

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 10 November 2025

Present:-

Councillor Knott (Chair)

Councillors Rolstone, Asvachin, Atkinson, Banyard, Hussain, Ketchin, Mitchell, M, Pole and Williams, M

Apologies

Councillors Hughes

Also Present

Strategic Director for Place, Planning Solicitor, Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects), Principal Project Manager - Development Management and Democratic Services Officer.

Also in Attendance

Ben Sunderland (Devon County Council Highways)

34

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

35

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

36

LIST OF DECISIONS MADE AND WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

A Member enquired about a change of use application (C3 to C4) and sought clarification on whether it related to an Article 4 direction and further information.

The Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects) would provide a written response on the decision.

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

37

APPEALS REPORT

A Member noted that officer summaries were missing for some items, and a request was made to include the final appeal decision directly in future reports to improve public accessibility. The Strategic Director for Place noted the feedback and would address this matter.

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

The meeting was briefly adjourned at 17:35 and resumed at 17:38.

38

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 25/0098/FUL & 25/0099/LBC- FORMER WALLED GARDEN ADJACENT TO REED MEWS, MARDON HILL, EXETER

The Chair invited Mr Shore-Nye, to speak for five minutes in support of the

application, who made the following points:

- the proposed development was for a flagship facility following a two-year extensive collaboration with Council officers and following a number of design revisions;
- the proposal would deliver a cross-faculty research and teaching facility to support the Institute of Arab and East Studies, accommodating 80 academics and 400 students, meeting the identified need for large, active and digitally connected learning spaces and collaborative research space;
- the design process involved extensive collaboration with council officers and two reviews by the Council's Design Review Panel;
- in response to feedback, the building had been reduced in height and size by 19%, landscaping enhancements had been increased across the site, and the architecture and materiality had been revisited to better integrate with the surroundings;
- the plan to use the historic Mews courtyard during construction has been removed at the officers' request;
- the sensitivities and complexity, of developing within the historic campus setting had been a primary consideration throughout the project and the design balanced the functional needs of a new educational facility with the sensitivities of the historic campus setting;
- the proposals would inevitably result in some heritage harm through the loss of historic fabric on site, but the significant public benefits of the project, would outweigh the acknowledged heritage harm;
- economic benefits included supporting the University's £509.4M contribution to Exeter's GDP and 9,070 jobs and would generate an estimated £6.7million in annual postgraduate teaching income and £2million in research income;
- the construction phase would provide additional fixed-term social and economic benefits, estimated to be between £7.45M to £8M to the local economy over two years;
- the development would create a new, fully inclusive and accessible path through the Reed Hall buildings, improving campus connectivity;
- a package of restoration measures would be secured by condition to better reveal the significance of Reed Hall;
- new garden areas and elevated cafe terraces would also allow for greater appreciation of the historic setting;
- the building would use low embodied carbon materials, off-site construction, and adopt Passivhaus House standards;
- biodiversity net gain objectives would be met through on-site and off-site measures and a separate, standalone bat house had already been constructed to mitigate impacts on existing roosts;
- all issues raised by statutory consultees had been addressed through design revisions or planning conditions; and
- the proposal would deliver a world-class, sustainable academic building that justified approval based on its long-term public value and requested that the Planning Committee support the officer's recommendation.

Mr Shore-Nye responded to Members' questions as follows:

- the location was a key area of activity and would be a logical extension for the successful Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, which was already there;
- the new building would boost activity in that part of the campus and encourage people to enjoy it more;
- the university had moved away from a carbon management approach but there was a recent example of creating a valley to increase biodiversity for community engagement;

- the planting and landscape for the development would be significant; and
- the university had a comprehensive biodiversity strategy that governed grounds management, chemical use, and focused on improvements to being biodegradable.

The Principal Project Manager - Development Management presented the application for the partial demolition of the existing garden walls and workshops at the former walled garden adjacent to Reed Mews, Mardon Hill and the construction of a part two, part three storey educational building for teaching and research use and associated landscaping, including temporary enabling works.

