



Yeovil Town Council

Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Yeovil Town Council

Yeovil Town Council

Tuesday 7th October 2025

7:30pm

Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact
town.clerk@yeovil.gov.uk.

Amanda Card, Chief Executive / Town Clerk

1st October 2025

This information is also available on our website: www.yeovil.gov.uk

Members of Yeovil Town Council are summoned to attend:

Tony Lock – Mayor of Yeovil Town

Wes Read – Deputy Mayor of Yeovil Town

Barry Boyton

Evie Potts-Jones

Jade Cabell

Ashley Richards

Tareth Casey

Jeny Snell

Karl Gill

Andy Soughton

Emma-Jayne Hopkins

Roy Spinner

Kaysar Hussain

Rob Stickland

Justice Jimba

Helen Stonier

Andy Kendall

Ruth White

Jamie Lock

Adrian Wilkes

Jane Lowery

Dave Woan

Graham Oakes

Public Comments at meetings

Members of the public may attend the meeting either physically or via zoom.

If you would like to join the meeting via zoom, please e-mail ytic@yeovil.gov.uk by 9:00am on Tuesday 7th October 2025. Instructions will be sent to you to view the meeting.

Equality Act 2010

The general public sector equality duty places an obligation on a wide range of public bodies (including town and parish councils) in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Race
Disability	Religion or Belief
Gender Reassignment	Sex
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation
Pregnancy and Maternity	

Recording of Council Meetings

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 allows both the public and press to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media).

Any member of the public wishing to record or film proceedings must let the Chairman of the meeting know prior to, or at the start of, the meeting and the recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting), but non-disruptive. Please refer to our Policy on audio/visual recording and photography at Council meetings at www.yeovil.gov.uk. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during the time allocated for Public Comment who do not wish to be recorded or filmed, need to inform the Chairman who will instruct those taking a recording or filming to cease doing so while they speak.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Members are invited to join the Mayor's Chaplain in the Council Chamber for "Reflections".

The Mayor's cadet – Boris Velkov will give a presentation about the AirCadets.

A G E N D A

Public Comment (15 Minutes)

11/282 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Council to receive apologies for absence and consider the reasons given. LGA 1972 s85(1)

11/283 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

11/284 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous Town Council Meetings held on 2nd September 2025 and 1st October 2025 (if available).

11/285 MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

To note the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's recent and forthcoming engagements as attached at pages 6 to 8.

11/286 CORRESPONDENCE

Members to consider any correspondence.

11/287 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEETINGS

To note the meetings of each Committee, any resolutions and recommendations contained therein to be ratified.

Planning Committee – 15th September 2025

Presented by Cllr J Snell

Leisure & Environment Committee – 8th September 2025

Presented by Cllr R Spinner

Culture, Events & Promotions Committee – 16th September 2025

This meeting was cancelled due to insufficient business to be transacted

Infrastructure (Property & Assets) Committee – 9th September 2025

Presented by Cllr R Stickland

Finance & Policy Executive – 30th September 2025

Presented by Cllr A Soughton

11/288 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members who represent the Town Council on outside bodies should take this opportunity to report on any matters of interest.

- Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee – 9th July 2025 (minutes previously circulated)

11/289 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES – 2025/26

To note the corrected programme of meetings – the reserved date for the Finance and Policy Executive (FPE) should be Tuesday 28th October 2025 (not Tuesday 29th October 2025 as printed) attached at Page 9.

11/290 NOTICE OF AUDIT AND RIGHT TO INSPECT THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/25

To note the uncertified Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 (as attached at pages 10 to 15) and Notice of Audit and Right to Inspect the AGAR 204/25. The external auditor has not been able to complete their review in time to enable the smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements.

11/291 MOTION

Notice of Motion received from Cllr T Casey on 21st September 2025: *Standing Order s9* (as attached at page 16 to 17)

Letters from the public have also been attached at page 18 to 25.

11/292 MOTION

Notice of Motion received from Cllr G Oakes on 29th September 2025: *Standing Order s9* (as attached at pages 26 to 34)

List of Engagements attended/to be attended by the Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock and Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Wes Read from 2nd September 2025 to 4 November 2025

<u>September Engagements</u>	
04/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended The High Sheriff of Somersets Garden Party at North Cadbury Court
06/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended the Yeovil Pride March
07/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended the Yeovil Freewheelers Motorcycle Memorial Rally
09/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Yeovil Pub Watch at the Quicksilver Mail
12/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended a charity bucket collection with the Yeovil Hospital Charity in Morrisons
14/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended North Petherton Town Council's Civic Service
15/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Yeovil Town Council Civic Day
16/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Afternoon Tea with Friends of Yeovil at Yeovil Hospital
18/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended the Yeovil Retail Meeting
19/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended charity bucket collection with the Yeovil Hospital Charity in Asda

19/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Cooksons Court for their 10 year anniversary
19/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Joans 90 th Birthday at Potter House
20/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Yeovil Super Saturday
20/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Axbridge Blackberry Carnival
21/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Yeovil Chrysanthemum and Dahila Society in Marston Magna
22/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended visited residents at Chestnut Lodge
25/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended St Michaels and All Angels Church to celebrate their new vicar
26/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended the Macmillan Cancer Support coffee morning at Potter House
27/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended the Yeovil Railway Centre for the Railway 200 event
27/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended FND Friends Funday at Birchfield Park
27/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Castaways Theatre Group Musical Theatre Show at Westlands Entertainment Venue
27/09/2025	The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Wes Read attended Welington Carnival

