

EXETER CORE STRATEGY

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a further stage of consultation in the preparation of a new development plan for Exeter. Exeter City Council consulted on its Core Strategy Preferred Options report in October 2006. That report set out guidance on the spatial development of the City up to 2021. The City Council is now seeking views on some significant matters that have arisen since the earlier report. These are:

- extension of the plan period to 2026 in order to respond to guidance and development requirements set out in the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS);
- advice in the RSS that more houses should be built in Exeter up to 2026 than previously envisaged; and,
- new government guidance that Core Strategies:
 - (i) may allocate those sites that are considered central to the achievement of the strategy and;
 - (ii) should outline the infrastructure needed to support the amount of development proposed for the area.

1.2 This document considers how the increase in the housing numbers may be achieved, identifies the areas to be allocated as strategic sites, and provides a broad outline of the infrastructure that will be needed to deliver the level of growth now proposed.

2 PROVISION FOR HOUSING TO 2026

Housing Targets

2.1 The draft RSS proposed 11,000 dwellings in Exeter between 2006-2026. The Panel who held the Examination In Public of the RSS recommended, in December 2007, a limited increase from 11,000 to 12,000 dwellings. Proposals to meet this dwelling requirement are set out in section 3.

2.2 The “Proposed Changes”, published by the Secretary of State in July 2008, further increase the target for the City to 15,000 dwellings, to be met within the urban area and to the east and south west. This would represent a rise from the 600 dwellings per annum required by the RSS Panel Report to 750 dwellings per annum. The City Council objected to this increase on the basis that it was not soundly based on evidence of capacity.

2.3 Adoption of the RSS has been delayed. Section 4 considers the implications if the final South West RSS confirms the dwelling requirement in the Proposed Changes, or a similar target.

Proposed Strategy

- 2.4 To meet development requirements the Core Strategy Preferred Options report proposed a spatial strategy for the development of the City based on:
- making full and effective use of land within the urban area, particularly in the City Centre;
 - delivering further growth to the east and south west of the City where existing infrastructure is, or can be made, available;
 - protecting the hills to the north and north west from development because of their importance in providing the strategic landscape setting for the City and because of the difficulty in achieving sustainable development in these areas that is served with adequate infrastructure; and
 - in all cases, taking a precautionary approach to flood risk that avoids higher risk, where possible, and manages that risk elsewhere.
- 2.5 In response to the new housing target, the City Council do not intend to deviate from the spatial strategy outlined above. It remains the only acceptable means of delivering the required development in a sustainable manner. Key to the delivery of the strategy will be the emphasis on the delivery of infrastructure, mitigating and adapting to climate change and cutting carbon emissions.
- 2.6 Inevitably the consequence of the increased RSS housing target is that the pressure on the urban area and on the east and south west of the City is increased.

Evidence Base

- 2.7 In order to effectively assess the housing capacity of the City, and in accordance with Government requirements, the City Council has prepared a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).
- 2.8 The main purpose of the SHLAA is to show whether or not there is a sufficient potential supply of land for housing in Exeter to meet the RSS strategic requirements to 2026.
- 2.9 The SHLAA has been prepared in accordance with national guidance and a methodology produced by the Council and neighbouring local authorities. A careful assessment of site suitability has ensured that development constraints are recognised and environmental assets protected. A panel of key stakeholders with sound knowledge of the local housing development industry has also been involved in its preparation, to ensure that conclusions are as robust as possible.
- 2.10 The assessment identifies a range of opportunities on previously developed land within the urban area, such as Istock Brickworks, Exmouth Junction and St Loyes College (see 3.2), and includes potential 'Regeneration Areas' such as the Grecian Quarter and Water Lane (see 3.3 to 3.4). It also identifies significant capacity, in accordance with the spatial strategy outlined in 2.4

above, through urban extensions to the east of the urban area at Newcourt and Monkerton/Hill Barton, and to the south west of the urban area at Alphington. Other areas, defined in the SHLAA as 'Broad Locations' that may be available towards the end of the plan period (see 4.3 to 4.6) are also identified. The findings of the SHLAA have informed this consultation document.

3 MEETING THE REQUIREMENT FOR 12,000 DWELLINGS

- 3.1 The Newcourt, Monkerton/Hill Barton and Alphington areas were proposed for development in the Core Strategy Preferred Options. These areas are considered in section 5 as potential strategic allocations. Proposals for previously developed land (Identified sites within the urban area) and the Regeneration Areas are discussed below:

Identified sites within the urban area

- 3.2 There are a number of previously developed sites dispersed around the urban area that will contribute to meeting the dwelling requirement. These sites become available when land is no longer required for its original use, such as Exmouth Junction railway sidings, or Ibstock Brickworks or where the existing occupier chooses to relocate, such as the land at St Loyes. The sites identified have been carefully assessed to determine their suitability for residential development and have the potential to deliver around 1500 dwellings.

