

Exeter Plan: City centre boundary

Exeter City Council note in response to the 'Boundary Correction Note' provided by Exeter St James Community Trust'

Introduction

- 1.1 At the Exeter Plan examination relating to Matter 7 - Meeting Housing Needs on 11 March 2026, Exeter St James Community Trust (the Community Trust) raised concerns regarding the interaction of the adopted St James Neighbourhood Plan (SUP-DPD-03) and the defined city centre boundary in terms of the concentration of student accommodation and assessing community balance.
- 1.2 The Community Trust suggested that the ambition to steer purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) to the city centre would negatively affect the St James area because the city centre boundary has been amended to include a larger part of St James. The suggestion was that this would lead to a conflict between the City Council aspiration to accommodate PBSA in the city centre and Policy C3 of the St James Neighbourhood Plan which has the objective of creating a balanced community.
- 1.3 As part of the discussion, the Community Trust provided a document entitled 'Hearing Statement: Boundary Correction Note (PS3: G-29, Appendix). This document suggests that the boundary of the city centre as identified on the Exeter Plan policies map (CSD-04a) has been widened since the preparation of the Exeter Local Plan First Review Proposals Map¹ to include a larger area of St James, which increases the conflict regarding student accommodation and the St James Neighbourhood Plan objective of achieving a balanced community.
- 1.4 This note responds to the Community Trust's Correction Note (PS3: G-29, Appendix).

City Council response to the Boundary Correction Note

- 1.5 As the Community Trust note states, the Local Plan First Review (SUP-DPD-02) was adopted in 2005. The Local Plan First Review includes a Proposals Map as a visual representation of the policies in the Plan.
- 1.6 The Community Trust note suggests that the boundary of the city centre on the Local Plan First Review Proposals Map does not extend northwards into the interior of St James and describes some of the boundaries.

¹ Available at: <https://exeter.gov.uk/planning-services/current-policy/current-local-plan/written-statement-and-proposals-map/>

