

# Somerset

## Personal Details:

**Name:** Peter Seib  
**Email:** [REDACTED]  
**Postcode:** [REDACTED]  
**Organisation Name:** (District or county councillor)

## Comment text:

Dear Ross,

Regrettably I will be unable to attend your Committee due to a clashing work commitment, please record my apology.

I would like to have made the following representation, and please note that I am copying this to the LGBCE, as they are presently consulting.

Whilst I appreciate the difficulty of the task, and the hard work put in - especially by the co-ordinating officer, I, as a democrat, was disappointed with the final recommendation since I believe it does not adhere to the principles of Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act and the criteria to which LGBCE are required to have regard, i.e.:

- the need to secure equality of representation - this has been largely met by consolidating existing lists
- the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities - this has not been met in regard to the Electoral Division that I presently represent, as I will illustrate
- the need to secure effective and convenient local government - this has not been met as I shall illustrate.

I understand that further criteria include fixing boundaries which are easily identifiable, and long-lasting. I see no evidence that this was considered and some evidence that earlier LGBCE work on this was ignored.

I do not feel that the Working Party's recommendations should be adopted as a Somerset Council response.

The following diagram (presented to the Working Party and attached as a PDF) is my attempt to illustrate community identity in north-west Yeovil. It shows where physical boundaries exist that naturally result in separate community identity. This understanding is based on my experience from having lived in, and represented, the area for 30 years - as a Parish Councillor (Chair), District Councillor, County Councillor and now Somerset Councillor. During that time the number of houses has tripled, and I think I can rightly claim some blame for the strong community identities which exist (and breaking down some barriers as well)

The physical boundaries on this diagram are streams, wooded valleys, continuous fences/hedges, etc and the black arrows indicate the few access points through these barriers (some of which I helped to secure). The blue areas on this first diagram are the Westland Airfield and various industrial estates. These clearly separate residential areas. Not shown is the substantial "no development" area safeguarding the approach to the Westland Airfield).

Where local residents use a verbal shorthand for an area, I included that in case it informs division naming at a later stage.

From this understanding of community identity, when last reviewing the South Somerset District Council Wards, LGBCE decided to move the south-western boundary to its present alignment, recognising that residents of the large Abbey Manor estate had a very cohesive identity, sharing common facilities, etc (e.g. at The Forum, in the centre of this area, where the sole polling station is located). The proposal of the Working Party reverses this LGBCE decision, separating off S-ADBY and breaking up the community of Abbey Manor.

I recognise that the total number of voters in S-ADBY and S-ADY together, exceeds the desired single-member ED size. Whilst I fully understand that the Council wished to have predominantly single member divisions, it expressed the view that a few two member divisions were likely to be needed in urban areas. The present solution of including other voting areas and a two-member division works presently well for the community here. The two local councillors, both of whom are still in full-time employment, are able to support each other with casework to get around time constraints. It is also important that Councillors can relate to the community they serve, and since this is an area dominated by employees, I think that need for mutual support continues if employees are future councillors. The existing Division crosses into three Parishes. I also sit on Chilthorne Domer Parish Council while Cllr Snell sits on Yeovil Town Council, and we both sit on Brympton Parish Council, ensuring that residents benefit from this two-member arrangement in the form of enhanced collaboration.

Moving to the specific proposals made by the working party, I have tried to illustrate my issues below (a file copy is attached). This analysis only focuses on Brympton ED residents, and how only using existing electoral lists has driven some perverse results.

I have shown the urban area of Yeovil in grey. The lighter parts are devoid of housing (airfield, industrial areas, major parks, school and college campuses). These enduring "gaps" entirely separate communities and should have been recognised. They are a good place to put electoral

boundaries though. I did not mark those busy roads which also cause severance, reflected in community identity.

The yellow shaded area is the WP proposed "Division 54 - Brympton" (comprising S-ADY only). I have already pointed out that separating S-ADY from S-ADBY breaks up the Abbey Manor community. With respect to the western, northern and southern boundaries, the boundary represents the historic landholding of the Brympton D'Evercy estate, but the area is very sparsely populated. It is easy to keep in touch with the few residents and takes less than 10 minutes to cycle to any part of this district. S-ADY contains 3 hamlets: Brympton D'Evercy, Lufton and Thorne Coffin. There is a strong identification by the whole community with the name Brympton (also the civil parish) and the identities of Lufton, Houndstone and Alvington are too confined to be used as a Division Name.