28/09/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended BBC Radio Somerset Make a Difference Awards at Westlands Entertainment Venue
<u>October Engagements</u>	
06/10/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended Breakfast for Professionals at Potter House
08/10/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock will attend Bridport's Civic Day
11/10/2025	The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Wes Read will attend Chard Carnival
15/10/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock will attend Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society Come from Away show
19/10/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock will attend Wellington Civic Service
21/10/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock will attend the Moose International Meeting with the Town Clerk at the Quicksilver Mail
26/10/2025	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock will attend The Dorset Legal Service

Yeovil Town Council



Programme of Meetings of Council and Committees – 2025/26

Meeting	Day	Time	2025								2026				
			May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Council	Tues	7.30pm	6* ¹ 13* ²	24 ⁴	-	(5)	2	(7)	4	2	27 ⁵	-	(3)	7	5* ¹ 12* ²
Planning Committee	Mon	7.00pm	14* ³	16	14	11	15	13	17	15	19	16	16	13	13* ³
Leisure and Environment Committee (L&E)	Mon	7.00pm	19		7		8		10		12		9		18
Culture, Events and Promotions Committee (CEP)	Tues	7.00pm	27		15		16		18		13		17		26
Infrastructure (Property and Assets) Committee (IPA)	Tues	7.00pm	28* ³		8		9		11		6		10		19
Finance and Policy Executive (FPE)	Tues	7.00pm		3	29		30	(28)	25		20	(24)	31	(28)	27 ³

- () Meetings are reserve dates and will only be held if necessary
- *1 Annual Town Meeting followed by Annual Meeting of the Town Council
- *2 Annual Meeting of the Town Council (reconvened)
- *3 Moved to Wednesday
- *4 To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
- *5 To approve the budget precept for the following year

Yeovil Town Council
BY EMAIL

DDI:

+44 (0)20 7516 2200

Email:

sba@pkf-l.com

Date:

29 September 2025

Our Ref:

SO0316

SAAA Ref:

SB09813

Yeovil Town Council

Annual limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2025

Dear Ms Card

We have commenced our review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Yeovil Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 but cannot formally complete it. Please refer to our 'interim' external auditor report (Section 3 of the AGAR Form 3) which sets out the reasons we have not been able to complete the review. The 'interim' report is included for your attention as another attachment to the email containing this letter along with a copy of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR. The smaller authority must consider the report and decide what, if any, action is required.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234) set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In advance of the formal conclusion, we have provided the attached documents. The authority should use this 'interim' external auditor report and:

- Prepare a "Notice of audit" which details the rights of inspection, in line with the statutory requirements. We attach a pro forma notice you may use for this purpose (a Word version is available on request). It also states that the audit has not yet been completed.
- Publish the "Notice" along with the uncertified AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3) before 30 September, which must include publication on the smaller authority's website. (Please note that when the statute and regulations were amended in 2014 and 2015, they did not include a requirement for the length of time for which that the "Notice" must be published. The previous statute required 14 days; but it is now up to the authority to make this decision).
- Keep copies of the AGAR available for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the published AGAR remain available for public access for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of publication.

PKF Littlejohn LLP
15 Westferry Circus,
Canary Wharf, London
E14 4HD
T: +44 (0)20 7516 2200
pkf-l.com

Fee

Our fee note for the limited assurance review will be issued when we certify completion. The standard review fee is in accordance with the fee scales set by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.

Please note further charges may arise in addition to the standard fee if either:

- we have had to issue chaser letters and/or exercise our statutory powers due to a failure to provide an AGAR; or
- it was necessary for us to undertake additional work, for example due to challenge correspondence received.

Timetable for 2025/26

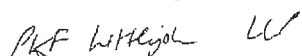
Next year we plan to set a submission deadline for the return of the completed AGAR Part 3 and associated documents (or Certificate of Exemption) of Wednesday 1 July 2026. It is anticipated that the instructions will be sent out during March 2026, subject to arrangements for the 2025/26 AGARs and Certificates of Exemption being finalised by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited (SAAA). Our instructions will cover any changes about which smaller authorities need to be aware.

- The smaller authority must inform the electorate of a single period of 30 working days during which public rights may be exercised. The period must be **exactly** 30 working days, please do not set public rights dates that cover a longer period. This information **must be published at least the day before** the inspection period commences;
- The inspection period **must** include the first 10 working days of July 2026, i.e. 1 to 14 July inclusive. In practice this means that public rights may be exercised:
 - at the earliest, between Tuesday 3 June and Tuesday 14 July 2026; and
 - at the latest, between Wednesday 1 July and Tuesday 11 August 2026.

As in previous years, in order to assist you in this process we plan to include a pro forma template notice with a suggested inspection period on our website. On submitting your AGAR and associated documentation, as was the case for this year, we will need you to either confirm that the suggested dates have been adopted or inform us of the alternative dates selected.

We would like to draw your attention to a change within the Practitioners' Guide 2025 which is mandatory for the 2025/26 period. Paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 relate to an additional assertion to be included in the 2025-26 AGAR, Assertion 10, regarding email management, websites, compliance with both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the requirement to have an IT policy. The requirements in relation to Assertion 10 are listed in Paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 and the local authority should review these requirements and take appropriate steps to ensure compliance.

