

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP
28 NOVEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE
6 DECEMBER 2011

EXETER INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the work completed to date in identifying, prioritising and costing strategic infrastructure investments that will be needed to support the development growth that is proposed for Exeter between 2006 and 2026.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Existing national planning policy and the emerging draft National Planning Policy Framework require local planning authorities to prepare evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed in their areas.
- 2.2 A Core Strategy's strategic development proposals should be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that includes evidence of Infrastructure needs, costs, timings, stakeholders and funding sources. This information should also be used to identify any infrastructure 'funding gap' and inform the preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule.
- 2.3 IDPs offer more certainty to development stakeholders as to infrastructure needs associated with those developments. In association with authority-wide planning policy, they offer an up-front indication of the kinds of investment that will need to be put in place in helping to ensure that the development strategy is delivered sustainably.

3 EXETER'S INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

- 3.1 As drafted, the Exeter Infrastructure Delivery Plan (summary version at Appendix 1) is a technical document that has been prepared in consultation with Exeter's infrastructure providers and stakeholders. Its preparation has involved liaison with various internal officers and a number of external organisations and service providers. In most instances the items of infrastructure it identifies have been included on the basis of detailed studies and reports.
- 3.2 The Plan looks at transport, education, health, flooding and Green Infrastructure needs amongst others. The items of infrastructure identified are prioritised as follows in respect of their importance to delivering the Core Strategy's proposals sustainably:

Critical: Items that are vital to bringing forward development and to which there is no easily identifiable alternative.

Essential: Important but alternative infrastructure and policy approaches could be put in place.

Desirable: Add to the quality of a place – either in terms of functionality or attractiveness as a place to live.

- 3.3 An indication of when the provision of infrastructure items should be phased is also provided and set out in five-year time periods (e.g. 2011-2016). Of course, such phasing is based on expectations of development delivery. Were development at Newcourt, for example, to come forward at an accelerated rate, associated infrastructure would need to be provided at a commensurate pace.
- 3.4 The IDP is a compendium of evidence that has already played a part in supporting the preparation of Exeter's Core Strategy. It was submitted to the Secretary of State in support of the Core Strategy's examination. The introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy must be informed by evidence of any funding gap, as included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. If the Core Strategy is found 'sound' the IDP and the funding gap that it identifies will not need to be re-examined or consulted upon again through CIL examination. A separate report on CIL is included with this agenda.

4 LIMITATIONS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

- 4.1 At an operational level, the IDP can also help to guide infrastructure investment decisions. However, as a strategic and technical document there are important considerations that it does not incorporate:

Community aspirations have not been addressed. These are gaining prominence, especially as regulations that will provide for a 'meaningful proportion' of CIL receipts to be passed to the infrastructure priorities of the local communities in which new development is situated are being introduced.

Council priorities have not been afforded any weight. Priority has only been attributed to those items that have been assessed to be most integral to bringing forward sustainable development.

The IDP is an evidence base that can guide infrastructure budgets. Council and community aspirations can then be overlaid to arrive at spending decisions.

5 DELIVERING THE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

- 5.1 The cost of all of the infrastructure identified within the IDP is estimated at almost £300 million. Around £110 million of that figure is unfunded, £60 million of which is identified as 'critical'. In combination with other funding sources a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would help to address a significant portion of the 'funding gap' but, on its own, would be unlikely to raise enough even to cover the unfunded costs of 'critical' infrastructure. To bridge the gap it will be essential that all funding sources are exploited.
- 5.2 This means that infrastructure budgeting procedures will need to be established. This will involve taking important decisions associated with passing investment funds to communities' infrastructure priorities. It is also likely to mean working with the County Council and neighbouring authorities to ensure that strategic infrastructure investments that will benefit a wider catchment than just Exeter (like the current Junction 29 improvements) are funded and delivered efficiently.
- 5.3 The establishment of a revolving infrastructure fund could present an opportunity to stretch funds further. The principles of this are set out through the Government's introduction of a 'Growing Places Fund' and could be applied locally.

Here, an initial amount would be invested to accelerate development and then recapitalised by associated CIL and New Homes Bonus (NHB) receipts to fund further infrastructure projects.

- 5.4 The IDP would play an important part in helping to prioritise and co-ordinate such an investment programme. It is proposed that Executive receive a further report detailing infrastructure budgeting proposals.

6 UPDATING THE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

- 6.1 The IDP is an iterative document and there is clear guidance that its content should be led by technical evidence. With the funding landscape changing, it will be essential that it is kept up to date to help guide investment decisions around the use of CIL, NHB, and other funding sources.
- 6.2 It is important to arrange regular updates from stakeholders. In the immediate future, the likely focus of this will be more closely aligning the Delivery Plan with utilities providers' business plans.
- 6.3 Low carbon energy opportunities should also be better incorporated. From 2016 it is expected that developers will be required to contribute towards offsetting the regulated carbon impacts of development that are not addressed on site. If those contributions are to be used in Exeter, it will be necessary to have developed evidence and identified suitable projects.

7 ADVICE SOUGHT/RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That Planning Member Working Group note the report.
- 7.2 That Executive agree that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan be taken forward as a compendium of evidence that is used for the following purposes:
- i) To support the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy for Exeter;
 - ii) To help guide future infrastructure investment decisions;
 - iii) Executive to receive a further report on the proposed details of an infrastructure budgeting procedure.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None