The blue shaded area is the WP proposed "Division 52 - Yeovil West". As can easily be seen, this proposal is perverse. The airfield and an industrial estate stand separate S-BXAY (Sampson's Wood) from the ward. It's an obvious anomaly caused by using old lists. As previously rehearsed, the north of this proposal includes part of Abbey Manor which is physically separated from the eastern parts by a wooded stream valley and high school high fencing with no road links and only indirect pedestrian access. These are very separated communities and do not belong together.

Finally, the green shaded area is the WP proposed "Division 61 - Chilthorne Domer". There are four key issues:

1. The name "Chilthorne Domer" will be an anachronism to anyone living in "Yeovil" or any of the other villages.
2. The Division proposed spans two Westminster Constituencies, complicating candidate selection, election management, discipline and support with ongoing communication with residents e.g. through political leaflets. Any attempt at a consolidated leaflet mentioning both MPs would obviously cause confusion!
3. It mixes a large, densely-populated area of Yeovil with a huge rural hinterland containing very few settlements. Those residents will have very different interests at Somerset Council.
4. It's huge, and it takes a long time to transit by car (20-30 minutes). It's fairly obvious that only the most diligent councillor would engage directly with all residents and parishes equally, because the critical mass is in the urban area of Yeovil. That isn't giving all of the voters the same power between elections.

I have no suggestion for an alternative name - what do you call such a schizophrenic area? The rural part (when associated with Ilchester) used to be called Ivelchester reflecting the river flood-plain nature of the land to the north and the ancient settlements, but that would not suit Yeovil residents who are in a very different geography. Use of a Yeovil-based name would be an affront to the villages, who don't want to be absorbed by Yeovil.

I am certain that better GIS tools now exist to allow rapid redefinition of electoral lists based on barriers/boundaries, UPRN geo-locations and post-codes (IMHO, boundaries should normally follow the back fences in residential streets to keep a street together).

I feel that were the exercise have been carried out from first principles, the three statutory considerations would all have been given proper

regard. This would likely have required a two-member Division to best serve the communities concerned in north-western Yeovil and its hinterland.