Yours sincerely



PKF Littlejohn LLP

Yeovil Town Council



NOTICE OF AUDIT AND RIGHT TO INSPECT THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 No.234)

1. The audit of accounts for Yeovil Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been carried out but cannot be completed for the reasons stated in the external auditor report. The accounts have been published.
2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of Yeovil Town Council on application to:

Name: Amanda Card

Position: Chief Executive / Town Clerk

Address: Yeovil Town Council, Town House, 19 Union Street,
Yeovil, Somerset. BA20 1PQ

Tel No: 01935 382424

E-mail: amanda.card@yeovil.gov.uk

Days and time of availability: Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 3:00pm by appointment.

3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment for **£1.00** for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.

Amanda Card
Chief Executive / Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

30th September 2025

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Yeovil Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		Yes means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.		✓	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.		✓	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, Independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

30/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

11/264(a)

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

www.yeovil.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

Yeovil Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,496,629	1,736,440	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,335,693	2,537,412	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	200,378	2,466,038	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	384,435	1,763,005	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	911,825	2,511,442	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,736,440	2,465,442	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,783,469	3,308,969	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,587,638	1,587,637	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

20/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

30/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

11/264(b)

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Yeovil Town Council - SO0316**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Please see below

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The smaller authority has submitted its AGAR and supporting documentation prior to 30 September 2025; however, we have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable the smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements. Once we have completed our review a final report will be provided with the certificate of completion detailing any qualifications and 'other' matters.

Our fee note for the limited assurance review will be issued when we certify completion.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

We do not certify completion because:

We have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable the smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

28/09/2025

11/291 **MOTION**

Notice of Motion received from Cllr T Casey on 21st September 2025: *Standing Orders*

The Council will debate the following motion:

Motion: Yeovil Town Council Position on the Yeovil Masterplan four key town centre sites.

Two of these – Glovers Walk and the former Wilko store – are redundant sites that clearly need redevelopment. Bringing these back into use would improve the look and feel of the town centre and provide much-needed new homes and facilities.

The other two – Court Ash and Stars Lane – are very different. These are well-used car parks which provide vital access to Yeovil. Court Ash supports the independent shops and cafés on Princes Street, while Stars Lane serves families using the cinema, restaurants, the wider town centre, and Ninesprings Country Park. Together they are key to Yeovil’s daytime and evening economy.

The Masterplan admits that up to 600 parking spaces could be lost, more than a quarter of Yeovil’s public supply, without any clear plan for how this demand will be replaced. At the same time, the plan proposes 314 new homes, most we can expect with little or no parking, which will create even more pressure on the remaining spaces. The proposal highlights the addition of further retail and commercial property through the redevelopment of Wilko and Glovers Walk, but without sufficient parking to support this, regeneration could be undermined before it even begins.

If these car parks are sold for redevelopment, Yeovil risks losing the very infrastructure that allows its businesses, residents, and visitors to thrive. By contrast, focusing on Glovers Walk and Wilko would deliver regeneration without undermining the town’s accessibility.

This motion seeks to make Yeovil Town Council’s position clear: we support regeneration where it makes sense, but we oppose the disposal of vital car parks. It asks Somerset Council to listen to this town and protect the assets our community depends on.

This Council notes:

- Somerset Council’s current consultation on the Yeovil Town Centre Masterplan, which identifies four “opportunity sites” for redevelopment.
- That two of these sites — Glovers Walk (including Earle Street) and the former Wilko store on Old Station Road — are currently vacant and in need of regeneration.

- That two others — Court Ash Car Park and Stars Lane Car Park — are active, well-used facilities which provide essential parking for residents, visitors, and businesses, including those on Princes Street and in the leisure and evening economy.
 - That the Masterplan acknowledges up to 600 public parking spaces (around 27% of capacity) could be lost, without clear plans for reprovion.
-

This Council believes:

- That redeveloping redundant retail sites such as Glovers Walk and Wilko is sensible and overdue, and could bring real benefits to Yeovil town centre.
 - That the loss of Court Ash and Stars Lane car parks would significantly harm the accessibility of the town centre, reduce footfall for independent traders, damage the leisure economy, and create long-term conflicts with residents of new town-centre housing who will need parking.
 - That Somerset Council has provided no guarantee that proceeds from land sales will be reinvested in Yeovil, or that adequate replacement parking will be provided.
-

This Council therefore resolves:

1. To formally record Yeovil Town Council's opposition to the sale and redevelopment of Court Ash and Stars Lane car parks.
2. To confirm Yeovil Town Council's support for the redevelopment of Glovers Walk and the former Wilko site, recognising the regeneration benefits of these schemes.
3. To write to Somerset Council (Leader, and Portfolio Holder) to communicate this position, making clear that Yeovil Town Council supports regeneration but will oppose the disposal of critical car parking assets.
4. To encourage local businesses and residents to make their views known through the Masterplan consultation before the deadline of 2 November 2025.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to formally object to the proposed development of residential flats on North Lane and Court Ash Car Parks in Yeovil.

These car parks are a vital part of the town's infrastructure and are heavily relied upon by shoppers, workers, visitors, and local businesses. Removing them would have a seriously damaging impact on the economic and social life of Yeovil for the following reasons.

- **Severe Impact on Local Businesses**

Many independent shops, cafés, restaurants, and service providers in the town centre rely on accessible short- and medium-stay parking for their customers. Without convenient parking, footfall will inevitably decline, leading to reduced trade and possible business closures.