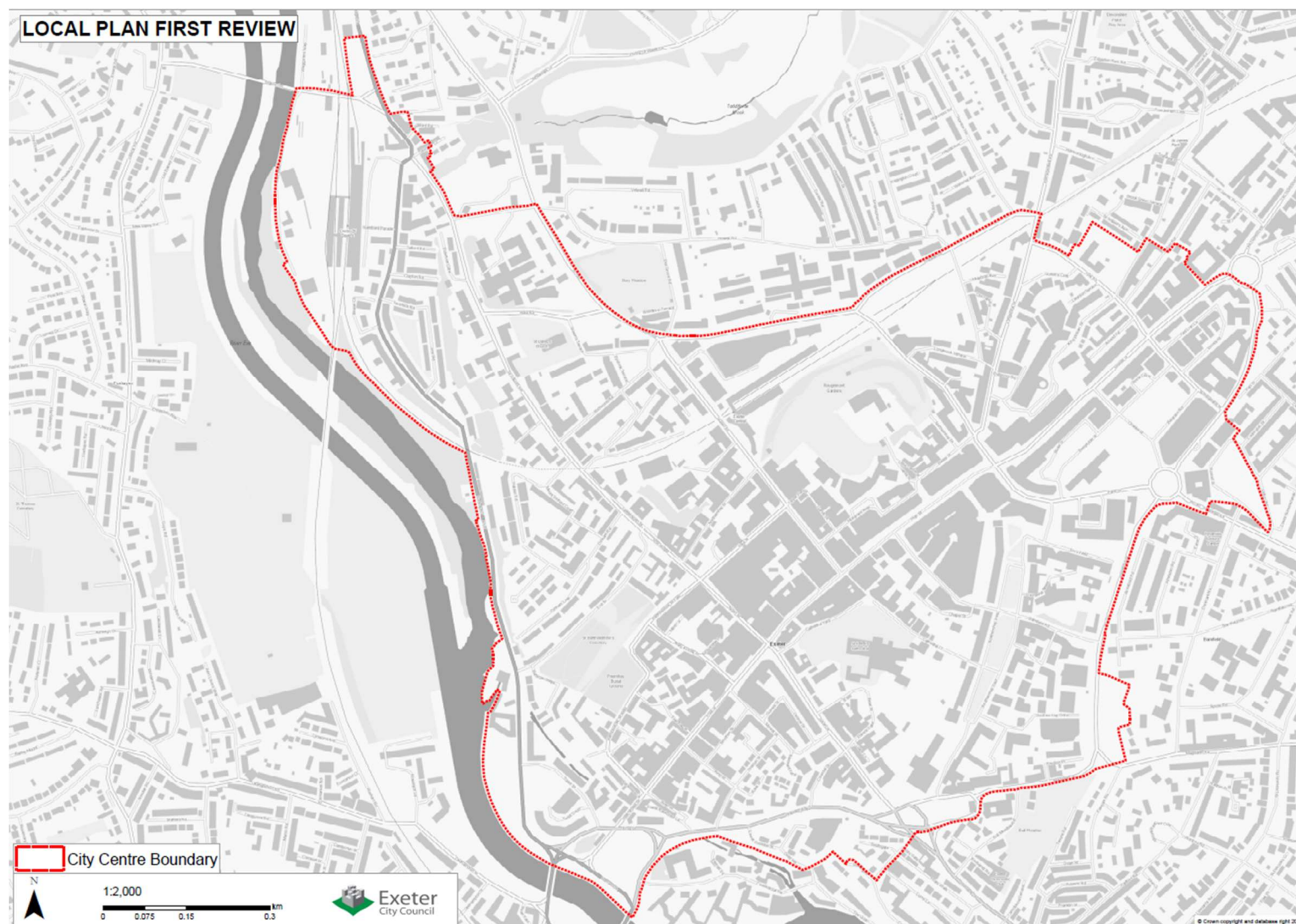
- 1.7 The description of the extent of the city centre on the Local Plan First Review Proposals Map in the note is not accurate. The extent is shown in Appendix A with a description of the area around St James included below:
- The northern boundary runs along New North Road and Blackall Road;
 - The northeastern boundary runs along York Road then includes St Sidwell's Primary School before meeting the northern end of Sidwell Street;
 - The boundary then runs along Western Way towards Paris Street roundabout as it wraps around the city centre to the north.
 - The boundary includes the streets between New North Road and Longbrook Street;
 - The boundary also includes the streets between Longbrook Street, York Road and Sidwell Street;
 - The boundary includes Queen's Crescent Garden, St Sidwell's Primary School, and other elements of the St James Community Hub defined in the St James Neighbourhood Plan (SUP-DPD-03: page 28, figure 6) (though not all of it).
- 1.8 By way of comparison, the extent of the City Centre boundary on the Exeter Plan Policies Map is shown in Appendix B. This is consistent with the boundary on the Local Plan First Review Proposals Map. It is also consistent with the boundary of the city centre in the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule ([EXM-02m](#), page 6).
- 1.9 A previous version of the Draft Policies Map for the Exeter Plan which was consulted on at Regulation 18 stage (the Full Draft Plan) did include a different city centre boundary. However, the Regulation 19 version returned the boundary to that shown on the Local Plan First Review Proposals Map.
- 1.10 The St James Neighbourhood Plan shows a depiction of the city centre boundary in Figure 2 on page 10. Although this is helpful in showing the location of St James within the Exeter context and includes the city centre, the City Council considers this to be illustrative only because of the stylistic nature of the map. In any case, it would not be for a Neighbourhood Plan to redefine an area already included in a local plan.

Summary

- 1.11 This note demonstrates that the southern part of St James has been included in the city centre area for a period of at least 20 years since the adoption of the Local Plan First Review. The City Council continues to consider the boundary of the city centre to be appropriate and retains the policy position of focusing purpose-built student accommodation in this area, together with the University campuses and other areas that are well served by public transport.
- 1.12 The City Council will continue to engage with the local community to address concerns regarding student accommodation in St James.

APPENDIX A:

Extract from the Exeter Local Plan First Review Proposals Map showing the city centre boundary



APPENDIX B:
Extract from the Exeter Plan Policies Map showing the city centre boundary

