

## **EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE  
19 JUNE 2007**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE EXPANSION OF UNIVERSITY OF EXETER RESULTS OF CONSULTATION**

#### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the results of a consultation on draft supplementary planning guidance on development relating to the University of Exeter. Executive is recommended to adopt the proposed amended guidance.

#### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In December, Planning Committee considered a report on the University of Exeter estates strategy that envisages a significant expansion of about 36% in student numbers over the next ten years. The report also addressed a number of recurring issues regarding proposed developments of purpose built student accommodation. Planning Committee resolved that nine general principles be agreed as a basis for public consultation with a view to their subsequent adoption as supplementary planning guidance. The principles would then carry some weight as material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

#### **3 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSE**

- 3.1 About thirty local residents' associations and other interested organisations were consulted on the draft guidance. Items on the draft guidance appeared in the Express and Echo. A meeting was arranged with representatives of the consultees to discuss the proposed supplementary planning guidance. Councillors from the six wards most affected by university related issues were also invited. The meeting, on 22 February, was attended by 18 representatives of organisations and seven councillors. The main issues raised were reported to Planning Member Working Group. 18 representations have been received as a result of the consultation. Appendix One summarises the responses in relation to each of the proposed principles.

#### **4 ISSUES**

- 4.1 The results of the consultation raise a number of issues, the proposed response is in italics:
- (i) *There have been a number of comments that the support for the expansion of the University is too open-ended.*

*In order to limit the impact on the private rented market, it would be*

*appropriate to link an increase in student numbers to significant increases in purpose built student accommodation. A 'significant increase' will be interpreted as about 75% or more of additional student numbers being accommodated in purpose built student accommodation..*

*An additional statement in the first principle is proposed:*

*'The City Council, where appropriate, will impose planning conditions or seek a planning obligation to ensure that student numbers increase commensurate with significant increases in additional purpose-built student accommodation.'*

- (ii) There were comments that any further development at the Streatham Campus should be informed by further studies on the ecological interest and wildlife linkages with surrounding areas.

*The University of Exeter will be asked to do further work on the ecology of the Streatham Campus and linkages with surrounding areas to inform decisions on future planning applications.*

- (iii) The management of purpose built student accommodation has been a recurring theme, including in representations on recent planning applications.

*An additional statement is proposed to accompany the fourth principle:*

*'Developments will be permitted subject to management and supervision arrangements appropriate to the size, location and nature of occupants of schemes. A standard form of planning obligation relating to management arrangements is available from the Council. The planning obligation is enforceable against owners of the land and they will be required to ensure through terms of tenancy agreements that tenants adhere to the management scheme'*

- (iv) A number of developer providers of purpose-built student accommodation question the merits of a reference in the report to Planning Committee that 300 students per hectare may be a useful benchmark of acceptable densities in Exeter.

*This is not one of the proposed principles; every case will be considered on its merits.*

- (v) A number of respondents questioned what exact area was intended in the use of terms such as Streatham Campus or the city centre.

*A plan, agreed at PMWG, will be attached to the principles showing the general extent of the campuses mentioned to overcome any confusion over geographic definitions. It is not considered appropriate to define areas such as the city centre.*

- 4.2 Purpose built student schemes are mainly cluster flats that share kitchen facilities. On some schemes a proportion of units are self contained studios intended for post graduates. Affordable housing requirements have not previously been applied to student housing schemes on the basis that the accommodation does not comprise dwellings within Class C3 of the Use Classes Order. This issue will be reviewed as part of forthcoming work on a supplementary planning document on affordable housing. The threshold would apply to the number of cluster flats and studios not the number of student bedrooms.
- 4.3 A copy of the proposed amended principles is at Appendix Two.
- 4.4 The University of Exeter has commissioned consultants to undertake a study of the future of St Luke's campus. The study looks at whether the future expansion of the three faculties presently on the site should be accommodated there or whether some or all of them should relocate to the main Streatham campus. The University is consulting on the results of the study but notes that the most cost effective and least disruptive option is to relocate the faculty of Sports and Health Sciences to Streatham Campus and utilise space for the expansion of the other two faculties at St Luke's campus. Planning Member Working Group on 12 June considered a report that suggested that it support this approach which keeps the University represented in the local community and avoids the release of large areas for redevelopment.
- 4.5 Officers are undertaking further work to draft potential supplementary planning guidance and local development framework policies aimed at restricting the further growth of student numbers in parts of the city where this may give rise to unacceptable impacts. Some forms of student housing are however likely to be outside of planning control. PMWG and Executive will receive a further report on this work in the summer.