- **Accessibility for All**

The car parks provide essential access for people with limited mobility, families with children, and those coming from surrounding rural areas who cannot reasonably travel by public transport. Removing this provision will make Yeovil town centre less inclusive and less accessible.

- **Undermining Town Centre Regeneration**

Yeovil is already facing challenges with high street vacancies. Reducing parking will deter visitors at a time when the council should be supporting town centre regeneration, not undermining it. Adequate parking is fundamental to a thriving, attractive, and sustainable town centre.

- **Unfair Burden on Local Businesses**

Businesses in Yeovil already face some of the highest business rates in the region. Removing convenient customer parking while expecting businesses to shoulder these costs will make survival even harder, especially for independent traders.

- **Loss of Strategic Car Parking Capacity**

North Lane and Court Ash are not surplus facilities but core parking assets. Once lost to development, they cannot be replaced. This will put increased pressure on already limited alternative parking, leading to congestion, frustration, and reduced visitor numbers.

- **Insufficient Consideration of Alternatives**

It is not clear that the council has adequately explored other options for housing development that would not so directly undermine the town centre economy. The old cattle market or underused land elsewhere in Yeovil should be prioritised before sacrificing key infrastructure. The council should also explore compulsory purchase of long-term vacant or derelict buildings within Yeovil. Repurposing underused sites would both revitalise the high

street and deliver housing without stripping away vital resources.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the council to reject this proposal. Yeovil needs both new homes and a vibrant, accessible town centre, but this scheme would sacrifice one for the other, to the long-term detriment of the community.

We therefore petition the council to protect the North Lane and Court Ash Car Parks and to safeguard them as essential facilities for the town's future prosperity.

We look forward to your reply,

Dear Sir / Madam

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

I am writing in response to the proposals to build on several well used carpark in Yeovil as well as the circulating petitions regarding this issue.

I am gravely concerned at this move. I think its short sighted and hasn't taken into account how important these car parks are. There are plenty of other available plots to build residential, my understanding after speaking to the Quedam manager some time ago was Beales /Denner's was to be this and as much as I would prefer the store back, understood this. They are great buildings and it would be lovely to restore them. Also creating residential accomodation will increase the requirement for parking of those housed. Where will this occur on the carparks you intend to build on?

I am a very frequent user of North Lane. Its always well used even in the week and it considers those with mobility issues as well as providing optimal access to princes Street. Those businesses for sure rely on this carpark. Ive recently joined the dental practice and for me and my health losing North Lane would put me at considerable disadvantage in accessing this. I hope you are acknowledging these and other concerns at losing the carparks and the impact on the businesses in the town.

As with many towns, financial issues pre covid have impacted the town and I know every effort is made but losing the carparks you are thinking of will only make this worse. The Quedam carpark is a difficult one as in adequate space to park and all the pillars which I am surprised more modern cars can fit into so the other ones are far better suited.

Please reconsider this move and leave them as they are. It is a such a pleasant experience to park at North lane (as well as a necessary one) and to walk through the grounds of St Johns and enjoy your beautiful flower displays. Lets keep the good things that impact on peoples

experiences of Yeovil, their wellbeing both physical and mental. If I can help with any of this (I hope to attend your meeting on the 7th October) I am invested.

I would seek to encourage the Yeovil Town Council to oppose the proposal to reduce the number of car parks in Yeovil. At the moment they are one of the better reasons to come into Yeovil.

Princes' Street is, in my opinion, the best part of Yeovil centre with a diverse mix of cafes, restaurants and individual shops. Should the car parks at Court Ash and North Street be removed I fear that the whole nature of the street will change for the worse. People will not frequent this area if they cannot park nearby.

Stars Lane is also of great importance to the central and lower area of the town. If motorists are forced to trawl around the town to find a parking place many will not come back.

Please object to Somerset Council's ill conceived plan.

Yours faithfully,

As. Partially disabled person it's hard enough to find places to park with a short walk to town but if this goes ahead I don't think I will be able to get into town at all. I know I'm not the only person with this issue.

Please think about people money.

Regards

Dear Sirs,

I have read via local news, social media and owners of local businesses in Yeovil about the proposed development of these car-parks, and initially thought it couldn't possibly be true. These car-parks are used and needed by Yeovil citizens which include retail/business owners and car owners who use their facilities which boost the economic future of all town centres. Without such car-parks people will increasingly shop and do business away from our town where there are more convenient places to park.

I really don't understand who this proposal is going to benefit, except, of course, funds for Somerset Council who want to sell these sites and, as we are all aware, are in financial difficulties. Do they have the interests of Yeovil when making this proposal? I doubt this as they have to look at Somerset as a whole unlike you, as the Town Council, who will be directly affected if this proposal is approved.

To conclude, I am opposed to any development of any of our car-parks in Yeovil and trust you will represent the residents and users of our much needed Town Centre and agree this is not a viable proposition and refuse approval.

Yours faithfully,

Dear Gentleman

Can I firstly share my appreciation for all your hard work you put in to serving the needs of our town. My reason for writing is to ask you as a team to oppose the closure of the North Lane and Court Ash car parks as I believe it will have a severe impact on the business's at the top part of town. Further to that there is the additional effect it will have on the elderly members of St Johns church, who really value the closeness of the North Lane car park to the church. I hope you agree.

Yours briefly but sincerely

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed development plans affecting the North Lane, Court Ash, and Stars Lane car parks in Yeovil.