Regards

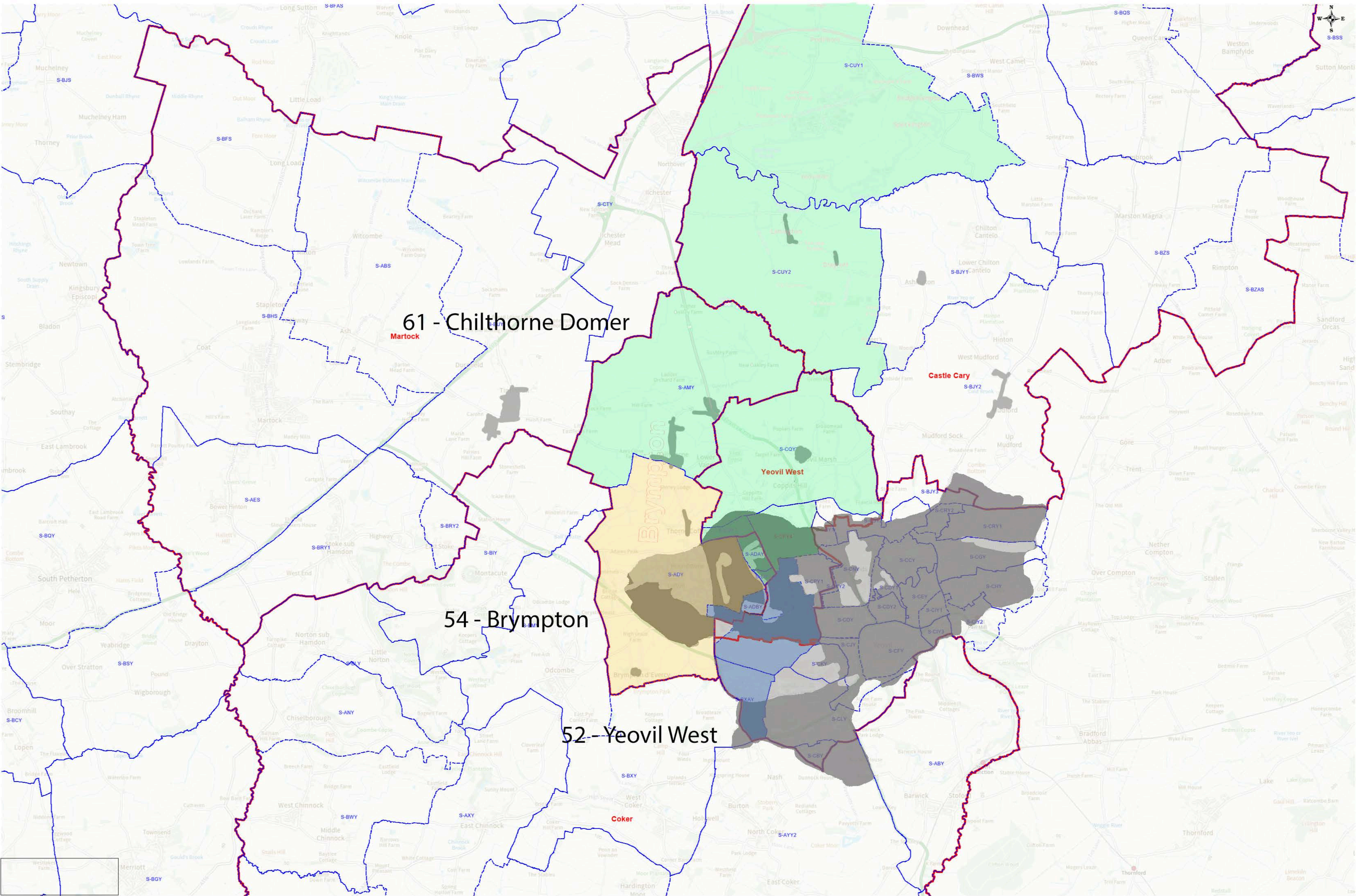
Cllr Peter Seib  
Brympton Ward  
Somerset Council



## **Attached Documents:**

- brympton-division---community-identity.pdf
- 20241114\_brympton-division-pd---snell-and-seib-1.png







# Brympton ED - Strong Social/Community Identities





# Somerset

## Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Postcode: [REDACTED]  
Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Yeovil

Dear LGBCE,

I thought the following may be of use to you in your deliberations. It shows the urban form of Yeovil with the housing areas clearly delineated (darker grey).

The "holes" are things such as industrial areas, larger parks, campuses, which separate neighbourhoods.

As the intent is "long-lasting" boundaries, I have included (in pink) major extant planning permissions. Please be aware that there is a very large brownfield land assembly in the centre of town that is likely to produce a lot of housing, albeit beyond the period considered by this review.

Also shown are the present Parish boundaries.