## **5 PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP**

- 5.1 Planning Member Working Group considered this report on 10 April and endorsed the adoption of the proposed amended guidance. One Member raised the potential for the public and students to share sports and other facilities. This will be pursued but is not a matter for inclusion in an SPG.

## **6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 It is recommended that Executive adopts the proposed amended supplementary planning guidance at Appendix Two.

**RICHARD SHORT**  
**HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES**

### **ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

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

Background Papers used in compiling this report:

Representations received on Draft SPG

**Appendix One****RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION**

1	Colourcolt Ltd
2	University of Exeter
3	Occupier 37 West Avenue
4	Devon County Council
5	Unite Integrated Solutions plc
6	Signpost Homes Ltd
7	Hillcrest Park Residents' Association
8	Argyll Road Residents' Association
9	Occupiers, 18 Lower Argyll Road
10	Councillor R Branston
11	Police Architectural Liaison Officer
12	Leighton-Boyce Properties Ltd
13	Occupier 4 Lonsdale Road
14	Thornton Hill & West Ave Residents' Association
15	Occupiers, Collingwood Gate, Bicton Place
16	Occupier, 7 Bicton Place
17	St David's Neighbourhood Partnership
18	Occupier, 61 Thornton Hill

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS BY PRINCIPLE**

	<u>Support for the intention of the University to expand.</u>
5,6	Support the positive steps to facilitate the growth of the University.
7	Reserve position on specific proposals. Statement is too vague, all-embracing and needs qualification.
8	There should no completely open-ended commitment to support expansion without any caveats. There is a need to monitor expansion such as success in attracting postgraduate and overseas students and the trend towards living at home that may affect the strategy.
10	Statement should be qualified.
13,16	Support should not be unconditional, there are negative factors.
14	The presence of the University does pose a number of problems that will be aggravated by expansion.
17	Associated expansion in student accommodation needs to be sustainable in environmental and social aspects.
	<u>Space on Streatham campus should be reserved to meet any additional requirements for teaching related (non -accommodation) facilities. The biodiversity of the site should be conserved and enhanced.</u>
5	Quality of the campus could be compromised if over developed with student accommodation.
6	Some expansion of accommodation at the campus is expected and should not be precluded.
7	The Council should commission an environmental and ecological audit on the effects of expansion on the Duryard and Hoopern valleys. The terms Streatham and Duryard campus need spatial definition.
8	Support intention to conserve and enhance biodiversity of the site.
10	Do not accept that Streatham Campus cannot provide any accommodation.

13	There should be some student accommodation there is space for expansion and it would minimise travel.
15	Reason is unclear.
16	There should be an independent study of capacity for expansion on the campus.
17	The University should develop proposals for how it could balance campus development for student accommodation with conservation.
18	Extent of Streatham Campus should be clearly defined. Traditionally it excluded the land of Duryard, Birks and Hope Halls, it is this area, also known as main Campus that should not be used for building more student accommodation.
	<u>The provision of as much purpose built student housing as possible to reduce the impact on the private sector housing market.</u>
1	HMO registration will lead to a decline in HMO stock. The market not university will determine the quantity, quality and location of accommodation.
2	Hall accommodation needs to be conveniently located and supported by a good bus service, laundry, shopping and IT facilities if students are to choose it as a preference to living in the private sector.
3	Support.
5	Hall schemes provide an opportunity to promote green travel and for management plans that can influence undesirable student behaviour.
7	Issues of management of accommodation need to be recognised.
8	What is meant by high density managed accommodation? Building heights should be appropriate to their surroundings.
10	Schemes will be at the expense of conventional housing development including the required proportion of affordable housing.
13	Purpose built student accommodation should be opposed in residential areas. It takes away land for ordinary housing, which would include 25% affordable and schools may lack pupils in some catchment areas.
14	Question whether the forecast number of students living at home and in halls of residence will be achieved, more students may end up competing in the private housing market. How confident is the University that sites for new halls of residence will come forward? What will it do if sufficient sites do not come forward? There is a lack of research on the impact of the 900 forecast additional students on the house prices and rental levels in the private sector.
15	‘As much... as possible’ is vague and exaggerated in ambition.
17	Statement could lead to more accommodation being provided than needed.
	<u>It recognises that relatively high density managed accommodation on appropriate sites will need to make a significant contribution to meeting future needs.</u>
2	Densities of existing off campus halls in Exeter are 300-1,000 students/hectare, the latter (King Edward St) is acceptable. Density should be determined by the location, no guideline such as 300 should be applied.
5	Existing halls are at a broad range of densities dependent on type, style and location. In a city centre context densities are likely to be much higher than 300 students per hectare. Any restriction on density would be inappropriate