Members were advised that the recent planning update sheet circulated to Members, had raised two issues which had since been addressed:

- Exeter airport had requested two additional pre-commencement conditions, which the university and their agent had agreed to; and
- A request was made for minor changes to a number of other planning conditions, which had been discussed and agreed upon by both parties.

The recommendation had subsequently been updated to approve both applications, subject to delegation to officers to finalise minor changes to the conditions based on the issues raised in the amendment sheet.

Members received a presentation which included the following information:

- the proposed development was a Grade II listed building, located on a complex, historic site within the central-west area of the university campus;
- the site's red line boundary was reduced in size during the application process;
- key features of the surrounding area included Reed Hall, historic terraces and steps from the original ornamental gardens, a catering courtyard for Reed Hall, the Mews Courtyard, student accommodation buildings to the north and the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies (IAIS);
- an 1899 historic map showed a walled garden that predated the house, confirming the historic layout;
- the entire area shown on the historic map was considered to be part of the curtilage of the listed Reed Hall and was therefore curtilage listed;
- the steps and terraces were also separately listed heritage assets and the entire area was designated as a registered historic park and garden, but was not on the national register so was considered an undesignated heritage asset;
- historic maps showed that buildings along Mardon Hill and a central building were still in place, while hatched areas indicated former glasshouses were now gone;
- photographs revealed the site's current state, topography, and accessibility challenges and included a vault beneath the western part of the site, original stone-paved paths that serviced former glasshouses and potting sheds;
- Mardon Hill had a steep gradient posing accessibility issues;
- a key walking route through the Mews Courtyard, included historic steps, which had been closed since the COVID-19 pandemic for safety reasons;
- the new building would have an entrance directly opposite the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies building and a new path was proposed across the former productive garden, which currently lacked a formal path and had a significant slope;
- the application was first submitted in January 2025 after limited pre-application discussions and a Design Review Panel presentation. In June 2025, officers concluded they could not support the initial scheme due to its heritage impact,

- citing concerns over scale, design, and materials;
- the proposal to use Mews Courtyard as a construction compound, requiring demolishing historic walls, were considered unjustified and unacceptable;
- following feedback, an intensive redesign process was undertaken, including officer workshops and another Design Review Panel in July 2025;
- the revised scheme was resubmitted on 11 September 2025, with the process accelerated to meet the university's program, which was driven by the need for bat licenses;
- revisions to the scheme included reducing the building's footprint by pulling it back from Reed Hall. Revisions also reduced the height by 1.3 meters by lowering the floor-to-ceiling heights, and the ground floor level was raised by a metre, reducing the amount of excavation required and lessening the impact on the historic vault;
- the project included the demolition of most existing structures and construction of a new teaching and research building, providing a disabled car parking space and cycle parking, a new accessible path through the former garden and environmental enhancements;
- the proposed building was for an academic facility with a vision focused on sustainable development, requiring proximity to the IAIS building;
- the demolition and enabling works plan would prioritise material reclamation and tree retention where possible, as well as retaining the historic vault beneath the site;
- a total of 14 category B and C trees would be removed, but no category A trees would be removed;
- the building's floor plans would be designed for accessibility, for various uses and would be integrated with the surrounding campus;
- the roof level would house plant equipment and feature a roof lantern, a green wildflower meadow, and solar PV panels, which were the subject of the airport's conditions regarding glint and glare;
- the building's exterior materials would be either reclaimed from the site or new to match, will be set within pre-constructed concrete frame panels, exposed concrete with smooth or ribbed finishes and hardwood for handrails and bronze for highlight materials;
- the materials for the north elevation would use reclaimed brickwork on lower levels with new brick in prefabricated panels above;
- the materials for the east elevation would include a bronze panel to mark the second-floor entrance;
- the materials for the south elevation would feature lightweight and elegant bronze columns to act as the front of the building;
- the setback from the Mews Courtyard was 6.6 meters at levels 0 and 1, with further setbacks of 3.88 meters and 4.5 meters at higher levels;
- the west elevation, showed the relationship between the new construction, the retained wall, and the existing Mews buildings;
- a 3D view showed that existing retaining walls around the site, including the one adjacent to the IAIS building, would be preserved and the design would retain the existing steps and terraced paths;
- a green roof was included in the plan and dividers would be installed to create smaller, semi-private outdoor seating and conversation areas;
- the main quadrilateral garden was inspired by an Italianate garden design and a courtyard on level one was also included on the plan;
- the design change allowed for direct access to the adjacent garden space during events and the landscaping plan showed the alignment of a proposed new route through the garden that would connect with an existing lit path;
- the application was publicised through two separate rounds of publicity and no public responses or objections were received;
- a licence would be required from Natural England to address the demolition of

