

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

**PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP  
5 NOVEMBER 2013**

**EXECUTIVE  
26 NOVEMBER 2013**

**DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY POLICY STATEMENT**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider the content of the Development Delivery Policy Statement (formerly known as the Development Management Policy Statement) and to agree to its adoption to help deliver good development in the city.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council adopted the Core Strategy in February 2012. At the same time the Council adopted a Development Management Policy Statement that set out the actions City Development would take to deal with any shortfall in the provision of a five year housing land supply (as recommended by the Inspector examining the Core Strategy).
- 2.2 Since the Core Strategy was adopted the Council has been able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. However, it will remain challenging to maintain a five year supply in the future. Accordingly many of the policies put in place following the Core Strategy examination will remain relevant. The original document has been revised, updated and re-named to ensure the focus on delivering good development is maintained.

**3 FOCUS ON DELIVERING GOOD DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 In order to maintain a five year land supply and meet the Core Strategy requirement for at least 12,000 dwellings, it is imperative that the Council takes every possible action to ensure delivery, at the earliest opportunity, of good quality housing development on allocated sites and on windfall sites within the urban area. The Development Delivery Policy Statement makes a series of commitments or policy statements that will help to ensure this occurs.
- 3.2 A copy of the proposed Development Delivery Policy Statement is attached at Appendix 1.

**4 THE POLICY STATEMENTS**

- 4.1 The policy statements included in the 'Development Delivery Policy Statement' are summarised below.

**Leading Role for the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

- 4.2 City Development will maintain an up-to-date SHLAA to identify land capable of delivering sustainable development and to monitor housing delivery. If, at any point, this monitoring concludes that the city does not have a five year housing land supply, then a full review of the SHLAA will be undertaken.

## **A Pro-active Approach to Delivering Development**

- 4.3 City Development will continue to take a pro-active approach to delivering development; working closely with developers and landowners to identify suitable sites for development and to remove barriers to development.

### **The Importance of Infrastructure**

- 4.4 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be monitored and updated to ensure that the infrastructure requirements for the strategic allocations are recognised and the costs and timings understood. The officer responsible for infrastructure delivery will help to ensure prompt and coordinated delivery, to bring forward development as quickly as possible.

### **Delivering Housing on Council Land.**

- 4.5 The Council will ensure that, where appropriate, land within its ownership is brought forward, at the earliest opportunity, for housing development. It will engage with Devon County Council to encourage it to pursue a similar approach.

### **Fast Tracking Planning Applications**

- 4.6 All proposals for housing development will be 'fast tracked'. A number of commitments are made to ensure new housing proposals progress smoothly and quickly. Whilst most of these commitments are not new, they are vitally important in ensuring that good development is encouraged and delivered at the earliest opportunity.

### **Partnership Working**

- 4.7 City Development will continue to work closely with its partners in bringing forward good development. Partners include the public, stakeholders, the development industry, neighbouring local authorities, the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

## **5 DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY AND RESOURCES**

- 5.1 Achieving these commitments means fully embracing the new principles introduced by the re-design. All staff need to understand the importance of delivering housing and need to work together as a team to ensure this is achieved. Working pro-actively to deliver housing development requires adequate resources. The proposed draft new structure aims to minimise waste work so that resources can be directed to meet this objective.

## **6 ADVICE SOUGHT/RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 That Planning Member Working Group supports the approach taken.
- 6.2 That Executive agrees to adopt the Development Delivery Policy Statement to help deliver good development in the city.

**RICHARD SHORT**  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR CITY DEVELOPMENT**

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



**Exeter City Council**

## **DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY POLICY STATEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 To help boost the supply of housing, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to identify and keep up-to-date a deliverable five year housing land supply. Without this, even recently adopted planning policies for the supply of housing will be considered out of date (NPPF paragraph 49).
- 1.2 This is particularly important given that the NPPF states that where relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts outweigh the benefits, or other policies indicate otherwise, when assessed against the NPPF (paragraph 10).

### **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council adopted the Core Strategy in February 2012. The Core Strategy set out the vision, objectives and strategy for the spatial development of the city up to 2026. At the same time the Council adopted a 'Development Management Policy Statement' that set out the actions City Development would take to deal with any shortfall in the provision of a five year housing land supply (as recommended by the Inspector examining the Core Strategy).
- 2.2 Since the Core Strategy was adopted in February 2012 the Council has been able to demonstrate a five year land supply. However, it will remain challenging to maintain a five year supply in the future. Accordingly many of the policies put in place following the Core Strategy examination will remain relevant. The original document has been revised, updated and re-named the 'Development Delivery Policy Statement' to ensure the focus on delivering good development is maintained.