Regeneration Areas

- 3.3 The Water Lane area, located just south of the City Centre and adjacent to the River Exe, is previously developed and largely in employment use. The area is identified for comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment in the Exeter Local Plan First Review. Although the Exeter Employment Land Review 2009 concludes that this area offers a poor quality location for employment use, it would provide a highly sustainable location for residential development. Subject to addressing issues of flood risk, the area has the potential to deliver around 800 additional dwellings.
- 3.4 The Grecian Quarter comprises an area of previously developed land in the City Centre, bounded by Sidwell Street, Western Way and Paris Street. It currently incorporates a variety of uses, including the City's bus and coach station, employment, retail, leisure, car parking and a small amount of housing. The southern part of the area (including the bus and coach station) is allocated in the Exeter Local Plan First Review for comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment. The area as a whole is highly sustainable and offers the opportunity to deliver significant regeneration benefits to the City as a whole. The Grecian Quarter has the potential to deliver around 300 additional dwellings.

Summary

- 3.5 In summary, taking into account the proposed strategic allocations discussed in section 5, the City Council believe that the RSS 'Panel' requirement to provide 12,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2026 could be achieved as follows (as at 1 April 2009):

Completions 2006-2009	1817
Planning Permissions	1668
Permissions subject to Section 106 agreement	880
Newcourt	2500
Monkerton/Hill Barton	2300
Alphington	600
Identified sites within the urban area	1500
Regeneration Areas	1100
Total	12,365

4 MEETING THE REQUIREMENT FOR 15,000 DWELLINGS

- 4.1 As stated in paragraph 2.2 above, the adopted RSS could confirm a 15,000 dwelling requirement. The provision of an extra 3,000 dwellings would mean that towards the end of the plan period there would have to be a reliance on windfalls and other areas would have to be brought forward for development (see below).

Windfalls

- 4.2 Past trends suggest that around 290 dwellings a year may be delivered through windfalls. The Council's Urban Capacity Study indicates significant potential in Exeter through conversions/living over the shop and infill. However, national planning guidance indicates that an allowance for windfalls should not be made in the first 10 years of the plan period. The inclusion of 2,000 windfall dwellings in the period from 2019 (year 11 onwards) is, therefore, considered robust, particularly as windfalls that are completed in the earlier years of the plan will, in due course, be counted against the 15,000 target through monitoring.

Potential Broad Locations towards the end of the plan period

- 4.3 Pinhoe Quarry is a large previously developed site on the north-eastern edge of the City. The quarry and adjoining land are currently safeguarded as a Minerals Consultation Area but quarrying is no longer taking place and the associated brickworks has closed. This previously developed land is considered to have the potential to deliver around 200 dwellings by the end of the plan period.
- 4.4 Land at Middlemoor, under the ownership of Devon and Cornwall Police, is within the existing urban area to the east side of Exeter. Around two thirds of the area comprises previously developed land in institutional use, whilst the remainder is open space/playing fields. Over the plan period, it is likely that part of the site may become surplus to requirements. The land at Middlemoor is in a sustainable location, on a transport corridor, and may have the potential to deliver around 100 dwellings.

- 4.5 The land between Topsham and the M5 is largely greenfield, including open fields and public open space, with ribbon development along the roads. This area forms part of the green wedge that separates Topsham and Exeter that has been protected by successive Local Plans. Whilst the potential for housing development on this land was subject to consultation through the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, the area was not proposed for development in the Preferred Options Report as it was not required to meet the housing target, as it stood at that time, for the period up to 2021. If development of this area was required, its location in the eastern sector of the City, would enable it to be served by enhanced infrastructure and there would be opportunities to provide affordable housing for local people. Nevertheless, due to the importance of maintaining the green wedge, the area will only be identified for development if the 15,000 target is imposed. Furthermore, it will be phased towards the end of the plan period and only brought forward if monitoring of completions and land availability elsewhere in the City dictates that the release of this land is essential.
- 4.6 Together these areas have the potential to meet the additional dwelling requirement of around 700 dwellings to 2026. As noted above, there may be other sites or areas, of which the Council is not yet aware, that come forward for development over the plan period. Completions from these sources will be carefully monitored, and the release of additional sites managed, to ensure that a five year supply is maintained.