the potting sheds which currently housed four species of bat. The university having recognised this as a significant issue, had proactively applied for a license and built a replacement bat roost in the woodland north of the IAIS building, which would support in their application to Natural England;

- the heritage significance of Reed Hall and its gardens had been formally assessed, as required under legislation. Case law had established that heritage matters must be given considerable consideration in the decision-making balance and Section 16 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), provided the framework for conducting this heritage assessment;
- the historical significance of the application site was multifaceted, with the garden area pre-dating the Reed Hall, making it one of the oldest parts of the site;
- the heritage significance of the gardens and glasshouses were derived from it once growing rare and newly identified plant species from around the world and the glasshouses being heated by technologically advanced structures for the era;
- the area also had cultural significance and was used by skilled working-class gardeners with a strong material character, evidenced by surviving stone paths, brick walls, and structures;
- the development's impact on heritage assets included demolition, but measures had been proposed to mitigate the harm and demolition would be prevented until a contract was signed for the wider redevelopment of the site;
- an assessment of the development's visual impact on the setting of retained historic assets was conducted by the applicant's designer using a 3D model using views from key locations. The assessment concluded that the development would cause less than substantial harm to the heritage assets;
- the original designs submitted were more dominant, extending continuously across the view and featuring a large pergola. The revisions had improved the scheme's relationship with the historic Mews courtyard and Reed Hall and the new building's design and materiality better reflected the character of Reed Hall;
- the ground floor plinth at Mardon Hill would be constructed from reclaimed brickwork from the site, which was considered positive;
- the new building would obscure some views of Reed Hall; however, the hall's significance was not derived from specific views and the new design created new spaces, including a cafe terrace and a colonnaded entrance, which would offer more positive views over Reed Hall;
- the design of the new building's front elevation was considered a benefit, which enhanced the connection to and appreciation of the historic garden;
- the level of harm to heritage assets was consistently assessed as less than substantial, which allowed for a balancing exercise against public benefits;
- the project would deliver significant economic and social public benefits, including 80 additional academic jobs, an estimated £6.7 million of teaching income and £2 million in research income, additional employment opportunities and shorter-term construction benefits estimated at £7.5 - £8 million for local businesses and subcontractors;
- a package of improvements to the historic environment around Reed Hall included a range of restoration and improvement works . The package would be secured through conditions to ensure the development generated direct benefits for the affected heritage assets; and
- the officer recommendation was to approve both applications subject to the specified conditions and to further minor changes to the conditions in response to the issues set out on the update sheet, as the public benefits were deemed to outweigh the less than substantial harm.

The Principal Project Manager - Development Management responded to Member

questions and clarification points as follows:

