

Appendix C

Respondent	Feedback	Response
A	<p>I have been able only to glance through the proposals but I am shocked to see that the topic of “accessibility” is relegated to one page and is limited only to ramp gradients, steps and tactile surfaces. Many of the design proposals elsewhere in the comment – such as low level bollards, Sheffield bike racks etc. will be a major hazard to anyone with low vision. Mixing cyclists with pedestrians is also a major cause of stress and anxiety for many older people as well as those with low vision.</p> <p>I would be grateful for reassurance that you are taking professional advice on this topic rather than paying lip service.</p> <p>The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation, among others, provides good guidance material on what needs to be done.</p> <p>As a local resident with a professional interest in this area I would be happy to offer some preliminary thoughts on good practice to meet the needs of the many residents of Yeovil and surrounding areas who are old and/or disabled.</p>	<p>Response advising that professional advice was being sought with regards to design of areas. Also advised that the use of this guide will take account of the points raised.</p>
B	<p>I think it is a disgrace that the escalator from the Bus Station area to the Quedam Shopping Area has been out of action for so long. Surely pressure can be brought upon the owners to get it repaired! It makes the area along with the closure of so many shops look like a derelict area. Goodness knows what holiday makers and visitors to the area think. I have lived in South Somerset for 18 years and have never felt so ashamed of my local town as I have done in the last 12 months. The area close to M & S has also become an eyesore with the concrete bath shaped planters!!</p> <p>On a positive note St John's Church gardens are beautifully kept and are always a pleasure to walk through, and other planters around the top end of town always look good. Somerset is a lovely area to live and has such beautiful countryside, so why can't Yeovil do it proud, it is just such a let down.</p> <p>I look forward to your reply and hopefully to be told that Yeovil will soon become a town to be proud of!</p>	<p>Responded to points raised relate to general condition of town.</p> <p>Relayed request for repair of escalator to Glovers walk management team.</p> <p>Shared positive feedback on management of St John`s Church Gardens with green spaces team.</p>
C	<p>Reading the PRDG I wonder what the overall budget for this Consultation is and how much of the “spend” is to outside consultants rather than SSDC employees.... But that is another story which I'll probably raise with a District Councillor.</p> <p>I am a motorist a Reading the PRDG I wonder what the overall budget for this Consultation is and how much of the “spend” is to outside consultants rather</p>	<p>Responded to question on park and ride facilities stating that there aren't any plans for one at this stage.</p> <p>There is an access strategy for the town centre being developed to deal with all forms of transport which covers walking, cycling,</p>

	<p>than SSDC employees.... But that is another story which I'll probably raise with a District Councillor. I am a motorist and I walk - I do not use public transport.</p> <p>When I go to Yeovil it is for planned shopping with some impulse buying.</p> <p>Currently I use the Tesco overflow car park (convenient because of the new cut-through to Clarence Street) and occasionally Park Road (not so convenient because of the exit to the Ring Road). If Yeovil should go down the parking route which has been applied in Salisbury (virtually no free parking and 95% of the remainder is pay and display, plus Park and Rides) I would reconsider my shopping habits and probably shop in Morrisons or ASDA to the exclusion of the town centre. Are there any plans for a Park and Ride facility?</p> <p>The PRDG document has a picture of Middle Street with the title "On-street parking provision within Middle Street develops a congested pedestrian environment". As I recall the area between Rymans and M & S is now no parking (with planters?) and the area outside what was Thomas Cook is Disabled parking – because of very low traffic volume (and low speed) through here pedestrians wander at will - safely. Also, with the road closure into Wine Street, access to Union Street and Middle Street is from Peter Street – tedious enough to discourage through traffic (which was probably the intention). Indeed, the town centre is sufficiently restricted (by existing one way streets, traffic restrictions and narrowness) that I feel that most vehicles that enter the area do so because it is essential (Disabled or deliveries). To reduce "dominance" by applying even more restrictions will be counter-productive.</p> <p>In my opinion a lot of thought and imagination needs to be applied to the lower part of Middle Street which looks to me as sad and neglected.</p>	<p>public transport, general driving and links to the rail stations. This is aligned to work on a parking strategy which will inform the necessity for park and ride facilities. This is still a work in progress so no plans at the moment but we have yet to draw a conclusion on this issue.</p> <p>Comments on further restrictions in the central streets are being considered as part of the design work so are informed but not delivered by the SPD.</p> <p>Advised that Middle Street design is being worked on as part of the design project which will be informed by the PRDG.</p>
D	<p>Dear Yeovil Refresh team, I'd like to give some input into the current consultation on Yeovil Town Centre. Just to give some context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I lived in Hardington Marsh and went to East Coker / Westfield • My mother still lives in Yeovil, but I live and work in London • Since leaving Yeovil I've lived in 9 countries working in marketing facing roles, many of which had a focus on things like driving footfall. • Having visited the centre a couple of months ago I was heartbroken to see how bad it is (but, let's be honest, it's never been good for decades down that end). You all deserve full credit for taking on the 	<p>Responded thanking individual for excellent and thought provoking feedback and time taken to respond.</p> <p>Stated that in a broad sense we are thinking about a lot of the concepts and ideas that are suggested.</p> <p>The response outlines the breadth of activity required to regenerate the town and investment required. This</p>