As the owner of The Mad Hatter, 42 Princes Street, Yeovil for nearly four years, I have witnessed first-hand the challenges town centre businesses face, particularly in attracting and retaining customers. The removal of these car parks would significantly reduce convenient access for visitors, further discouraging footfall at local businesses such as mine.

The area surrounding Princes Street has long suffered from neglect, and I fear this development will be the final blow to the small and micro-businesses that contribute to the character and vitality of our town centre. Rather than revitalising the area, it risks driving away the very customers we rely on to survive.

For these reasons, I urge you to reconsider allowing this plan to proceed. Protecting accessible parking is essential to supporting independent businesses and maintaining a thriving community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I hope my concerns will be taken into account when making any decisions about this development.

To who it may concern,

I am writing to you, not only as a business operator on Princes Street (OfficeWyse) but also as a resident of Yeovil for my entire life, to reject the plan to sell and redevelop North Lane, Court Ash, and any other car parks in the vicinity of the town centre.

There is a struggle to park in the town centre as it is without the loss of over 150 spaces, and 3 as "scarce as gold dust" disabled spaces. Of which have already been decimated in the town centre due to the re-work down in Middle Street and High Street.

Arguably Princes Street and the Borough have the most sought after stores in the town, and these 2 car parks are vital to the success of the dwindling small businesses that need these car parks to survive.

I believe that the short-sightedness of some of the aspects of the "Refresh Project" will be the downfall of this town, and I am not the only person who believes this.

The increase in small business rates has already affected many around the town centre, and removing these car parks will only compound the problem, causing the closure of more shops, and therefore less income for the council.

Don't cut off your nose to spite your face, as the saying goes.

I am at the owner of a hair salon in Yeovil in wine Street. And I think it's shocking that you are planning on taking away the car parks and building on them. This will not help Yeovil this will mean that more shops will close down in Yeovil and we already have a lot of empty shops. There are other places that you could build on and I really don't see how you can be building houses when there isn't even a maternity hospital and you're saying that these houses are for young people. I would like to know when the meeting is going to be held if this isn't already a done deal. as I do feel that a lot of taxpayers money has been wasted by the council on the Yeovil refresh and if the council do Hermes car parks they are obviously selling them to get more money with no beneficial help to the town centre or businesses.

I'm very saddened to hear about the proposed closure of the St Johns and Court Ash car parks in Yeovil and them being used as development land. Myself and my wife use these car park regularly when shopping in Yeovil, and they're both regularly full on Saturdays and so they're clearly popular with others too. I seriously doubt that the other car parks in the town have the capacity to absorb the loss of St Johns and Court Ash. Also remember that those

car parks serve the 'top of town' (Princes Street etc) and so the impact on businesses in that should not be under estimated, particularly since they both serve to make that area accessible to people with limited mobility.

Please don't allow those two car parks to be closed, because I believe that their usage and popularity is being greatly under estimated.

Good evening,

I am contacting you in the hope that as a user of the car parks at North Lane & Court Ash, you will be able to contact Somerset Council to remove the car parking development from the Yeovil Refresh Project Plan.

I am a frequent visitor to the independent traders along Princes Street and feel that if this project goes ahead, it will cause irreparable damage to their trade. I have also used these car parks when attending Yeovil District Hospital, either as an outpatient or visiting relatives & friends, as their multi-storey car park is so expensive.

We have lost so many traders in the town already, surely you don't want to see more disappear?

Please can you ask SC to reconsider their plans, in order to save our small businesses.

I was shocked and very disappointed to hear that Yeovil Town Council is prepared to lose the 2 car parks at the top of town: the one next to St.John's church (North Lane car park) and the one next to the old cinema (Court Ash car park).

Not only do I regularly use these car parks to go in shops/café's in the town centre, I have also used them a lot when my mother was in hospital for weeks.

I would park in those car parks because the multistorey car park in front of the hospital is too expensive, especially if you plan to stay hours in hospital visiting a loved one.

Where does the YTC believe customers of the shops at the top of town should/would park if these 2 important car parks were not available to the public anymore?!?

In the last years Yeovil town centre has lost many businesses that have closed down and surely forcing the businesses at the top of town to close down due to reduced clients must be a counterproductive move.

Please rethink your decision and remove the car parking redevelopment from the Yeovil Refresh project plan.

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed redevelopment of the town centre car parks—specifically North Lane, Court Ash, and Stars Lane—into residential flats. As a local business owner, I am deeply concerned that removing these parking facilities will severely impact local trade and make it more difficult for customers to access our businesses.

Currently, parking in Yeovil is already limited, and the available car parks are often full. This creates significant challenges for both customers and businesses. Reducing parking further by replacing car parks with flats will only exacerbate these issues, potentially driving away customers and harming the local economy.

I respectfully urge the council and Mr. Soughton to reconsider this redevelopment plan and to prioritize maintaining and expanding parking facilities. This would help ensure that Yeovil remains a welcoming and thriving destination for shoppers and businesses alike.

Thank you for considering my views. I look forward to your response.

I am writing in connection with the proposed developments on three of our town centre car parks.

Whilst I quite understand the need to build more housing in all of our towns, in my view a reduction in car parking spaces to achieve this very laudable aim would have a very negative impact on the local economy.

The country and the town is crying out for economic growth and that is in part generated by the public spending money in our town centres.

In my role as a local town centre based Chartered Accountant I act for a number of retail businesses in the town centre who I know have customers who rely on parking in these very carparks and it would be a travesty if potential spending was driven out of the town.