- level 4 recording was a high recording level, defined by Historic England, which intended to capture written and photographic records information for future researchers to use. Records would be archived and it was anticipated that the demolition process would likely reveal further information about the historic arrangement and functionality of the site, which would also be documented;
- the new path gradient would be 1 in 12, which would be fully accessible for wheelchair users;
- the potting sheds were previously used for storage as an extension of the theatre workshop but were not currently used, with low architectural merit, and the constraints of the development site, the demolition of the potting sheds was justified;
- a formal verified view assessment was not legally required and that the 3D visualisations provided were considered accurate for assessing the building's impact. A formal verified view assessment was also considered to be unnecessary and would have caused significant project delays and costs;
- views for the visual impact on Reed Hall were those provided in the presentation, notably the where the two buildings would be seen together from a pedestrian perspective;
- officers considered it unlikely that unexploded ordnance (UXO) would be found on this site, but the responsibility for managing the risks associated with any unexploded ordnance survey, ultimately rests with the landowner/developer. However, given that UXO had been discovered in relatively close proximity, an informative could be attached to the permission to highlight this issue;
- the new accessible route would continue to be publicly accessible, and there were no plans for barriers, but this was subject to confirmation from the university;
- the trees to be removed were primarily Category B and C which did not warrant a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), but an informative would be attached to the permission recommending that they consider translocating younger trees to other parts of the campus;
- bat re-location did not involve physically moving them and a compensatory roost had been provided. Once a license was granted, the existing roosts, would then be blocked off to prevent re-entry, encouraging them to use the new alternative roost;
- the proposed solar array as part of this proposal is at the furthest western extent of the area where the airport must be consulted for aviation safeguarding and the other solar array referred to that was explained to be north of this site was outside this designated zone. The airport required a proper assessment, and it was possible that specific non-glare panel finishes could be used to mitigate any identified risks;
- the design of the north elevation facing Mardon Hill, had been given significant consideration and the central entrance had been designed to be plain due to the main entrances being in other locations. It would feature designs to add interest but the design focussed on the south elevation facing Reed Hall, which was more important;
- the area was formerly the location of greenhouses and the visible stone walkways were paths between the greenhouses, and there were original planter positions;
- one of the buildings to be demolished was a 1950s building, which was not considered to have heritage value, and was being used as a theatre workshop;
- the potting sheds were located on the other side of a wall from the main development footprint and another retained building on the site was a

- functional historical structure but not of high value;
- the bricks from the demolished structures would be reclaimed and reused in the new building's materials where possible;
- access to the lit path was, historically, by a flight of steps from the Mews courtyard, as well as via the gap through the Potting shed buildings from Mardon Hill. This route from Mardon Hill would no longer be available following the development, but an equivalent route is proposed a short distance to the south west;
- the new, accessible route would be created along the side of the new building, leading to outdoor seating, the quadrilateral garden, and then to the lit path;
- as part of the improvement package, the stairs from the Mews Courtyard, which were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and have since remained closed, would be re-opened, though it was not an accessible route;
- the university had agreed to re-open the terrace behind Reed Hall, which will re-establish a historic route linking the Billiard Hall with the new development site;
- the development's impact on historic structures, including Reed Hall and adjacent buildings, was clarified; and
- the combination of the project's specific economic benefits and the negotiated package of heritage/environmental interventions was necessary to outweigh the "less than substantial harm" to the heritage site.

A Member request for a better visualisation of the new building's impact on Reed Hall was addressed by reviewing a presentation slide, which showed the view from the gardens (in which Reed Hall itself had not been fully detailed so was not clear). The chair identified that the new building would have its most impactful and damaging effect on the principal view of Reed Hall from the gardens.

During the debate, Members expressed the following views:-

- the application would benefit the sustainability of the global south and was suitable given the site's historical context;
- positive aspects included the reduction in the building's massing to lessen its visual impact and improved pedestrian routes;
- the evolution of the application through collaboration between the university and planning officers was commended;
- ensuring that information about the heritage assets being lost would be properly recorded and made public was welcomed;
- the reuse of materials from demolished structures would be beneficial;
- on balancing the harm and the benefits, the application was supportable;
- the development was welcomed as a sustainable project on an existing site that could accommodate its scale;
- the university's role as an economic driver for the city and region was highlighted as important;
- the building's would be built to Passivhaus standard was significant and echoed the site's history of innovative heating technology;
- the high level of detail and sensitivity shown toward the heritage aspects was commended;
- the collaborative effort from officers, the design team, and the university to produce an evolved and sound scheme was impressive; and
- it was a positive factor that the working-class culture and history was being preserved.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following concluding points:

- the planning team were thanked for their intensive work over the summer

- period, which involved workshops with the university to make design improvements and secure a package of enhancement measures; and
- the enhancements were crucial for helping the Planning Committee understand the balance of the benefits against the less than substantial heritage harm.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Ketchin seconded the recommendation, which was voted upon and CARRIED unanimously .