Summary

- 4.7 In summary, the RSS target of 15,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2026, if imposed, is likely to require the following (as at 1 April 2009):

Completions 2006-2009	1817
Planning Permissions	1668
Permissions subject to S106 agreement	880
Newcourt	2500
Monkerton/Hill Barton	2300
Alphington	600
Identified sites within the urban area	1500
Regeneration Areas	1100
Potential Broad Locations	700
Windfalls	2000
Total	15,065

5 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

- 5.1 The Preferred Options report specifically identified the potential for achieving significant development at Newcourt, Monkerton/Hill Barton and Alphington. The development of these sites is considered central to the achievement of the development strategy in response to the RSS. The aim is, therefore, to allocate these areas in the Core Strategy so that work to deliver the sites can move forward with some certainty. Plans 1-3 identify the boundaries of these strategic allocations.

- 5.2 It will only be by achieving well planned and comprehensive development that the potential for these urban extensions to contribute to creating more sustainable development can be maximised. The sections below identify some of the features that will be important in creating strong, safe and prosperous communities, together with the key infrastructure requirements to ensure delivery.

Newcourt (see Plan 1)

- 5.3 The Newcourt area will deliver a mix of residential, employment and community uses together with open spaces, green corridors and essential infrastructure. Around 3,700 dwellings (including 1,176 dwellings with planning permission) and around 20 hectares of employment land (including an allowance for 12.4 hectares already allocated) should be provided. The new community must work well with surrounding development and form a sustainable urban extension to Exeter.
- 5.4 The proposals for residential development must fully integrate with the existing permissions and create distinctive new neighbourhoods. At the heart of the development a local centre, positioned to the south of Old Rydon Lane, should provide local shops and community facilities. Two local primary schools will also be required in the area to meet educational needs up to 2026. Newcourt House, which is an attractive grade two listed building, could extend its existing role as an administrative centre for Devon PCT to include GP services and a health centre/polyclinic. Contributions towards the improvement of other educational, social and community facilities, for example Topsham Library, will also be sought where no new facility is required on-site.
- 5.5 Residential densities should reflect proposed locations with the highest density located centrally and along public transport corridors and lowest densities on the least accessible parts of the site. Average housing densities of at least 50 dwellings per hectare will be encouraged. The development must also provide affordable housing in accordance with adopted policy, and site provision for Gypsies and Travellers made in accordance with the site search criteria identified in the Core Strategy.
- 5.6 The most appropriate locations for employment land are likely to be to the south of the A379 and along the M5 motorway. Employment development must be well integrated into surrounding development with direct links to the local centre. It should have good access onto the strategic road network and benefit from high quality telecommunications infrastructure.
- 5.7 The development of the Newcourt area will have a strong regard to the principles of good urban design so as to ensure an attractive and locally distinctive environment. High quality strategic landscaping will be expected and existing trees and important landscape features will be retained. A green infrastructure framework, comprising green corridors linking formal and informal open spaces, will enhance biodiversity, meet local sporting and recreational needs, and provide a sustainable movement network.
- 5.8 In order to maximise sustainability it will be important to encourage people to switch from using the car to walking, cycling and using public transport. At the heart of this urban extension there should be a transport hub. This should,

ideally, focus on a new rail halt on the Exeter to Exmouth line, a site for which has been safeguarded in the existing permission, and should include a bus and rail interchange allowing direct links to the City and wider area. Section 106 contributions will be sought to ensure the delivery of this and other transport infrastructure improvements discussed below.

- 5.9 Good permeability must be achieved throughout the development area and links to the surrounding urban area established. The sustainable movement network will radiate from the local centre and will provide convenient and safe walking and cycling routes to link existing and proposed housing, employment and community areas to each other and provide access to existing facilities beyond the development area. The potential for a bus route along Old Rydon Lane and a High Quality Public Transport (HQPT) route, and provision of a park and ride site, will be fully explored. Proposals for development in the area must not preclude these options. Further bus priority along Topsham Road is also being investigated. A new highway access onto the A379 has consent and is required to serve existing development proposals. Improvements to the strategic road network may also be required, particularly at junction 30 of the M5 and at Countess Wear roundabout.
- 5.10 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be required to ensure the risk of flooding is minimised. At least 10% of the energy needs of the development should be provided through decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy production methods. The potential to achieve exemplary sustainable development, for example by setting up an Energy Services Company (ESCO) to serve the area, should be fully explored.
- 5.11 The Newcourt area is the subject of various constraints all of which must be considered in bringing development forward. In particular, areas of high flood risk must be avoided, sources of noise and pollution taken into account and biodiversity and landscape features protected.
- 5.12 The development of this area should follow guidance in the Newcourt Masterplanning Study.