I would also add that many older people value being able to park very near to the shops and may feel excluded from parts of the town if parking becomes much more restrictive.

Our shops and cafes provide a social service for many people, young and old, whose lives are enhanced by meeting people in places such as cafes and hairdressers.

I feel that we must make sure that these people do not become excluded from easy access into the town centre and that we do not lose those small generally independent businesses from our beautiful town centre.

They are its very lifeblood and have already shouldered the burden of the disruption caused by the pandemic and now the much needed redevelopment work taking place behind Middle Street – we must not lose them altogether.

I believe we have both an economic and a social/moral duty to think very carefully before parking spaces are lost forever to shoppers and vulnerable people.

I am writing to ask Yeovil Town Council to oppose the selling and redevelopment of Yeovil's car parks, specifically North Lane, Court Ash & Stars Lane. Whilst the redevelopment of derelict areas such as Glover's Walk and the Wilko site has the potential to attract interest from outside investors and businesses; to counter that with the closure of the very car parks which will allow the uncomplicated flow of shoppers, of workers, of visitors - of *spenders* is a ludicrous, decision-making clanger. If I were an investor I would certainly be looking at the transport links and car parking facilities before I invest any money in a particular site or town.

Stars Lane is the car park that would serve the sites of any new investment at the bottom of town, as well as being the safe place to park for evening nightlife and for Ninesprings Country Park.

North Lane and Court Ash car parks serve as essential infrastructure for the top of town, serving over 30 independent businesses on Princes Street and neighbouring streets. Many of those customers, in particular the elderly and less mobile residents, rely on the accessible parking these two sites provide. The alternative car parks such as the Quedam multi-storey require a steep uphill walk, which presents a real barrier for the elderly and people with mobility aids or disabilities. The car park at Petters Way is equally too far for our elderly patrons and Tesco car park has a time limit, which does not allow for people to shop and have lunch or visit the hairdresser, the dentist or the optician. Many of our customers spend time and money at the top of town, which is also arguably the most historic street of our town centre.

Closing these car parks would therefore put the very survival of the Princes Street businesses at risk, undermining the vitality of our local economy and diminishing the character of our town. Once thriving small businesses are lost they rarely return and our community would be poorer for it.

For the sake of the community and economy of Yeovil, we ask you to contact Somerset Council and urge them to change their proposal to exclude these three car parks.

Yours faithfully

11/292 MOTION

Notice of Motion received from Cllr G Oakes on 29th September 2025: *Standing Orders*

The Council will debate the following motion:

“That the Council write to the Secretary of State for Health asking them to recall the decision to close the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit (HASU) at Yeovil Hospital now that the evidence behind the decision has changed.”

Attached on the following pages is previous correspondence on the matter.



Yeovil Town Council

Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Telephone : (01935) 382424
Website : www.yeovil.gov.uk

Amanda Card Town Clerk

Rt Hon Victoria Atkins
Secretary of State for Health and
Social Care
Ministerial Correspondence Team
39, Victoria Street,
London
SW1H 0EU

Date: 8th March 2024
Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Ask for: Amanda Card
E-mail: amanda.card@yeovil.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State

Acute Hospital Based Stroke Services in Somerset

I am the Leader of Yeovil Town Council. I am writing to you to ask that you use your powers under the Health and Care Act 2022 to intervene in proposals for changes to local NHS Services. I believe that since 30th January 2024, you, as Secretary of State, have discretionary powers to call in and make a decision on a reconfiguration proposal. **“The Secretary of State will be able to use this call-in power at any stage of the reconfiguration process. This power is intended to be used in cases which are complex, a significant cause for public concern, or where Ministers can see a critical benefit to taking a particular course of action.”**

I understand the Chair of Somerset Council’s Adult Scrutiny Committee has already written to you with her concerns about this proposal. That committee unanimously voted against the sole proposal that went to the Integrated Care Board.

Yeovil Hospital sits in the middle of Yeovil and provides emergency treatment for those who have had Strokes. The Hospital serves not only Yeovil, but most of South Somerset, part of the Mendip area and people living in part of North and West Dorset. Due to the geography of our county neither Yeovil Hospital or Musgrove Hospital is centrally placed and so health services have developed with a two-centre approach, not unusual in rural counties.

Somerset and Dorset have larger numbers of older people than most counties and so Stroke Services are more vital in our county.

I have read all the various papers that were supplied to the Scrutiny Committee and have concerns regarding a number of elements, these elements suggested the switch to a single Hyper Acute Service may not shorten the time patients spend in hospital and that other factors may be equally or even more important.

I was also concerned that the Scrutiny Committee was told TWICE that it was difficult to recruit a Consultant to work at YDH and that the imminent retirement of the Senior

Consultant at YDH would create significant problems. The committee was told this, despite a replacement consultant having been recruited and days away from commencing. It appears the committee were deliberately misled. Another consultant who expressed an interest in joining the YDH team was told that no post was available. This was before the decision to reduce services had been made!