RESOLVED that Planning Permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in the report, the two additional conditions requested for airport safeguarding reasons and the minor changes to conditions to address the issues raised by the applicant in their correspondence as set out in the Planning Committee Update Sheet. Delegated authority was given as sought by officers in their presentation for the minor changes to the conditions to be finalised by officers in consultation with the Chair.

RESOLVED that the listed Building Consent be granted subject to conditions as set out in the report, subject to any minor revisions outlined in the Planning Committee update sheet, which relate specifically to the Listed Building. Delegated authority was given as sought by officers in their presentation for the minor changes to the conditions to be finalised by officers in consultation with the Chair.

39

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 23/1532/OUT - SANDY PARK FARM

The meeting was briefly adjourned at 19:41 and resumed at 19:43.

The Chair invited Mr Pete Thomas, to speak for five minutes, against the application, who made the following points:

- there were concerns about procedural validity, access arrangements and policy compliance of the proposal;
- policy EJ6, designated this land for use for transformational employment allocation and the proposal to deliver 158 dwellings was a departure from emerging policy;
- there were highway implications, especially on match days where congestion in this area was already difficult and additional traffic from 158 dwellings would significantly worsen existing congestion and impede emergency vehicle access;
- the applicant's red line boundary on the location plan did not extend to the edge of the access roundabout, leaving a gap, which was land owned by the Exeter Rugby Group;
- according to National Planning Policy Practice Guidance, the red line must include all land necessary for the development, including access and as the applicant did not own this land, the application was procedurally defective;
- no ownership notice had been served on his clients;
- he challenged the Highway Authority's suggestion that access could be secured through a Section 278 agreement, and advised that despite the road surface being the Highway Authority's responsibility, his client owned the adjoining grassed area and bank;
- if the northern access were undeliverable, all traffic would be forced onto the southern route via New Court Way and Old Rydon Lane, which had not been assessed in the transport assessment;
- officers had already determined that the southern access was unacceptable;
- the proposal for 158 dwellings was a material departure from emerging policy in which no operating justification or demonstrable planning need had been

- provided; and
- the Planning Committee were requested to uphold the officer's recommendation for refusal and also to refuse for procedural invalidity and the undeliverability of the northern access.

Mr Pete Thomas responded to questions from Members as follows:

- the Exeter Rugby Group had checked their plan which advised that they owned the small sliver of land around the fence;
- the redline should include access to the roundabout as an integral part of the application;
- the Exeter Plan showed the direction, but was not at an advanced stage, so considerations were being highlighted;
- the objection originated from the potential impact upon the roundabout, particularly on match days, and the larger concerns about traffic coming out of there, and the implications for the surrounding road; and
- even with commercial land development, there would be additional vehicles to and from the site, so there were concerns about additional vehicles impacting access.

The Chair invited Mr James McMurdo, to speak for five minutes in support of the application, who made the following points:

- he was working for the applicant, who was also a landowner;
- the proposal was a significant opportunity for the city, which planned for 158 houses and 180,000 sq. ft of employment space, which would deliver 1,000 jobs;
- he enquired how such a development could be considered harmful, especially in the context of a 3,000-housing delivery backlog and employment issues;
- there were significant issues with the existing policy plan which had been superseded by the construction of the hotel;
- despite paying a pre-application fee, he claimed officers had refused to engage with them or respond to emails with the pre-application fee eventually being returned; and
- the Planning Committee were requested to defer making a decision on this application and to undertake a site visit to the hotel and assess the impacts in relation to the policy.