Monkerton/Hill Barton (see Plan 2)

- 5.13 The Monkerton/Hill Barton area will accommodate around 2,300 dwellings and about 5 hectares of employment land set within a green infrastructure framework. The residential development must be closely integrated with adjoining housing and be within convenient walking distance of a local centre comprising a primary school, a doctors surgery/polyclinic, local shops, and other appropriate facilities to meet skills, special educational and community needs. Contributions towards the improvement of existing educational, social and community facilities will also be sought where on site provision is not required. Contributions may be sought for the expansion of St Luke's Secondary School and Pinhoe Library. The employment land should have good road links to the M5 junction 29 which do not pass through residential areas. The green infrastructure framework will comprise green corridors linking formal and informal open areas, that will meet local sporting and recreational needs; keep development away from sensitive natural habitats, areas of high flood risk and important landscape features; and screen housing from the motorway, busy roads and employment areas.

- 5.14 The green infrastructure framework will also provide a sustainable movement network for travel by foot or by cycle. This should link existing and proposed housing and employment areas to each other; to the proposed local centre, and to existing schools, shops, public transport connections, employment opportunities and community facilities in adjoining areas. A link to the major developments proposed to the east of the City and to open countryside will be provided via a proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge over the motorway.
- 5.15 New development will also need to facilitate, and contribute towards, the improvement of transport infrastructure in the area. All dwellings should be within easy walking distance of frequent public transport services linking the neighbourhood to local facilities and employment; to the City Centre; and to existing and proposed residential and employment areas to the south and east. The route of a new road link from Cumberland Way to the motorway (which leads on to the A30 to the east) must be safeguarded. A proposed High Quality Public Transport service linking the City with new development in East Devon could also follow this route. Improvements to the motorway crossing would be required to accommodate the resulting additional traffic. Land for a rail halt on the Exmouth line should also be safeguarded.
- 5.16 Average housing densities of at least 50 dwellings per hectare will be encouraged with highest densities most applicable close to the new local centre, existing facilities and along public transport corridors. Affordable housing must be provided in accordance with adopted policy, and site provision made for Gypsies and Travellers in appropriate locations in accordance with the site search criteria identified in the Core Strategy. Development should follow the principles of good urban design to ensure that the resulting development is both attractive and locally distinctive.
- 5.17 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be required to ensure the risk of flooding is minimised. At least 10% of the energy needs of the development should be provided through decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy production methods. The potential to achieve exemplary sustainable development, for example by setting up an ESCO to serve the area, should be fully explored.
- 5.18 The development of this area should follow guidance in the Monkerton/Hill Barton Masterplanning Study.
- Alphington (see Plan 3)
- 5.19 South of Alphington, between the urban area and the City boundary, there is capacity for around 600 dwellings to be delivered through a compact urban extension with associated infrastructure, open space and community facilities. This must include affordable housing provided in accordance with adopted policy.
- 5.20 The area consists of a number of fields with mature boundary hedges that rise gently to the south to a ridge. This prominent ridge forms the City's administrative boundary and proposals should respond sensitively to this feature.
- 5.21 The development form would be expected to relate well to the adjoining housing. Average densities of 50 dwellings per hectare would be encouraged, provided that the amenity of existing residents is protected.

Principles of good urban design should be followed to ensure that the resulting development is both attractive and locally distinctive.

- 5.22 There must be good permeability for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the development with links to surrounding areas and contributions would be expected to enhanced transport infrastructure. Improvements to the Alphington Road Corridor will be required, a proposed High Quality Public Transport service could link this development to the City Centre, and a new Park and Ride is proposed at the A30 junction.
- 5.23 The development would result in significant additional pressure on existing facilities. Contributions towards the improvement of existing educational, social and community facilities will be sought where on site provision is not required.
- 5.24 Whilst the capacity of the land within the City is for around 600 dwellings, the Regional Spatial Strategy Proposed Changes propose an urban extension to the south west of the City of around 2,500 dwellings that would include the dwellings within the City and approximately 2,000 dwellings in Teignbridge.
- 5.25 The prospect of a larger urban extension offers both challenges and potential opportunities. At this scale, the urban extension could support it's own local centre, on site community facilities, including new primary schools, a new secondary school and a new GP or polyclinic, provision for park and ride, significant green infrastructure, and an extensive pedestrian and cycle network giving access to the City and surrounding countryside. Teignbridge and Exeter will work closely together to ensure a comprehensive masterplan guides development of the area.

