visitors will want to come if they can’t park”.

“Loss of parking in town will prevent visitors from coming, particularly those who are elderly or disabled people.”

“Provision of parking is needed in the south side of town, as this supports the cinema and wider nighttime economy.”

“The parking data doesn’t appear to reflect the reality. Can further information be provided on where these statistics come from, or will the council consider undertaking new parking surveys to understand the current car park capacity.”

”

WE DID

- Following the Yeovil Masterplan Consultation, parking loss—particularly at North Lane and Court Ash car parks—emerged as the primary concern. Significant correspondence, feedback, and two petitions from the Princes Street business community highlighted fears that development would adversely affect their businesses and customers.

- In response, we have removed North Lane and Court Ash from the Masterplan as potential development sites.

- Stars Lane and Box Factory car parks remain as opportunity sites. Should proposals come forward, we will consider whether alternative parking is needed to support the cinema and night-time economy on the south side of town.

- Any specific redevelopment proposals would trigger Somerset Council surveys to assess current parking demand and potential impacts on parking pressures in Yeovil. We received several suggestions for alternative car parking locations, which we will consider carefully, though many of these sites are already in third-party ownership.

Theme 2: Support for Regeneration

“ YOU SAID

“We support the overall regeneration initiatives but oppose any disposal of critical car parking assets that underpin the viability of Yeovil’s town centre.”

“Like the sound of the vision - just don’t think the plan to get there is feasible.”

“I think the Vision sounds good but is anyone thinking of cleaning up the bottom end of the town? I appreciate that they are demolishing the old Glovers Walk but apparently keeping the old Poundland building. There doesn’t seem to be any constructive plans for what to do when it’s all finished.”

“Although I generally support the vision, the key problem is Yeovil town needs more shops to encourage people to visit the town and spend money to help the local economy.”

”

WE DID

- Many respondents to the Yeovil Masterplan Consultation expressed general support towards the principal of regeneration but objected toward specific components of the masterplan. The majority of objections centred on the loss of central car parking assets. Therefore, we have amended the Masterplan to remove the North Lane and Court Ash car parks as a potential development opportunity.

- The condition of vacant buildings was also a concern. However, many of these buildings are not in council ownership. As we progress with plans for the redevelopment of Glovers Walk and the other opportunity sites, we hope that developers will seize the opportunity to bring forward proposals for other central sites.

- Though residential development forms a key part of the Masterplan, the Masterplan also supports a mixed set of uses, including retail, and we will look at ways in which new and innovative retail spaces can be delivered within the town centre.

Rational:

The original masterplan identified North Lane and Court Ash car parks as opportunity sites based on two key factors: their allocation in the existing Local Plan and findings from the 2019 parking survey showing town centre car parks operating at approximately 55% average utilisation. This suggested potential to release underutilised land for development while maintaining adequate parking capacity elsewhere in the town centre.

Rational:

Somerset Council developed the masterplan recognising that Yeovil town centre requires transformative change following retail consolidation and economic challenges affecting many UK town centres. The strategy focused on council-owned sites to maximise public sector influence over regeneration outcomes, using these as catalysts to attract private investment and create conditions for broader economic revival across the town centre.

Theme 3 : Community Facilities

“ YOU SAID

“There needs to be a greater provision of facilities for children and young people, including places where they can do activities, such as ice skating or skateboarding, as well as playgrounds and youth centres.”

“More facilities for older generations that allow them to socialise is also needed.”

“It would be good if there were neutral and inclusive community spaces for people to socialise in Yeovil, particularly in the evenings.”

“With the redevelopment of the Glovers Walk and Bus Station site, facilities such as a waiting room, public toilets, shop, or café should be provided.”

“Sort the Octagon out as a priority. The theatre could be used to a far greater extent as one of the Community facilities.”

“It would be good if there could be more museum or cultural facilities in the town centre, which celebrate Yeovil and West Country heritage.”

”

WE DID

- As we progress with plans for the opportunity sites, we will seek to include more opportunities for community facilities and encourage developers to provide these for other sites emerging within the town centre.

- Regarding the development of Glover’s Walk, there were a number of requests for the redevelopment to include facilities, such as a waiting room, public toilets, a shop and a cafe, which, where possible, we will look to incorporate within the plans for the site redevelopment.

- Any comments made regarding the Octagon Theatre have been passed on to the Octagon consultation team for consideration.

Rational:

The masterplan identified opportunities to integrate community facilities within mixed-use developments, particularly at the Glovers Walk site. This approach recognised declining retail demand and the need to diversify town centre uses. By incorporating spaces for healthcare, cultural activities and community gathering, the proposals aimed to create destinations that serve residents’ daily needs while increasing footfall.