6 7 10,13 15 16 17	<p>and contrary to Government guidance.</p> <p>Any density standards need to be flexible. A standard of 300 students per hectare would be counterproductive. Provide a table of density of 13 schemes in the southwest, the lowest being 424 students per hectare.</p> <p>The reference to high density on appropriate sites needs amplification. ‘Appropriate sites’ needs to be defined and should exclude conservation areas, open spaces, setting of listed buildings, areas over-crowded with students etc.</p> <p>Vague to the point of meaninglessness.</p> <p>‘appropriate sites’ needs clarification.</p> <p>Statement ambiguous, do not support any large blocks of student accommodation outside the campus, if student numbers fall the accommodation may be released for social housing.</p>
1 2 5 6 7 8 9 10,16 12 13 14 17	<p><u>Favours provision of further student accommodation in the following general locations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>The City Centre</u></li> <li>- <u>St David’s Station/Cowley Bridge Road area.</u></li> <li>- <u>More intensive use of Duryard Campus</u></li> </ul> <p>Concentrations are a problem, sites should be peppered through the city centre and fringes. St Luke’s Duryard and Cowley Bridge area are poor due to distance from university and city centre</p> <p>Support city centre and St David’s Station corridor locations.</p> <p>Support for city centre. Some concerns about ability to deliver Network Rail land at St David’s Station to a reasonable timetable if the City Council brings it forward through the LDF process.</p> <p>Support general locations, policies should be flexible to allow sites in other areas with good transport links to the university such as Pennsylvania.</p> <p>The areas need more precise spatial definition.</p> <p>Redevelopment of Duryard should not replicate the existing built form and should be sympathetic to the landscape of the Duryard Valley.</p> <p>University owned land in the Duryard Valley should be sacrosanct from development. Suggest alternative access arrangements for Duryard House.</p> <p>Agree.</p> <p>Support subject to the southern part of Consignia Court (beyond the approved scheme) being a suitable location. There is an extant planning permission for housing on part of the site, it is suitable for 150 student and would improve the visual appearance of this part of Bonhay Road.</p> <p>Add surplus University of Plymouth sites in Exeter and Exmouth.</p> <p>How is the ‘city centre’ defined? Will this be from conversion of existing commercial premises? Some areas, such as south of Union Road are like a ghost town in university holidays and lack any real community. Properties owned by private sector landlords are often less well cared for and lead to areas appearing run-down.</p> <p>Do not consider area covered by St David’s Neighbourhood Partnership to be city centre. Support Duryard and a relatively small addition at St David’s Station / Cowley Bridge Road.</p>
	<p><u>Seeks the investigation of student accommodation as a priority for use of any surplus land at St Luke’s campus.</u></p>