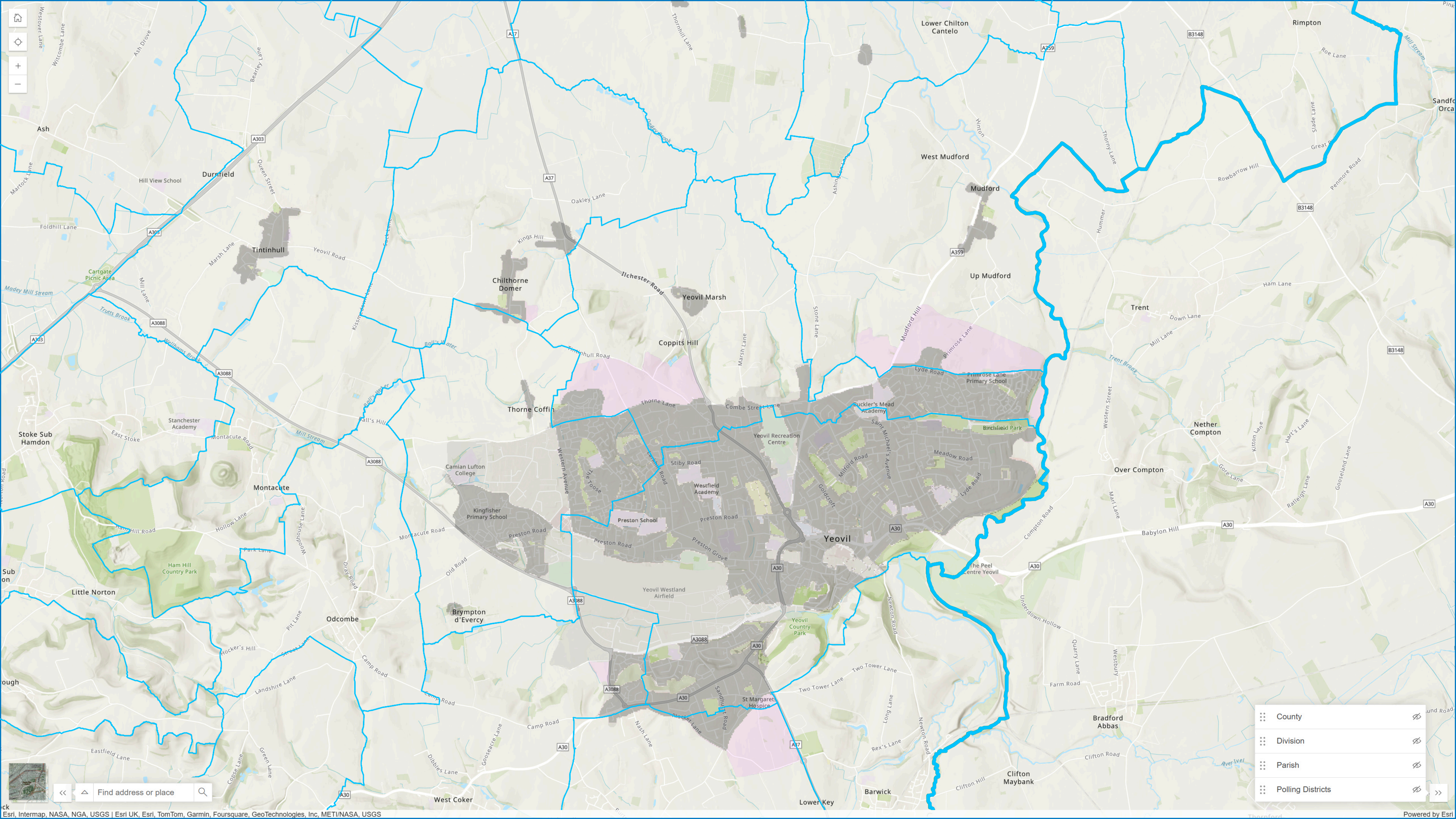
I will be sending this in three formats, a PDF (easily shared), a GIF (easily re-used) and a TIFF (which includes the layer structure).

Peter Seib

## Attached Documents:

- lgbce-yeovil---parishes,-urban-area,-housing,-growth.gif
- lgbce-yeovil---parishes,-urban-area,-housing,-growth.pdf