Theme 4: Business and Retail Offer

“ YOU SAID

“Support independent businesses. The town centre needs more businesses selling locally sourced produce and food, or arts and crafts businesses.”

“Create opportunities for the use of empty and derelict shops, by providing better incentives for businesses, or creating pop-up units.”

“Yeovil town centre should offer a better variety of retail, including more clothes shops, book shops, toy shops and gift shops.”

“There are currently too many vape shops, charity shops, Turkish barbers and betting shops in town. Yeovil should look to attract a higher quality of retail/ businesses.”

“Look to centralise retail in the town centre as opposed to permitting further retail parks and outlets in the outer parts of town.”

”

WE DID

- Many comments received in response to the consultation provided detailed and well thought out ideas for improving the existing and future business and retail offer.

- At present the masterplan is looking at the use and opportunities for spaces within the town centre. However, as plans further develop, we will further consider how businesses can be supported and provided for.

- We will be looking into how we might be able to make use of the existing empty shopping units and hope to implement measures in 2026.

- The local plan policies look at encouraging retail in the town centre, so hopefully, as the local plan policies are further delivered, there will be a growth of retail and business opportunities in the town centre.

- Though it is not within the scope of the Masterplan to define what retail and businesses take up units within the town centre, we are committed to creating clean and attractive spaces, to attract quality businesses to Yeovil.

Rational:

The masterplan acknowledged changing retail patterns and the need for diversification beyond traditional shopping. Rather than pursuing additional retail space in a market showing contraction, the strategy focused on creating flexible, adaptable spaces that could accommodate varied business types including independent retailers, food and beverage operators, and creative enterprises to enhance the town centre experience.

Theme 5 : Transport

“ YOU SAID ”

“The redevelopment of the bus station is important, but not that important until the service to surround villages is improved. The community is a long way from being persuaded it doesn’t need to bring the car to get about in Somerset.”

“Better public transport needs to be delivered to support commuters travelling to businesses both inside and outside of Yeovil.”

“Changes need to be made to improve traffic flow within Yeovil, such as a new bypass, changes to crossings and traffic lights, or general restructuring of the traffic system, to enable better flow of traffic, whilst reducing vehicle numbers in key shopping areas.”

”

WE DID

- The redevelopment of the bus station at Glovers Walk, will hopefully make travelling by bus more attractive, through the provision of a centrally located facility with quality public amenities.

- We have shared comments with our operational teams for consideration, on aspirations for improved bus routes connecting the town centre to the surrounding villages, as well as comments relating to the improvement of traffic flow within the town.

Rational:

The decision to retain and enhance the bus station as a centrally located mobility hub reflected strong public transport principles and stakeholder feedback emphasising connectivity. Relocating and improving the facility within the Glovers Walk redevelopment aimed to create an attractive gateway to the town centre while maintaining essential public transport links for residents without car access.

Theme 6: Active Travel and Accessibility

“ YOU SAID ”

“Yeovil’s cycle network is better than many, but coverage to the east of the town centre is notably absent. There is no mention of cycling at all, it is unclear whether there are plans for new cycleways or even cycle parking. This should be corrected in the next iteration of the masterplan.”

“Yeovil also needs a safe cycleway/ pedestrian way to Yeovil Junction train station which is 3 miles out of town.”

“Look at ways to improve access across town for wheelchair users, particularly electric wheelchairs that have large dimensions. At present it is a challenge to access shops, venues and disabled toilets.”

“Consideration should be given to pedestrianising areas within the town to improve the visitor experience and pedestrian safety.”

“Look at ways in which you can improve walking routes, such as better paving and signposting, as well as delivery of more lighting and implementation of measures to improve site lines.”

”

WE DID

- In response to the consultation, we received a variety of comments suggesting active travel and accessibility improvements. At present, these changes don’t sit within the scope of the Masterplan.
- However, we will ensure this feedback is considered when developing any future schemes. We have also passed on comments relating to cycle improvements onto the team working on the delivery of the cycling network.

- Some comments made in relation to walking and cycling improvements may be addressed through the further delivery of the Yeovil LCWIP.

- With regard to ensuring that retail and businesses in the centre are more accessible, we will look into ways that we could encourage premises increase their accessibility. We will also make sure that accessibility is a central consideration within future plans for the redevelopment of the Masterplan opportunity sites.

