

EXETER CITY COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
15 JUNE 2010****DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT
RESIDENTIAL DESIGN****1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Executive for the draft Residential Design supplementary planning document (SPD) to be published for public consultation. The SPD identifies the City Council's requirements in relation to residential development and forms the basis for the determination of planning applications. A copy of the proposed draft SPD is at Appendix 1.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's proposed Local Development Scheme identifies the need for design guidance with regard to residential development. The adopted Exeter Local Plan First Review provides the statutory planning policy framework.
- 2.2 Exeter is required to accommodate up to 12,000 new dwellings over the next sixteen years. Pressing needs for significantly higher standards of accommodation, residential amenity, townscape and environmental performance demand that clear, comprehensive guidance is given to all prospective developers of new housing.
- 2.3 The draft SPD is written in a context of the compelling need to tackle climate change and, therefore, the need to design all aspects of new residential development in such a way that contribute to nationally adopted carbon reduction targets. Changes to Building Regulations will require all new houses to be "zero-carbon" by 2016, but these do not include all aspects of how residents use their dwellings and their wider environment. This means that guidance needs to consider not only the design of new buildings themselves, but also how they are laid out, how they connect to facilities and how development may actively discourage motor vehicle use.
- 2.4 Development needs to be of high quality measured by a range of clear criteria. There are numerous publications providing guidance on a range of aspects of design including sustainability, the aesthetics of townscape, maintaining residential amenity and the quality of accommodation. Some of these, such as those dealing with townscape, are dealing with well understood issues, while those which consider environmental performance and space standards are dealing with areas of emerging concern. It is vital, however, that these issues are considered together to ensure that future housing development enables people to live contentedly in one place for long periods by being attractive and adaptable to changing circumstances through life.
- 2.5 The draft SPD explains the principles that developers should adopt and the procedures that should be followed to meet the challenge of designing high density development without compromising design quality or residential amenity. The City Council requires development which is efficient in land use terms but which also creates an attractive, city-living, environment. Recent trends in house building have seen the development of some dwellings which are far too small to

be sustainable. Designs are inflexible and not able to meet the changing needs of people over time. The SPD, therefore, seeks to set clear space standards which will produce adaptable and flexible homes meeting the long-term needs of residents.

- 2.6 The SPD will also incorporate and build on the Building for Life (BfL) national standards for well-designed dwellings and neighbourhoods. Members will recall that BfL allows the evaluation of the quality of development according to 20 criteria. Proposed schemes are awarded points according to the quality of the environment and contribution to the community, the character of the scheme, the quality of the streets, parking and pedestrian environment and the quality of the buildings and the places they make. The final document will highlight the BfL criteria that are relevant to each chapter and explain how best to achieve high scores for all these aspects of development.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 In preparing the draft document two workshops have taken place with residents at Kings Heath and Gras Lawn and two with the major house builders actively working in Exeter. Over the past month further informal consultation has also taken place with the house builders. These have allowed the draft SPD to be prepared taking account of the concerns and aspirations of a cross section of interested individuals and organisations.
- 3.2 It is now proposed that formal consultation take place lasting about eight week. The results of which and the proposed responses will be reported to Planning Member Working Group on the 24 August and then Executive on the 14 September with a view to the adoption of the SPD.
- 3.3 The consultation will be publicised through the web site, press releases and letters to agents, interested organisations and to those members of the public who have already expressed interest in response to advanced publicity.

4 PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP

- 4.1 On 13 April 2010 a working draft of the SPD was presented to Planning Member Working Group. Members warmly supported the draft and agreed a period of informal consultation with house builders prior to consideration by Executive.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that Executive agree the draft Residential Design SPD for public consultation.

RICHARD SHORT
HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:
None