Mr James McMurdo responded to Members' questions as follows:

- ignoring economic development was not being proposed in favour of housing, the existing policy plan was being highlighted as being blank;
- the emerging policy was for employment to the north, and residential to the south, but did not consider the impact of the hotel;
- there was about eight hectares of land, which could deliver 158 dwellings, and met the residential density prescribed by the Council and would deliver 180,000 square feet of commercial space;
- the hotel is 8 storeys high, and the reason the Planning Committee were being asked to visit the site was to consider moving the employment land to accommodate housing;
- outline planning permission for housing and commercial space was sought;
- it was within the gift of the Council to control the delivery and phasing of commercial space in line with the houses;
- he was unsure if Exeter Rugby Club had asked his client whether they could develop the space;

- a pre-application payment was made but officers had refused to engage with the clients and the application fee was ultimately returned; and
- the application was seeking to deliver 1,000 jobs, with 158 houses to help the council meet its residential and commercial targets, and it was disheartening to see a recommendation of refusal.

The Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects) presented the application for up to 158 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), and up to 17,567 sq. m of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E, F2, B2 and B8) with associated infrastructure at Sandy Park Farm, Old Rydon Lane.

Members received a presentation which included:

- the site location plan;
- aerial views showed the site was generally used for agricultural land with some residential and commercial use;
- parameter plan showed a mix of commercial, residential and open space, with a central spine road connecting Sandy Park Way and Old Rydon Lane;
- the indicative layout showed how the site could be developed for mixed use;
- internal spine road through the middle of the site;
- the northern access to Sandy Park Way;
- the southern access to Old Rydon Lane;
- the 2010 Newcourt Master Plan allocated the site for employment land only;
- Core Strategy Policy CP19 policy required approximately 16 hectares of employment land for Newcourt area, and the current application only provided 2.29 hectares of employment land on an 8-hectare site;
- meetings with the applicant had been held and the Council's advice had been consistent since early last year, for the need for an overall masterplan to show how the required employment land and housing could be delivered across this site and the land in the same ownership to the south of Old Rydon Lane. The applicant did not provide this masterplan as requested;
- several technical issues remain unresolved, including access and the proposed southern access onto Old Rydon Lane would require the removal of two trees which were worthy of retention;
- the application was being brought to the committee now because an extension of time requested by the applicant expires at the end of the month; and
- the officer recommendation was for refusal, due to the failure in providing the required amount of employment land.

The Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects), the Strategic Director for Place and the Devon County Council Highways Officer responded to Member questions and clarification points as follows:

- this was an outline application, and although the housing type was not specified, the indicative layout suggested it would be a standard two-story type of houses;
- housing delivery had been broadly in alignment with the masterplan but there had been some significant changes, notably the IKEA store and hotel, but there had been no employment land delivered to date;
- Section 278 agreements could be made between the Highway authority and any individual, and Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) covered both the carriageway and verges;
- the newly identified strip of land owned by the applicant's client may affect the boundary, but this was only received on the Friday preceding the meeting and as such, had not been fully investigated;
- if third-party land were required for access, the Council could grant permission,

but the development could not legally proceed without an agreement between the developer and the landowner, which would create a ransom situation;

- 55 dwellings per hectare was not considered to be high density, with lower density being around 20-30 dwellings per hectare;
- the deferral request was for Members to view the hotel, which was on the land to the south, which was not being considered at the meeting;
- an extension was granted to the applicant to the end of November and any deferral would allow a six-month appeal window and could lead to a non-determination appeal;
- an application was submitted in 2014 for housing on the land to the south of Old Rydon Lane, which was approved subject to a Section 106 agreement; in 2015 a draft s106 agreement was sent to the applicant's solicitors, but no response had been received and subsequently the application was finally disposed of due to its age;
- officers required a masterplan covering both parcels of land, in order to demonstrate that the required level of employment land and housing was deliverable before accepting the redistribution of employment land to the south of Old Rydon Lane;
- there was an opportunity for the applicant to appeal, either officer recommendation to refuse or option to defer which go beyond the current extension of time, but it would be for the applicant to decide;
- the reason for refusal was on the loss of trees at the southern access, and the application's failure to demonstrate how the potential conflict with vehicles entering that access with the number of pedestrians on match days would be managed;
- the southern access likely would need a re-design to ensure safety, but there had been no objections from National Highways or the Highways Authority;
- if Members went against the officer recommendations and voted to approve the application, a comprehensive package of conditions and planning obligations would need to be agreed;
- the adopted Core Strategy allocated for around 16 hectares of employment land in the Newcourt area, but none had been delivered to date; and
- the emerging Exeter Plan policy (EJ6) allocated 7 hectares for employment at the site with the current proposal being approximately 2.2 hectares.