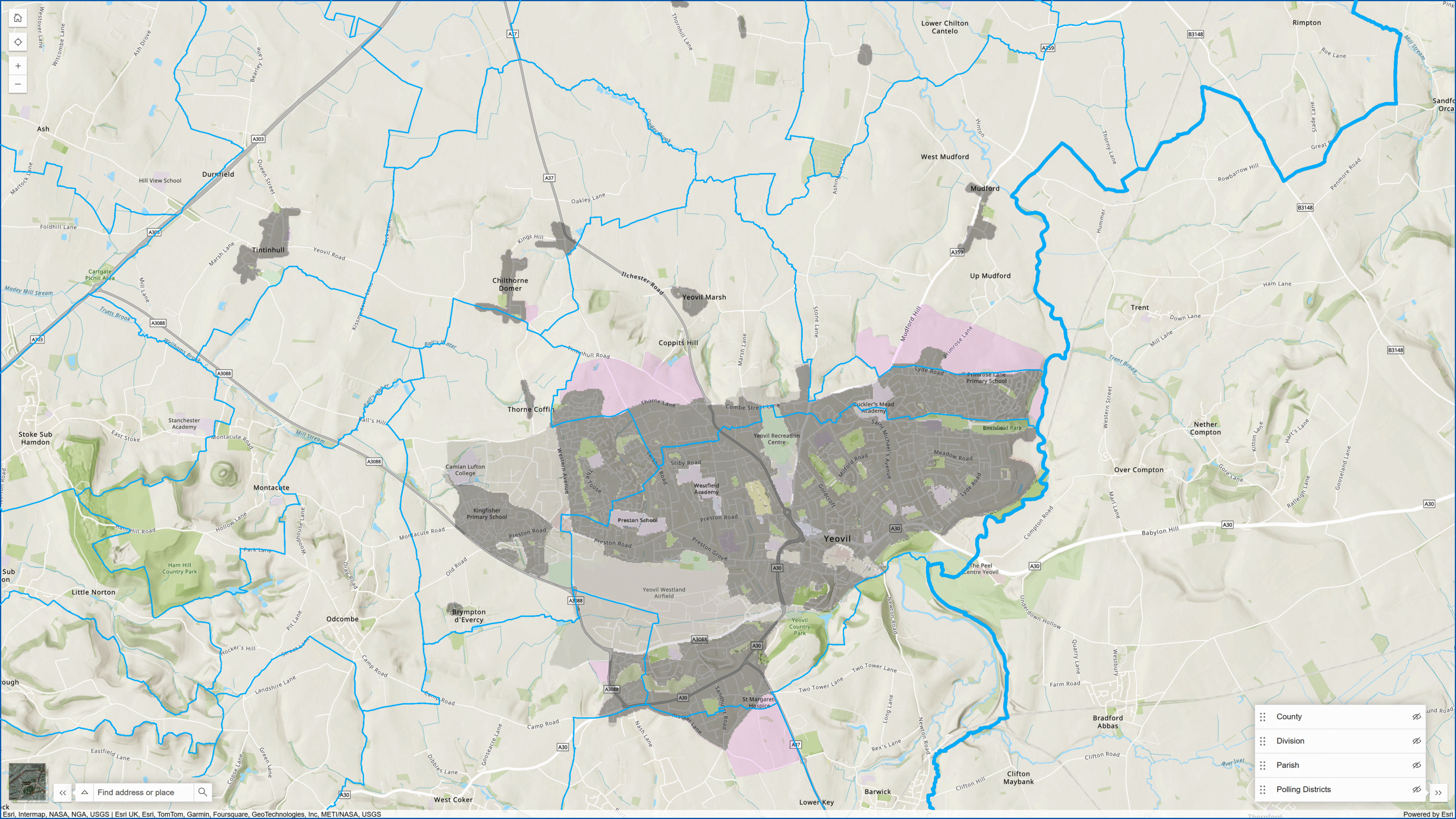
County

Division

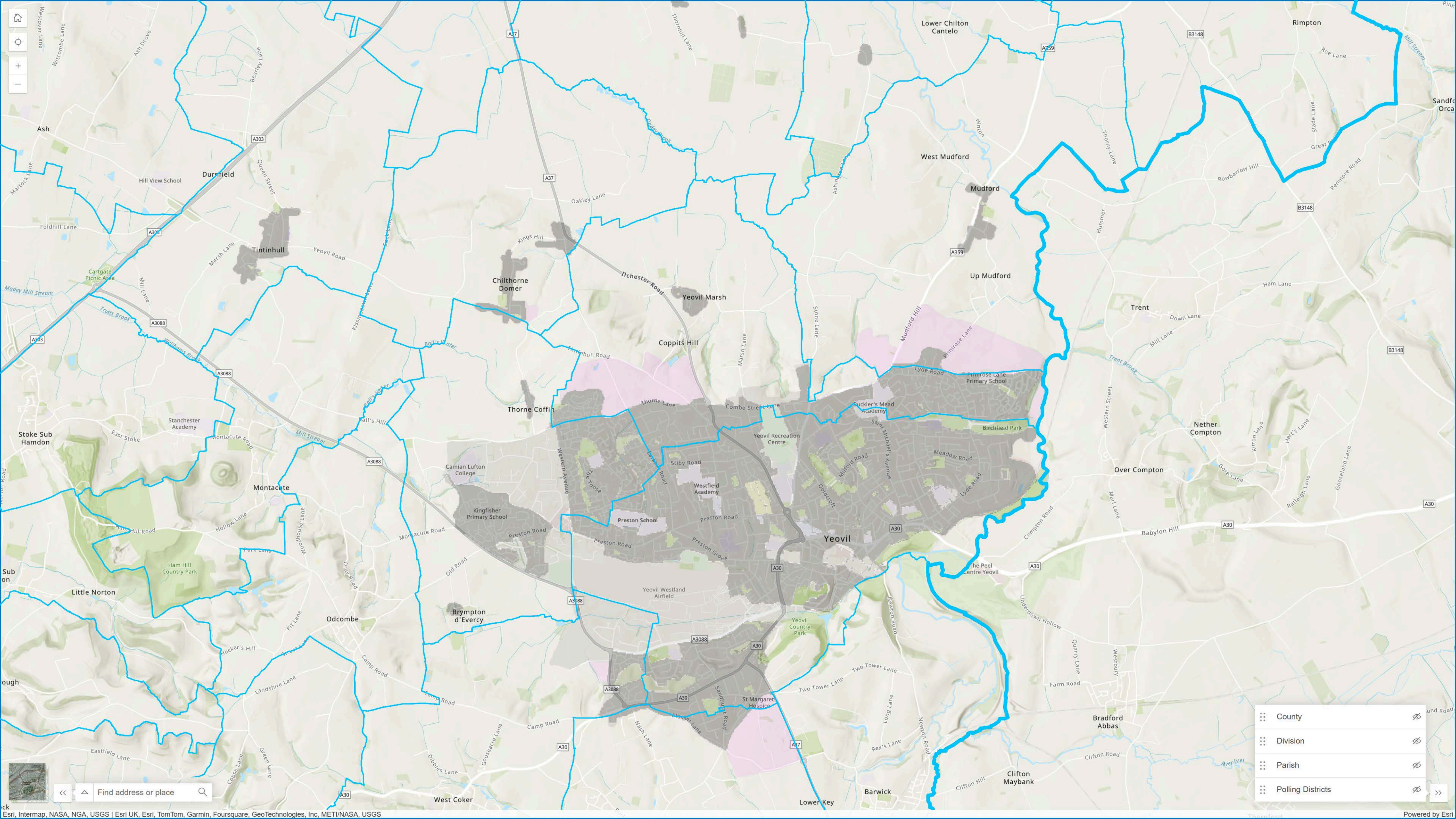
Parish

Polling Districts











# Somerset

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**Organisation Name:** (Member of the public)

## Comment text:

Dear LGBCE,

I have failed to find a Single-member Division solution which works in north-west Yeovil. The fundamental issue is that the Kufton/Houndstone/Alvington area is isolated but not large enough to warrant its own Councillor. Adjacent to that is the Abbey Manor estate, which is similarly cohesive.

The present lists representing this area are S-ADY and S-ADBY. The requirement to put these areas together was recognised by the last boundary review, and it would be inconsistent to reverse that. Abbey Manor must not be split, There are no suitable geographic features to locate a boundary in and it's a single estate off a single road (except for St James' Park and Parish Mews, which are only in S-ADBY to make lists equal in size).

S-ADY is larger than the ideal Division size on its own, and adding S-ADBY takes it well over the allowed deviance. There is therefore a strong case for considering a two member division, similar to that made elsewhere for towns which "cannot be divided".

Work to date has been limited to existing electoral lists, and hasn't considered moving the boundaries of those lists. If a two-councillor Division were considered, the best existing relationships are with S-ADAY and S-CPY which are in Brympton Parish and have been in Brympton Ward for a long time at District and County level.



There is a strong community relationship with other dwellings to the west of Larkhill Road, south of Tintinhul Road and north of Preston Road, and especially with S-CQY1, which has many pedestrian links and whose residents share the facilities at The Forum and routes to schools.

I would ask that you consider the exceptional use of a two-member Division to maximise achievement of compliance with statutory guidance in this tight knot urban area.

Regards

Peter Seib

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*