

Exeter City Council

Local Development Scheme -

Future planning policy work

September 2024

Version for Executive: Appendix A

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Local Development Scheme (LDS) is required to set out a programme of planning policy documents which the Council proposes to prepare for the city council administrative area.
- 1.2 The principal document the Council is progressing is the Exeter Plan, the new Local Plan for the city. This Exeter Plan has progressed through three public consultations since 2021 with further engagement planned in future.
- 1.3 The Council has also adopted three Supplementary Planning Documents since the previous LDS was published in 2023:
- The Liveable Water Lane SPD (including a development framework and design code): Adopted in July 2024
 - The Householders Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD: Adopted in April 2024
 - The Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD: Adopted in December 2023.
- 1.4 In addition to these planning policy documents the Council has also made an updated Article 4 Direction to control the change of use of regular dwellings to houses in multiple occupation (this sits alongside the Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD). The Council also approved and implemented a new Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in January 2024.
- 1.5 This document replaces the previous LDS of July 2023. It will be updated as necessary to reflect the progress being made on the planning policy documents being prepared.

2. Current planning policy for Exeter: The 'development plan'

- 2.1 Planning legislation¹ requires all local planning authorities to produce what is called a 'Development Plan'.
- 2.2 The current Development Plan for Exeter consists of a series of plans called Development Plan Documents. Taken together, these provide a vision and a framework for the future development of the city. More specifically, the documents set out the priorities for the city, identify areas for development and provide a comprehensive set of policies which are used to make decisions on planning applications.
- 2.3 In Exeter, the Development Plan currently includes the following documents:
- The adopted Exeter Core Strategy (2012) and saved policies from the adopted Exeter Local Plan First Review (2005)
 - The St James Neighbourhood Plan. This is currently the only 'made' Neighbourhood Development Plan in Exeter. Because neighbourhood development plans are not prepared by the Council they are not considered in detail here (plan adopted in 2013).
 - The adopted Devon Minerals Plan and adopted Devon Waste Plan. These are produced by Devon County Council. Because minerals and waste planning policy is not prepared by the Council these matters are not considered in detail here.
- 2.4 The policies in all these documents must be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.

¹ [The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)

3. Supplementary planning documents

- 3.1 In addition to formal Development Plan Documents such as the Exeter Plan, the Council occasionally produces other documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs provide further explanation of formal Development Plan policies, how they should be interpreted and expectations for their implementation. SPDs can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or on a particular issue and are taken into account when making planning decisions. SPDs cannot not themselves set out policies.
- 3.2 The Council already has a series of SPDs covering topics such as affordable housing, planning obligations, public open space and various areas in the city. The list of SPDs will gradually need to be reviewed in the context of the new policies which emerge in the new Exeter Plan and to reflect changes in national planning policy which may result from the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, the review of the National Planning Policy Framework and the emergence of National Development Management Policies.
- 3.3 SPDs do not provide formal planning policy in the same way as a local plan and so the procedure for preparing them is simpler and shorter as explained by the planning regulations². They do however have to be prepared with supporting evidence, require public consultation and need to be formally adopted by the Council.
- 3.4 The Council is currently scoping the potential for a further SPD:
- St Luke's University Campus Supplementary Planning Document.

² [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

4. The new Local Plan: The Exeter Plan

- 4.1 The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for the city. This will be known as the Exeter Plan. The Exeter Plan will replace the adopted Core Strategy and adopted Local Plan First Review. It will include a vision and objectives for Exeter, a spatial strategy, sites for development (allocations) and a series of planning policies. Some of these policies will be strategic policies covering themes and topics whilst others will be non-strategic policies covering requirements for development or specific areas.
- 4.2 The topics to be covered by the Exeter Plan include:
- Climate change
 - Homes
 - Economy and jobs
 - High streets and retail
 - Transport and communications
 - Natural environment
 - History and heritage
 - Culture and tourism
 - High quality places and design
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Infrastructure and facilities
- 4.3 Three formal public consultations to consider the Exeter Plan have already been held. An Issues Consultation was held between September and November 2021. This discussed the vision for the plan, a series of issues which the plan could cover and some of the principles to steer a future spatial strategy for the city. This was a regulation 18 consultation.
- 4.4 Following the Issues Consultation, work on the Local Plan evolved and the name of the document was revised to become the Exeter Plan. A further consultation on an Outline Draft of the Exeter Plan was held between September and December 2022. The Outline Draft plan included a vision for the city, a spatial strategy, a series of Liveable Exeter principles to achieve high quality development, a number of draft policies on various themes and a suite of proposed development allocations for Exeter. This was a regulation 18 consultation.
- 4.5 Most recently, a Full Draft Plan consultation was held between October 2023 and January 2024. The Full Draft of the Exeter Plan was a fully formed plan including a vision, spatial strategy, a full set of thematic policies and site allocation policies.
- 4.6 There is still further work to go on the preparation of the Exeter Plan. This includes the continued development of the evidence base, further policy drafting, additional consideration of potential development allocations,

consultation and an Examination. The key consideration for the timetable is the need for robust evidence to ensure the soundness and deliverability of the plan, in particular the predominantly brownfield development strategy.