Rational:

The masterplan incorporated improved pedestrian connections and cycling considerations recognising Yeovil’s potential for sustainable travel given its relatively compact size and self-contained nature. Creating new links through opportunity sites, particularly connecting Middle Street to the Country Park, aimed to enhance walkability and support broader objectives around sustainable movement within the town centre.

Theme 7 : Safety and Maintenance

“ YOU SAID

“More needs to be done to provide help to the homeless, alcoholics and drug takers who congregate in the town centre area, to support them with rehabilitation, or to re-access the job market.”

“More needs to be done to deter anti-social individuals from gathering in key locations across the town centre and detracting from the visitor experience.”

“Additional measures should be implemented to increase vigilance in the town centre, including the delivery of further CCTV cameras, as well as increasing police presence in the town centre.”

“A better cleaning and maintenance strategy needs to be implemented across the town centre, which should look at keeping the streets and buildings clean, managing waste and ensuring that planting is well maintained.”

”

WE DID

- Safety is a key concern within the town centre, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour. Though it is not possible to tackle issues relating to anti-social behaviour and homelessness within the Masterplan, we have referred these comments to our colleagues that lead on these matters, and the council will continue to consider appropriate methods for reducing ASB in Yeovil.
- As proposals come forward for the development of the Masterplan opportunity sites, we will consider how safety measures can be incorporated within these proposals, to both ensure the safety of the development and the surrounding area.
- Furthermore, with regard to cleaning and maintenance concerns, we will work with our open spaces team to address these concerns, and we will consider smart solutions within the proposals for the Masterplan opportunity sites, which will help to keep the area clean and attractive.

Rational:

Design principles within the masterplan emphasised creating overlooked streets with active frontages, following established urban design best practice for natural surveillance. The approach recognised that well-designed public spaces with clear sightlines, good lighting and consistent activity throughout the day contribute significantly to perceptions of safety and reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

Theme 8: Sustainability and Greening

“ YOU SAID

“Look to create a network of green links between Ninesprings and the other parks and green spaces in the town centre”.

“The masterplan should look to deliver more green spaces and planting in the town centre for people to relax, sit or walk through.”

“Existing planting needs to be better maintained and more interesting, there are a lot of empty planters, which should have flowers in.”

“The council should work with businesses to maximise the delivery and maintenance of planting in the town centre.”

“Improvements need to be made to the existing parks to make them attractive locations that people would want to visit and spend time.”

“Thought needs to be given to how the town centre will cope with extreme weather, such as flooding and increasing temperatures.”

“Sustainable shops and businesses should be encouraged within the town centre, offering zero-waste, low carbon goods.”

”

WE DID

- As Masterplan opportunity sites progress, we will explore delivering green links to better connect parks and create new green spaces, while reviewing maintenance arrangements for planting and greenery.
- Where there is business community interest, we may collaborate to ensure greenery surrounding business units is well maintained.
- Suggestions for improving existing parks fall outside the Masterplan’s scope but have been passed to relevant colleagues for consideration.
- While we cannot determine the specific retail offer in the town centre, new retail units built using low-carbon, sustainable materials could provide ideal settings for the sustainable retail concepts suggested by respondents.
- Future development will also consider climate resilience measures to address global warming impacts such as extreme heat and flooding. This may include interventions like air conditioning or Sustainable Drainage Solutions (SuDS) to manage surface water and reduce flood risk.

Rational:

The masterplan prioritised strengthening connections between the town centre and Yeovil Country Park, recognising this natural asset as a distinctive characteristic setting Yeovil apart from other towns. Proposals included creating green corridors through development sites and incorporating sustainable drainage solutions, responding to both climate resilience requirements and community aspirations for attractive green spaces.

Theme 9 : Economic Development and Job Opportunities

“ YOU SAID ”

- “Look at ways to incentivise businesses through reduced business rates and lower commercial rents, as well as providing business advice and guidance.”
- “Look to provide greater support for young people entering the workforce by working with existing businesses to provide more job opportunities, such as placements or apprenticeships.”
- “Look at ways to support more trades and skills-based businesses.”
- “Look at ways to encourage more organisations providing professional services to operate from Yeovil.”
- “The town centre should find a commercial niche, something that it is known for, which will encourage more visitors and tourists.”

WE DID

- We received a number of suggestions for better incentivising businesses, in particular suggestions to lower business rates and commercial rents. Unfortunately, Somerset Council does not control either of these regimes but have lobbied and will continue to lobby government for changes in business rates support.
- We do, however, have an economic prosperity strategy, which has measures to encourage working with partners, and we will pass on to our colleagues the suggestions shared regarding work opportunities for young people in Yeovil.
- As mentioned previously, the Masterplan strategy does not have influence over the types of businesses that take up units in Yeovil, however, by creating a variety of units and workspaces, we hope to appeal to a good variety of businesses, which may include skills-based businesses, professional services, or niche crafts/ goods services.