During the debate, Members expressed the following views:-

- a Member considered there was a need to agree a further extension of time and approve a deferral to undertake a site visit and concern that any refusal would force the developer to appeal. A deferral would allow the Council to maintain a level of control on this situation;
- a site visit was not considered necessary and that the developer had not been reasonable and needed to work with the Council;
- there were unresolved issues with access, land ownership, and highway safety as reasons to refuse and the developer needed develop a masterplan;
- a Member felt they did not have enough information to make a decision, and the point about retaining planning control was valid, but was reluctant to go against policy reasons for refusal; and
- there was concern about the developer's history and the current proposal's failure to provide adequate employment land. The application needed a masterplan to provide more confidence in it.

The Chair saw no grounds to defer for a site visit and saw no grounds under the regulations to consider undertaking one. Members were familiar with the site and going to a different site to view the hotel was not relevant to this application. He considered there were problems with this application and supported the officers'

recommendation for refusal.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following concluding points:

- the key issue for refusal was that the proposal would not deliver enough employment land as required by policy and by approving this application the opportunity to provide the right amount of employment land in this area would be lost;
- employment was a key issue for the Exeter Plan and no employment land had been delivered in the Newcourt area to date; and
- there was relatively little land left, which had not been developed for housing or other uses.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Atkinson seconded the recommendations.

It was proposed by Councillor Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Banyard that the following amendment be made to the recommendations:-

- that subject to a further agreed extension of time, the Planning Committee defer this application to allow for further negotiations between the applicant and the City Council.

During the debate on the amendment, the following points were made:

- concern was expressed that issuing a refusal could reduce the council's control over the land, pushing the applicant toward an appeal process where the Council had limited influence;
- the applicant appeared to be willing to cooperate with the Council, including agreeing to a site visit or a deferral;
- Members now have a better understanding of the site's issues following the debate;
- the developer should be given a further opportunity to negotiate with the planning team to find a proposal which would be acceptable to the committee;
- the applicant had already been given seven years, which was sufficient time to address the issues and planning applications should be resolved quickly;
- deferring would send the wrong message that the proposal was fundamentally sound and only needed minor adjustment;
- sending mixed messages to the developer would be unhelpful and they needed to understand the site's incompatibility;
- if the application were refused, the inspector would likely uphold the Council's position because there were strong grounds and ample alternative housing provision in the area;
- an extension would not change the fundamental issue of the employment land shortfall;
- an extension would be a desirable outcome to test the applicants willingness to engage and enable the Council to maintain control of the situation; and
- the Strategic Director for Place had clearly explained that the refusal reasons related to the balance of land use and the applicant had not indicated any willingness to adjust that balance; and
- granting more time or an extension would not change the core issue, in that, this specific parcel of land was allocated solely for employment use.

The amendment was put to the vote and was not carried (2 in favour, 7 against, and 1 abstention).

The Chair returned to the motion to follow the officer's recommendation for refusal,

which was voted upon and CARRIED (8 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions).

RESOLVED that the planning application for up to 158 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), and up to 17,567 sq. m of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E, F2, B2 and B8) with associated infrastructure at Sandy Park Farm, Old Rydon Lane, be refused for the reasons listed in the report.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 9.00 pm)

Chair