<p>thankless task of the project. I appreciate that it's easy for everyone to carp on about why things are bad, and you all deserve respect for the work so far on managing the improvement proposals. With that in mind I read all your documents in detail and I have some feedback and comments. At times below I have written in loose / informal language - fully appreciating that you might not in a professional capacity be able to agree, though privately might not disagree with my views.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caveat - I know that all local govt projects are funded from multiple sources and have different scopes / remits - some of my feedback might be valuable but not specific to your remit. Please take what you will from it! <p>Many thanks for taking the time to read my comments and good luck with the consultation.</p> <p>My biggest problem with the current PRDG - The Vision Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision is absolutely critical as it will naturally drive the subsequent actions. The current Vision is 71 words long and not really very visionary. • The lower end of Yeovil has 'never' been a nice place - not for several decades. It was a transactional place when Tesco / Bejam / Iceland were tenants due to the car parks and bus station proximity. But the buildings and environment aside from the Liberal club have always looked shabby. There's now a dystopian feel to that end of town with the properties not only being shabby, but also empty. • Do we really want to ...'build on the Town's identity and distinctive qualities'? What does that mean? Because most people would argue that the Town is (sadly) aesthetically inferior to all the small towns and villages within its 10 mile radius that use it as a hub. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Would it not be better to say that we need to build that link more rather than double down on the look of Yeovil today versus the strong identity the South Somerset region has? South Somerset has a powerful (positive) identity - Yeovil, does not. • I also feel that a lot of the other 71 words are not, 'wrong', but they are not really a vision, they are more of a washing list of criteria of what needs to be done. The risks that in having a vision like that you have almost set the action before considering the vision. • This is obviously just a conversation starter but could we not instead focus on a real vision that would connect the Town to the SS community. It could be based on 2-3 insights that are a mixture of physical issues with the Town today and societal ones we seek to address. For example the insights to the vision might be: 	<p>forms part of the approach needed over next few years to deliver wider impacts.</p> <p>Stated that feedback will be reported as part of the formal report when the PRDG moves forwards to adoption. The feedback will be used to feed into future plans.</p>
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- o Having grown faster than the communities around it, Yeovil has lost the powerful identity to the people and culture that live around the Town.
- o As society changes, people no longer 'need' a transactional shopping environment, they seek an experience that adds value and content
- o As a mid-sized town in a rural environment, people should look to Yeovil as a cultural and commercial hub, but they don't today - there isn't a lot of 'love' for the town from the SS community.
- The vision could then seek to address that which in short might be: More People * More Often * Doing More Interesting Things * More Relevant to Wider Audiences which I crudely made here as:
 - o The Vision for Yeovil is to be a hub for the people of South Somerset - where they want to spend more of their time to work, learn and play.
 - o The benefit of that kind of vision is that you can widen it to other initiatives and sources of funding, co-opting other community groups, government departments and local institutions.

Other points in the consultation I thought of:

- Page 5 the aims - again I would like to intellectually challenge you. Do we really want to maintain the distinctive identity of Yeovil centre? Do any of us look at the lovely villages in and around SS, the farms, the communities and think, 'Yes, Yeovil is reflecting this identity and is an aspirational reflection of it'?
 - o If not, then this is your once in 25 years opportunity to shake it up a bit. I am not talking about being crazy here, but why not look at the regional identity and make the challenge for Yeovil to reflect and lead that. Frome would be the best example in Somerset in my view that have done that.
- Page 7 - I respect and applaud you for doing surveys and this is useful. But a sample set of 188 leads to a few lookouts. All I ask is that you consider these points:
 - o Be really careful of confirmation bias from such a small sample. We know a huge issue in Yeovil is footfall. Not enough people visit the area because its ugly, has boring shops and the other facilities can be dull. I'd take my son to Ninesprings, I definitely wouldn't wake up and say 'let's go to Middle Street and hang out'!
 - o If we are serious about change, we need to think laterally about footfall. Guys you cannot fight technological change - we won't get Bejam's and Tesco back. We need to think about footfall in terms of multiple different groups using the space / environment constantly. I'm talking over 60's street Yoga every Thursday, I'm talking Primary School Take over where each SS school has a 2 week "take over" of activities / street art / performances every 2nd

Saturday of the month, I'm taking The Giant Farm every 1st Sunday of the month where 100+ livestock take over the space with 50 local farmers selling their wares, I'm talking mum's do runs every Tuesday morning where there's a fast walk from Tesco to Wetherspoons and have an open air space with free to use kids toys etc. in the open space at the bottom of town (King's Cross do this in London - brilliantly - inclusive, fun, brings 000's of kids), I'm talking The Great Yeovil Bakeoff every 3rd Thursday of the month where every village WI competes with a stand, I'm talking Yeovil to Glasto unplugged each spring where Glasto festival let the winner of any Yeovil based band under 18 play a set + get 4 tickets to glasto.... content content content - it's not your direct role in this project but if you don't think laterally while running it you'll end up with some nice trees (which is great) but no legacy. This is your chance.