4.7 The timetable for preparing the Exeter Plan is set out below:

- Issues consultation (Regulation 18³): September 2021
Complete
- Outline Draft Plan consultation (Regulation 18): September 2022
Complete
- Draft Plan consultation (Regulation 18): October 2023
Complete
- Publication (Regulation 19): December 2024 /January 2025
- Submission to Planning Inspectorate (Regulation 22): June 2025

Indicative timetable (determined by Planning Inspectorate)

- Examination including hearings (Regulation 23 - 24):
November/December 2025
- Adoption (Regulation 26): November 2026

4.8 It should be noted that the timetable after the submission is broadly outside the control of the council due to the Examination process being managed by the Planning Inspectorate.

4.9 Furthermore, the Council is preparing the Exeter Plan at a time of significant change to the planning system as proposed in national planning policy reforms launched for consultation in July 2024. The outcome of the reforms are not yet known but the Council will need to adapt as these outcomes become clearer.

4.10 Details of the steps required in preparing the Exeter Plan are set out in planning regulations⁴. The stages are summarised below.

- **Issues consultation (complete):** This was the first stage of public consultation where the Council sought views on what the plan should cover and the key issues facing the city.
- **Outline Draft Plan consultation (complete):** After the issues consultation, responses were analysed and further evidence was prepared. From this work, an outline draft plan was produced. This

³ [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

⁴ [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

included a series of draft policies and potential sites for consultation. This document was not yet a full draft of the plan.

- **Draft Plan consultation:** Following the Outline Draft Plan consultation, the responses are being reviewed, further evidence is being compiled, additional policies are being prepared and more detailed specific site proposals worked up.
- **Publication (Pre-submission Plan):** After the draft plan consultation, responses will be considered, amendments made and further work completed to produce a final draft of the plan. This 'publication' version is the plan which the Council intends to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. A publication consultation will be held on this version of the plan to seek formal comments ('representations'). The nature and duration of this consultation have to follow strict regulatory requirements with specific questions asked about the soundness of the plan.
- **Submission to the Planning Inspectorate:** The publication version of the plan, the supporting evidence and the formal comments on the plan will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who will appoint an independent inspector to test the plan through an examination.
- **Examination hearings:** During the examination, the planning inspector will hold a set of public hearings to discuss the plan. These hearings can be attended by those making comments on the publication version of the plan. The discussions at the hearings help the inspector to reach conclusions regarding the soundness of the plan. The inspector will often identify modifications to the plan which may require further consultation. At the end of this process the Council will receive a report from the Planning Inspectorate which concludes whether the plan is 'sound'.
- **Adoption:** After the Council receives the report from the inspector, the plan can be formally adopted by the Council. This means that the content of the plan, including the policies and development sites, become official planning policy for the city.

5. St Luke's University Campus Supplementary Planning Document

- 5.1 The Council proposes to allocate the St Luke's University campus in the Exeter Plan as a transformational employment site providing education, health, research and ancillary uses.
- 5.2 In order to provide high quality development, the Council is working with the University of Exeter to undertake masterplanning on the site. The University is doing the majority of work on this document with advice and input from Council officers. Consultation will be required as part of this process – this will be jointly held by the Council and the University. Once the Exeter Plan is adopted, this masterplanning would be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.3 The content and timetable for the work is currently being scoped in detail but a high level direction of travel is provided below:
- Evidence gathering: 2024
 - Consultation: 2025
 - Further assessment: 2025
 - SPD adoption: 2026

6. Other work

- 6.1 As required by legislation, this Local Development Scheme has set out the key formal planning policy documents which the Council proposes to produce together with a timetable for this work.
- 6.2 It should be noted that the projects included in this document are not an exhaustive list. There is a series of other work which the Local Plans team carries out. This includes:
- Development delivery work, focusing on the Liveable Exeter initiative
 - Housing monitoring and land supply calculations
 - Infrastructure planning
 - CIL and s106 collection and monitoring
 - Maintenance of the brownfield land register
 - Maintenance of the custom and self-build register
 - Preparation of the Authority Monitoring Report
 - Evidence preparation
 - Partnership working particularly covering sub-regional issues across Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge
 - Responding to planning consultations
 - Wider consultation and engagement activity