I believe there was insufficient consideration given to the concerns raised. I have listed below some of those concerns:

- Clinical Outcomes- Travel time for patients should ideally be within 30 minutes. As Somerset is such a rural and large geographical area, those living in the eastern quarter will have journey times nearer 60 minutes. The measure used in the consultations was an **Ambulance driving at 3 am under blue lights**, this is the only way 30 minutes from Hospital to Hospital can be achieved and does not take account of all the towns and villages beyond this.
- Workforce sustainability -there was a suggestion that it has been difficult to recruit a Consultant at Yeovil and yet one has been appointed and a second has indicated they would be willing to join should the Hyperacute ward remain in Yeovil.
- Equity of Service – The assertion that there is a 24/7 Service at Taunton is not strictly true as the service is provided via a telephone service and so could be provided by two units.
- Financial Sustainability – the closure of the unit in Yeovil will result in a cost to Somerset NHS Foundation Trust if patients are treated in any of the neighbouring Hospitals (Dorset, Bath or Bristol). There will also be a significant cost should patients not receive the care and treatment in the vital first few hours of the onset of a Stroke as the recovery will be longer and greater Social Care needed.
- Patient Choice and recovery – Patients and their families will have to travel considerable distances to support relatives and in Somerset transport is a challenge. Rural Bus services are infrequent or non-existent.

This is not the first time a proposal has been made to switch these vital services to Taunton. Sadly, this has resulted in a blight effect on recruiting to Stroke Team at YDH however in recent months doctors are seeing the opportunities our hospital presents and the advantages of raising their families in South Somerset.

This latest proposal first came before Somerset Council's Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee back in September 2022, when even at that first meeting a Hyper Acute Unit at Yeovil had been ruled out – though no details of why were supplied to the committee. Members of Yeovil Town Council, who like me also serve on Somerset Council have questioned and challenged this proposal since it was first raised.

The public Consultation process also rejected this proposal with many local residents citing the poor performance of the ambulance services as being their main concern.

Improving Stroke Services in Somerset is vital but I believe these proposals to be flawed. What the papers do suggest is that both Yeovil and Musgrove should become Hyper Acute Centres. Dorset County Hospital has stated they cannot take extra patients from Yeovil which was a fundamental part of the case for closing Stroke Services in Yeovil. This proposal simply will not work and will put those living in the villages around Yeovil and Sherborne at much greater risk.

Please on behalf of the residents of Yeovil and surrounding communities call in this decision so that alternative options can be given the honest and open consideration they deserve.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Graham Oakes
Leader of Yeovil Town Council
For and on behalf of Yeovil Town Council

Card, Amanda

From: Department of Health and Social Care <DoNotReply@dhsc.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 May 2024 17:38
To: Card, Amanda
Subject: Your correspondence of 8 March

Our ref: DE-1504278

Dear Councillor Oakes,

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 March asking the Secretary of State to use the powers under Schedule 10A of the National Health Service Act 2006 to call in the decision by NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board to close the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit at Yeovil Hospital. I have been asked to reply.

The Department has been asked to look into the issues you have raised and to provide advice on whether the Secretary of State should call in the above NHS reconfiguration proposal.

I hope that you will appreciate that the Department of Health and Social Care has to consider the use of the call-in power on the merits of each case. To support decision making, in January, the Department published statutory guidance on the call-in powers in *Reconfiguring NHS services - ministerial intervention powers*, which sets out how call-in requests may be considered.

As explained in the statutory guidance, it is likely that a reconfiguration will not be called in before:

- NHS commissioning bodies and local authorities have taken all reasonable steps to try to resolve any issues
- those making a request or others have tried to resolve any concerns through their local NHS commissioning body or have raised concerns with their local Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

To inform a decision on whether to call in a proposal, ministers may consider whether the proposed change meets at least one of the following criteria:

- there are concerns with the process that has been followed by the NHS commissioning body or NHS provider;
- a decision has been made and there are concerns that a proposal is not in the best interests of the health service in the area;

In addition, ministers may consider:

- whether the reconfiguration proposal is considered to be substantial
- the regional or national significance of an NHS service reconfiguration and the impact on the quality, safety or effectiveness of services

You have requested that the proposed closure of the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit at Yeovil Hospital be called in because a decision has been made and there are concerns that a proposal is not in the best interests of the health service in the area.

The Department will now consider your request. As set out in the 2024 guidance, the Department may also need to seek further information from other parties in order to take a decision about whether to call in the proposal. The Department will endeavour to keep you informed of progress and provide an update on the status of your request within six weeks from the date of this response.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

K Jarvis
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries
Department of Health and Social Care

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Card, Amanda

From: DHSC Reconfiguration <DHSCReconfiguration@dhsc.gov.uk>
Sent: 13 December 2024 14:09
To: Card, Amanda
Subject: [Ref: YS013] Response to call-in request: Acute Hospital Based Stroke Services in Somerset

Dear Councillor Oakes,

Thank you for your letter of 8 March, asking the Secretary of State to use the powers under Schedule 10A of the National Health Service Act 2006 to call in the decision by the NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board (ICB) to close the current Hyper Acute Stroke Unit (HASU) at Yeovil District Hospital. I am responding on behalf of the Secretary of State, and I apologise for the delay.

Summary of your request

The Department of Health and Social Care has received a number of requests to call in the closure of the current HASU at Yeovil District Hospital. I understand that you asked that the decision be reviewed because you have concerns with the process that has been followed by Somerset ICB, and that the decision is not in the best interests of the health service in the area.