6 INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6.1 The successful delivery of a strategy that accommodates significant new residential and employment development will be dependent upon the necessary infrastructure being provided in the right place and at the right time. Existing infrastructure will not always be able to cope with the additional demands arising from new development. Acting as a 'ring-master', the local authority must ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place.
- 6.2 In order to facilitate this delivery the City Council is working closely with infrastructure partners to identify, as far as possible:
- Infrastructure Needs
 - Responsibilities for delivery
 - Costs
 - Funding Sources
 - Timetable for provision
 - Risk Assessment and mitigation measures
- 6.3 This work has already established, in broad terms, the key infrastructure requirements for the proposed strategic allocations referred to in the preceding section.

Transport Infrastructure – to be updated on completion of New Growth Point Transport Assessment (Phase 3) – expected by end of September.

- 6.4 Exeter currently experiences traffic congestion at peak periods in and around the City Centre at some key junctions. Transport infrastructure will, therefore, be a priority in successfully accommodating the levels of development envisaged by the RSS for the City.
- 6.5 The Local Transport Plan proposes improvements through its Principal Urban Area Scheme to improve the modal share of public transport. The objective of the Scheme is to improve the functioning of major radial routes in the City, in particular reducing evening peak congestion and improving bus performance, without encouraging additional commuting into the City. This includes proposals for new park and ride schemes to the east of the M5 and to the west of the City to pick up the A30 approach; bus priority schemes on radial routes into Exeter; and highway capacity improvements on the orbital route to the east and south of the City.
- 6.6 The Exeter High Quality Public Transport Scheme is seeking to achieve a significant enhancement in public transport provision aligned to demand management measures. The scheme proposes the introduction of high quality buses enjoying substantial priority that will link major development uses to the east and south west of the City, through the City Centre. The Devon Metro scheme looks at the potential for enhancement of the local train network including consideration of increased frequencies on the Exmouth to Exeter Line and the potential to provide new railway stations.
- 6.7 Improvements to increase capacity are already in progress at Junction 30 of the M5 and funding has also been secured for improvement works at Junction 29.

Other Infrastructure Requirements

- 6.8 The ongoing work suggests that, in addition to the infrastructure needed to support the urban extensions, the following will also be infrastructure priorities to ensure successful delivery of development throughout the City and within the wider Exeter area:
- Education – including enhancement and/or expansion of primary or secondary schools;
 - Flood Risk Mitigation – including improvement in the environmental and flood risk management performance of existing flood defence systems in Exeter;
 - Public Services – including provision of a new central library, and a new police station and custody facility;
 - Utilities and Waste – including investment to improve the capacity of existing sewage treatment works and electricity sub-stations, and a new recycling centre to the east of Exeter;
 - Health – including the need for enhanced availability of Acute services, new or expanded GP practices or polyclinic, and new or extended

dental practices;

- Sport and Recreation – including the need for new sports facilities and the improvement of existing facilities;
- Green Infrastructure – including investment in the Exe Valley Park;
- Affordable housing – to be provided in accordance with adopted policy.

- 6.9 Many of the detailed requirements will be informed by a Social and Community Infrastructure Study, currently underway, that has been commissioned by the Exeter and East Devon New Growth Point Team.
- 6.10 It is only by working closely with neighbouring authorities that infrastructure requirements can be identified and delivered. In particular, the major developments on the fringes of the City, such as Cranbrook, Skypark, and the Science Park in East Devon and the proposed Alphington urban extension in Teignbridge, have significant transport infrastructure requirements which will need to be brought forward in a collaborative and coordinated manner.
- 6.11 On completion, the results of the infrastructure planning process will form an evidence base document to support the Submission Core Strategy and later Development Plan Documents.

7 YOUR VIEWS

- 7.1 This consultation document focuses on the following matters:
- The Core Strategy plan period extended to 2026;
 - Provision for the 15,000 dwellings required by the RSS;
 - Allocation of strategic sites; and
 - Infrastructure needed to support delivery.
- 7.2 We are keen to gain your views on these matters and in particular:
1. Are there other more sustainable and appropriate sites that should be considered for development?
 2. Are there other issues that are important in successfully developing the strategic sites (Newcourt, Monkerton /Hill Barton and Alphington)?
 3. Are there other key infrastructure requirements that should be identified in the Core Strategy?
- 7.3 We would also like to receive any other comments you have on the matters discussed in this Document. Comments should be made in writing to Forward Planning, Planning Services, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter, EX1 1NN or by email LDF@exeter.gov.uk

The consultation period will run for six weeks to xxxxx 2009.