### **HOUSING LAND SUPPLY IN EXETER**

- 3.1 Demonstrating a five year supply of housing land when set against Core Strategy requirements is challenging, particularly when deliverability of housing land is affected by economic downturn. Local authorities who also rely on substantial urban extensions for their housing supply often find such large scale releases of housing land take some time to come forward due to the complexities involved in such extensive areas of development.
- 3.2 Exeter City Council is keen to deliver new housing development within its boundaries and recognises the important part the sustainable growth of the city has to play in the prosperity of the sub region and indeed of the south west peninsula. The Core Strategy identifies strategic areas of land that have the capacity to deliver significant sustainable development and also stresses the importance of making full and effective use of land within the urban area.

- 3.3 However, in order to maintain a five year land supply and meet the Core Strategy requirement for at least 12,000 dwellings, it is imperative that the Council takes every possible action to ensure delivery, at the earliest opportunity, of good quality housing development on allocated sites and on windfall sites within the urban area.

## **POLICIES**

### **Leading Role for the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

- 4.1 It is this document which forms the starting point for the Council's primary objective of delivering good development. The ability of sites to deliver housing development is assessed principally through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This is also the document that monitors new housing completions and ensures there are enough sites to meet the minimum 12,000 housing requirement set by the Core Strategy. The latest SHLAA, published in October 2013, which includes a list of sites with potential to deliver sustainable development, is available to view at: [www.exeter.gov.uk/SHLAA](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/SHLAA)

**POLICY 1: The Council will maintain an up-to-date Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to identify land capable of delivering sustainable development to meet the 12,000 strategic housing requirement. A full review of the SHLAA will be undertaken if the city is no longer able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply.**

### **The Pro-active Approach to Delivering Development**

- 4.2 The City Council has long been supportive of housing growth within the City and remains keen to encourage sustainable housing development. The Council takes a proactive approach to ensuring the delivery of sustainable development and seeks to engage and form partnerships with developers and landowners. By working pro-actively to remove constraints to development, homes can be brought forward earlier and the five year supply position can be improved. The Council also utilises the stakeholder groups that exist (such as the House Builders Forum, the Agents Forum and the SHLAA Technical Panel) to promote greater understanding about housing land supply.

**POLICY 2: The Council will engage pro-actively with land owners and developers with a view to promoting appropriate housing development and delivering homes at the earliest opportunity.**

### **The Importance of Infrastructure**

- 4.3 Included in the SHLAA is a list of sites which form part of the three major strategic allocations set out in the Core Strategy. Such allocations are subject to substantial infrastructure requirements and it is important that there is certainty with regard to the timing, costs and viability of the provision of this infrastructure. The Council has produced an Infrastructure Delivery Plan that schedules the costs and timing of the infrastructure requirements and helps to assess the viability of such provision. The Council has also established a permanent officer post responsible for ensuring prompt infrastructure delivery and the coordination of such delivery with the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (to be applied from 1 December 2013).

**POLICY 3: The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the costs and timing of infrastructure requirements associated with the development of land within the strategic allocations. The Plan will be monitored and updated to ensure that sites within these allocations come forward for development as quickly as possible.**

## **Delivering Housing on Council Land**

- 4.4 The local authorities remain significant land owners within the City and where residential use is appropriate local authority owned land will be brought forward as quickly as possible for housing development.

**POLICY 4: The Council will regularly review its existing landholdings and promote, through the SHLAA process, where appropriate, its own land for housing development and will engage with the County Council to encourage it to pursue a similar approach to County owned land.**

## **Fast Tracking Planning Applications**

- 4.5 The granting of planning consent for development can be a time consuming process. Over recent years the Council has introduced a number of changes to the process to try and facilitate and speed up the granting of consent. With the need to promote the delivery of housing the Council has made the fast tracking of proposals for housing development an explicit priority.

**POLICY 5: The Council will 'fast track' proposals for housing development by:**

- **Ensuring planning officers are available to deal promptly with pre-application requests concerning major housing development and providing advice drawing on all necessary expertise.**
- **For major applications, offering applicants/agents the opportunity to make a formal presentation to the Planning Member Working Group prior to submission to enable any potential issues to be identified at an early stage.**
- **Prioritising the processing of such applications and ensuring applicants/agents are kept fully informed as to the progress on their application.**
- **Putting all such applications before the first available Planning Committee following conclusion of the statutory consultation period and the resolution of issues central to the development.**
- **Where appropriate, providing a draft section 106 agreement to applicants at the earliest possible stage and ensuring that legal advice is available to progress the agreement and offer guidance throughout the process.**
- **Ensuring that following the grant of consent planning conditions are dealt with in an expeditious manner.**

## **Partnership Working**

- 4.6 The Council will need to work closely with the public, stakeholders, and the development industry in order to deliver good development. It will also be important to work in partnership with adjoining local authorities to address any shortfall in the provision of additional housing within the sub region and to assess the opportunities for growth beyond 2026. To ensure a coordinated approach across the sub region the Council will continue to contribute fully to the work of the Growth Point Board and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

**POLICY 6: The Council will take a partnership approach to ensuring the delivery of good development, working closely with the public, stakeholders, the development industry and adjoining local authorities and contributing fully to the work of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board and the Local Enterprise Partnership.**