5,10,13, 16,17 8	Support.  The implications for increased traffic flow between campuses need to be explored.
1 45,6 7 8 10 11,16 13 14 17	<p><u>Will seek further operational (staff and maintenance related) car parking for student housing schemes than in the past and expects the University and accommodation providers to rigidly enforce no car tenancies.</u></p> <p>Schemes should be car free.</p> <p>Clarify these relate to maintenance/operational staff not academic/administrative. Limit students bringing cars through preclusion in tenancy and lack of any student parking spaces in schemes.</p> <p>No car tenancies cannot be rigidly enforced, amend to recognise the need to design practicable measures to address the real problem of student cars.</p> <p>Request clarification of statements.</p> <p>How will parking be monitored? Developer should pay for introduction of a by law.</p> <p>No car tenancies for students are unlikely to be enforceable.</p> <p>Parking should also be provided for students to avoid problems in residential areas or a no-car policy should be strictly enforced.</p> <p>The University should be forced to produce more serious proposals to tackle the problem of students bringing cars to the city.</p> <p>Strong support, the number one issue. Impact of students illustrated by the ease in car parking during University holiday periods.</p>
4 5 6 8,10 13 14,17 16	<p><u>Will expect the University to significantly improve its commitment to sustainable travel, in particular by funding improved bus services to the campus to provide services throughout the day and into the evening.</u></p> <p>Recently agreed travel plan will need to be reviewed to reflect proposals. Refer to the provision of secure cycle parking.</p> <p>Most hall schemes have associated travel plans.</p> <p>Student hall schemes can contribute significantly to green travel plans.</p> <p>Support.</p> <p>The University should consider provision of free bus travel for students, as at some other universities.</p> <p>Bus services are required well into the night to reduce disturbance from students walking through residential streets early in the morning.</p> <p>Further expansion should be conditional on sustainable travel arrangements.</p>
1 5 6 8 10 15	<p><u>Will expect any further major University developments to make significant advances in sustainable development / construction.</u></p> <p>Agree.</p> <p>Unite uses more sustainable off-site modular construction.</p> <p>Prioritised in agreed specification for partnership schemes.</p> <p>The Council should demand significant advances.</p> <p>Seek more clarification.</p> <p>So vague as to be meaningless.</p>

16	Proposals need to be examined in terms of value for money and whole building life costs.
17	Strongly support but there is no baseline information to monitor performance.
	<u>Other issues</u>
3,14	Urge the University to give a commitment not to apply to extend drinking and entertainment licensing hours at their on campus establishments due to problems of local disturbance.
6	Caution against any criteria that makes bespoke student schemes impractical or unviable.
8	The Council should require an environmental and ecological study of the affect of the increased student numbers on the Duryard and Hoopern Valleys.
9	The recently completed Holland Hall complements campus buildings, Birks Hall is undistinguished and should not be a model for the future. The university should hold competitions to appoint architects with leading edge sustainable designs. Duryard House and Thomas Hall are listed buildings that need plans to reverse signs of neglect.
13	University developments should be obliged to conserve and enhance the area in which they are proposed and not be a blight on existing residential areas.
14	The university or the City Council should increase late night security / community patrollers to tackle problems of disturbance.
15	Under misapprehension that the principles have been prepared by the University not the City Council. Concern they are frequently vague.
17	There should be a further statement in respect of the need for student accommodation schemes to provide amenity space and on site wardens.
18	Agree with all principles, suggest a few clarifications. Duryard, the Bradford site, land at Rowancroft and the Consignia site are suitable for student accommodation.



## Appendix Two

### UNIVERSITY OF EXETER PROPOSED AMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR ADOPTION (*AMENDMENTS IN ITALICS*)

#### THE NINE PRINCIPLES

- Support for the intention of the University to expand. *The City Council, where appropriate, will impose planning conditions or seek a planning obligation to ensure that student numbers increase commensurate with significant increases in additional purpose-built student accommodation.*
- Space on Streatham campus should be reserved to meet any additional requirements for teaching related (non -accommodation) facilities. The biodiversity of the site should be conserved and enhanced.
- The provision of as much purpose built student housing as possible to reduce the impact on the private sector rented housing market.
- It recognises that relatively high density managed accommodation on appropriate sites will need to make a significant contribution to meeting future needs. *Developments will be permitted subject to management and supervision arrangements appropriate to the size, location and nature of occupants of schemes. A standard form of planning obligation relating to management arrangements is available from the Council. The planning obligation is enforceable against owners of the land and they will be required to ensure through terms of tenancy agreements that tenants adhere to the management scheme*
- Favours provision of further student accommodation in the following general locations:
  - The City Centre
  - St David's Station/Cowley Bridge Road area.
  - More intensive use of Duryard Campus
- Seeks the investigation of student accommodation as a priority for use of any surplus land at St Luke's campus.
- Will seek further operational (staff and maintenance related) car parking for student housing schemes than in the past and expects the University and accommodation providers to rigidly enforce no car tenancies.
- Will expect the University to significantly improve its commitment to sustainable travel, in particular by funding improved bus services to the campus to provide services throughout the day and into the evening.
- Will expect any further major University developments to make significant advances in sustainable development / construction.