□ The risk with the 188 sample is you miss those people as they would never even visit the place to be questioned in the first place - so be careful is all I am saying.

• Page 29 - utilising dead spaces - TOTALLY AGREE!

Have you thought about how we can use these spaces for 'bottom up' community engagement? As a Yeovilian I really worry when I come back how we are not doing enough to help young people get into new high value technologies - we risk setting Yeovil on a course of lower-income industries in the tech age. Yeovil was lucky in the last century with helicopters... what will we do to sustain this century and avoid being like Grimsby?

o Have you thought about working with a company like this? <https://www.meanwhitespace.com/landlords-partners> They lease out empty spaces with the support of the local council for 1-5 years allowing start up hubs, workshops etc. - often in conjunction with local education too. In fact, I am based in one in Brixton at Lambeth Town Hall.

• Page 109 - totally agree with you on 'Quick wins' - there needs to be some lateral thinking on this Perhaps combining that idea with page 59 - the comments on public art. Art can be transient and transformative even in a short time. Think about the plinth in Trafalgar Square. What about simple things like 'the big space' which can be painted / designed by a different community group / artist - deliberately allowing some mainstream and controversial content to make people think - get people taking about this part of town. If we get "Outraged from Henstridge" writing into the Western, we're probably doing something right.

Those are some views. I'll just leave you with one curveball. It goes back to my intellectual disagreement

	<p>with you on the vision and aim (continuity, maintain, identity). What do you think of when you think of South Somerset? I think of nature, animals, green, cider, farms. Think of the Yeovil Folly's in Barwick - pointless yet brilliant. Think of the shops on Camden High St. Imagine those ugly post-war buildings along Middle street having a giant cow / pint of cider / pitchfork / tractor coming out of them. I'll definitely bring my son to Yeovil on a Saturday to see that. It'd be brave, courageous, identity building, distinctive, but it will also be different.</p> <p>Good luck guys and thanks for offering the invitation for feedback.</p>	
E	<p>I have lived in Yeovil all my life (53 years) and like so many Yeovilians have been sadden by its decline in the last few years or more. Once a beautiful little, thriving market town, it now has no appeal and is desperately in need of a facelift.</p> <p>I am very interested in the Yeovil Refresh project and would like to share my thoughts with you.</p> <p>Firstly, whilst art is a wonderful idea and works well in other towns, the art that we already have in our town has not faired well. The structures outside Frankie & Benny's, were vandalised not long after they were erected and have never been repaired (see photo), which has caused it to look unsightly ever since. I also have walked past the carving in King George Street, this has turned green in places and could do with cleaning. So I am wondering if whatever art is chosen, will it be vandalised then not maintained and left to rot?</p> <p>Also, I have never liked the flower beds which are in place outside Marks and Spencer's (see photo). These concrete looking baths are very ugly, have turned green and have stained the road whilst making it slippery in places, especially when it is a wet day. The small, round planters also look out of place and are in the way of pedestrians who have to walk around them. The plants, which are half dead, are inadequate for taking the focus away from these hideous looking containers. Personally the money spent on these containers has been a waste of money and the street looked smarter without them. I understand why they were put there but they contribute to being another eyesore for the town.</p> <p>Is it about time the council did something about the high rent being charged for the shops? It is all people talk about so if it is true then it is no wonder that shops are fast vacating Yeovil and with good business sense you could stop this happening. Surely it is better to fill</p>	<p>Responded on general points And advised will take account of feedback in project delivery approach.</p>

the shops and have rental money coming in than have no money coming in at all! You need to have a plan to attract more shops to the town. Why not take a trip out to Clarks Village? Street is a small place but you get a brilliant shopping experience with plenty of shops, bespoke cafes, clean pavements and designer flower planters, which help attract coach loads of people from far and wide. In Dorchester you get the same brilliant shopping experience, with lots of people from Yeovil driving there to spend the evening eating in trendy restaurants and watching films at a cheaper priced cinema. Yeovil was once a nicer town than Dorchester so it is possible to turn places around and I hope that can be the same for us.

When the project begins will something be done about the homeless living in the doorways of the boarded up shops of lower Middle Street? Maybe it would be a good idea to gate off this area so it won't get vandalised and left unclean.

This brings me on to the subject of cleaning. Will the newly renovated areas and the rest of the town be kept clean? When you walk around Yeovil what notices more than anything is how dirty it is. I never see street cleaners, maintenance people or gardeners anymore.

Before the traffic lights between Asda and Lysander Road were erected we had beautifully planted roundabouts and grass verges with daffodils, now we have grass verges and roundabouts full of weeds! It seems a lot of money was spent but this area is still not finished properly with roundabouts and grass verges especially in need of attention.

I know there is lack of money in some areas and this is probably why the town looks unkempt but I feel we have so many organisations in the town that would probably help like scout groups, etc. I help organise the Yeovil Ukulele Festival and have always found that local businesses are readily willing to help a good cause and it would be lovely to get them and the community involved and motivated to get Yeovil back to what it used to be.

I really hope you can refresh Yeovil and bring it back to how it used to be.