Rational:

The masterplan strategy aimed to rebalance land uses to enhance economic resilience, moving beyond retail dependency. By creating spaces suitable for NHS facilities, creative industries and flexible workspaces, proposals sought to diversify employment opportunities within the town centre while building on Yeovil’s existing strengths in aerospace and healthcare sectors.

Theme 10: Consultation Process and Council Decisions

“ YOU SAID ”

- “It doesn’t feel as though the community has been given enough of an opportunity to comment on the masterplan before it reached this stage and level of detail.”
- “Will the final masterplan genuinely reflect public opinion?”
- “Will the community be given further opportunities to comment on the masterplan proposals at later stages in the project.”

WE DID

- The consultation on the Yeovil Town Centre Masterplan, was designed to gather feedback on the initial sites that we had identified as potential opportunity sites. These sites were selected because of their allocation within the existing local plan, and because they are sites already in Somerset Council ownership. Feedback from the consultation, has since been used to review and refine the Masterplan.
- There will be a further opportunity to comment on the Masterplan, as well as opportunities to comment on proposals for each of the opportunity sites, as and when they come forward.
- During these stages, we will look into ways to involve and where possible collaborate with the local community to create detailed proposals that reflect the aspirations of the Yeovil community.
- To date, we have made a series of changes to the masterplan, based off community feedback. In particular, in response to concerns over parking loss.

Rational:

The consultation was designed to gather community feedback on draft proposals before finalisation, following established planning practice. Sites were selected based on Local Plan allocations and council ownership, enabling direct public sector influence over development outcomes. This staged approach allowed meaningful community input to shape the final masterplan direction.

Theme 11 : Alternative Development Sites

YOU SAID

Suggestions for sites included:

- The Old Cattle Market
- Beales/Denner's site
- Argos
- Bus depot on the north side of Reckleford Road
- Poundland site
- The Triangle
- Middle Street
- Mermaid Hotel
- Cineworld
- The old Tannery site
- Eastland Road
- Porter Blacks
- The "old department stores"
- The top of the high street and the empty shops there
- The Huish/Fairfield carparks
- The South Street carparks
- Tesco
- Suggestion to develop on existing vacant sites (as a whole) as opposed to the carparks
- The old glove factory
- "Takeaway alley"
- The old ski-slope

WE DID

We received a great number of suggestions of alternatives sites within the Yeovil town centre for redevelopment. Many of these sites consisted of vacant retail and business units and areas. We have carefully considered the suggested sites and have made some amends to the Masterplan to reflect a greater focus on this type of site.

Rational:

The masterplan focused on council-owned sites because these offered greatest certainty for delivery and allowed Somerset Council to lead by example in town centre regeneration. While numerous privately-owned vacant sites exist, the council cannot compel their development. Successful delivery on opportunity sites aims to demonstrate viability and encourage private landowners to bring forward their own proposals.

Theme 12: Housing Opportunities

YOU SAID

"Fully agree with proceeding with Wilko and Glovers Walk site although whether the density of housing is advisable is another matter. I would imagine if these sites were started, the Cattle market site will probably remain derelict as the demand will have dropped off and the costs to private developers will be prohibitive."

"If you are delivering housing, the units should be a mix of sizes and tenures including social housing, affordable and high end/ expensive to support workers and genuine local residents."

"To support the proposed housing in the town centre, there needs to be a better run bus service and ample parking provision."

"The plan to renovate the bus station and provide affordable housing in the area is excellent. We need to provide affordable housing for hospital workers within a short walk of the hospital."

"Housing is not required in the town centre. The delivery of retail and entertainment is much more important."

WE DID

- As plans develop for each of the opportunity sites, the community will have a further opportunity to comment on more specific details surrounding any housing provision, including the specific unit sizes and tenures, as well as transport provisions.
- Any plans for housing will be carefully scrutinised to assess viability, level of interest and potential impacts to the local community and infrastructure.

Rational:

Residential development formed a central component of the draft Masterplan recognising Somerset's housing shortage and the Government's brownfield development objectives. Town centre living supports economic vitality by increasing footfall, reduces car dependency through proximity to services, and creates demand for local businesses. The approach aimed to deliver mixed tenures including affordable and key worker accommodation to serve local needs.



WSP