In particular:

- You are concerned that Somerset ICB's consultation did not include the option of retaining the HASU at Yeovil District Hospital
- You are concerned about how the ICB considered the impact of the change, particularly travel time, on patient outcomes

Ministerial intervention powers

The Department has published statutory guidance in January 2024 on the call-in powers in [Reconfiguring NHS services - ministerial intervention powers](#), which sets out how call-in requests may be considered. As explained in the statutory guidance, it is likely that a reconfiguration will not be called in before:

- NHS commissioning bodies and local authorities have taken all reasonable steps to try to resolve any issues; and
- those making a request, or others have tried to resolve any concerns through their local NHS commissioning body or have raised concerns with their local Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

To inform a decision on whether to call in a proposal, ministers may consider whether the proposed change meets at least one of the following criteria:

- there are concerns with the process that has been followed by the NHS commissioning body or NHS provider; or
- a decision has been made and there are concerns that a proposal is not in the best interests of the health service in the area.

In addition, ministers may consider:

- whether the reconfiguration proposal is considered to be substantial; or
- the regional or national significance of an NHS service reconfiguration and the impact on the quality, safety, or effectiveness of services.

Secretary of State's decision

The Department has considered the information provided as part of the various call-in requests received in relation to Yeovil HASU, alongside other available information listed below against the statutory criteria. On balance, the Secretary of State has decided that this call-in request does not meet the threshold for intervention.

Key information considered includes:

- the Stroke Association's publication on "What we think about: Reorganising acute stroke services" – 2019
- NHS England's National Stroke Service Model – May 2021
- minutes from the Somerset County Council's (SCC) Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee meeting – 12 October 2022
- the NHS South West Clinical Senate's Stage 2 Clinical Review Report on Somerset Stroke Hyperacute Services Reconfiguration Proposals – 4 November 2022
- Somerset ICB's Improving Acute Hospital-Based Stroke Services in Somerset consultation documents – 30 January 2023 to 24 April 2023;
- Somerset ICB's decision making business case (DMBC) – 25 January 2024; and
- information provided to the Department by Somerset ICB.

In reaching this decision the Department has reviewed the information detailed in your request and information relating to the process followed by Somerset ICB in reaching its decision.

You raised in your request that you felt the initial consultation was flawed as it failed to offer an option of retaining the HASU that already exists at Yeovil Hospital.

We understand that the ICB consulted in relation to the proposal, in an open process over a 12-week period. The Department noted that retaining the Yeovil HASU was determined not to be a viable option for stroke services in the area. The two options that were put forward on the consultation document were subject to scrutiny as the stroke model was being developed and that the ICB sought the input of the South West Clinical Senate's review Panel on the proposed options, which concluded that "it could offer assurance that two options are consistent with a strong clinical evidence base". The rationale for not retaining the Yeovil HASU included its lack of sufficient patient admissions to make the hyperacute stroke service clinically sustainable, maintain expertise and to ensure good clinical outcomes. Even with predicted increasing in stroke incidence, the Yeovil HASU would continue to fall very short of the recommended admission level of a minimum of 600 cases per year. Yeovil District Hospital only having a specialist stroke consultant from Monday to Friday, compared to Musgrove Park which has one available all week, which was also considered a critical issue for the HASU.

On this basis, the rationale for not including the option of retaining the Yeovil HASU appears clear and the Department does not agree this demonstrates a flaw in the consultation process. The option was considered earlier, whilst the review of stroke services was being undertaken, but there is evidence available that the retention of the HASU at Yeovil was not a viable option for Somerset ICB to include at consultation.

Therefore, the Department has been unable to conclude that the criteria for ministerial intervention on the grounds of concerns around the process undertaken by the ICB is met.

The Department has also reviewed the information detailed in your request and information relating to whether the proposal is in the best interests of the health service in the area.

You raised in your request that the proposals for the Somerset HASU are not in the best interests of the local population, as there will be increased travel times for patients.

We understand that the changes mean there will be a change to travel times for patients closer to Yeovil than Taunton. However, the Department has noted that travel times will remain within the target set by the NHS National Stroke service model which states "patients with ischaemic stroke, systems should achieve a 90th centile call to needle time of 180 minutes". There has been no evidence provided that the increased travel times under this proposal mean that care is no longer in the best interests of patients. Therefore, the Department has been unable to conclude that the criteria for ministerial intervention on the grounds of concerns that the proposal is contrary to the best interests of the health service in the area is met.

Finally, you have also expressed concern that there will be a potential gap in hyper acute care provision in Yeovil between the Yeovil HASU closing and the new HASU at Dorchester opening which would not be in the best interest of the health service in the local area. The Department has been assured by Somerset ICB's public confirmation that hyper acute services at Dorset County Hospital will be ready to go and receive patients before emergency stroke services at Yeovil move. Implementation will follow best practice

for stroke services – a clear transition rather than a phased approach which may be appropriate for other services. With this in mind, the Department has been unable to conclude that the criteria for ministerial intervention on the grounds of concerns that the proposal is contrary to the best interests of the health service in the area is met.

In summary the Secretary of State has concluded that this proposal does not meet the criteria for ministerial intervention.

The Secretary of State's view is that as the local commissioner, Somerset ICB is best placed to continue to determine the needs of their local population. As set out in the guidance, it is important that integrated care systems operate with a high degree of autonomy in making decisions in the interests of their populations.

The Department expects Somerset ICB to continue to work closely with partners and patient groups throughout implementation. We understand that Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust have established a joint implementation group across the two counties and will work closely with local partners including the ambulance service, Somerset Council, staff, patient groups and MPs. The implementation group is meeting on a monthly basis.

I appreciate this decision may be disappointing to you. I would encourage you to continue to raise concerns with Somerset ICB, and the joint implementation group, should you wish to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine



**Department
of Health &
Social Care**

Catherine Fiegehen

Department of Health and Social Care

39 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0EU

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