

The Exeter Plan

Evidence Base Report: 0-25 Education

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1. Devon County Council Statutory Responsibilities: Pupil Place Planning

- 1.1 This report provides the evidence to support Devon County Council's (DCC) education infrastructure requirements in response to the development identified in the Exeter Plan. This covers childcare and early years, primary and secondary education, and learners up to twenty-five who have an identified special educational need through an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 1.2 In terms of education, DCC plans strategically for a sustainable pattern of provision which accounts for patterns in population growth and the impact of planned future housing development within an area.
- 1.3 Local Education Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient and suitable 0-25 education provision. Devon County Council's priority, as set out in the Education Infrastructure Plan (EIP) (2016-2033)¹ is to provide local schools for local children and recognises the role that schools play in the wider community. This is underpinned by the Office of the School's Adjudicator's determination that pupil numbers and places in a school's designated area must be balanced so parents have a reasonable chance of gaining admission.
- 1.4 In respect of early years provision, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient early years and childcare places for 0–5-year-olds, with recent announcements increasing entitlements for working parents, as well as a duty to ensure sufficient childminding for 0–2-year-olds. This requirement extends to school holiday provision.
- 1.5 In 2024/2025 there were 9,848 children and young people with an EHCP in Devon. The majority of learners' needs can be fully met within mainstream provision; however, a proportion of learners will require specialist provision, either a place in a special resource base/unit on a mainstream school site or within a special school place. It is anticipated that 2% of the total school population will need specialist provision.,
- 1.6 The infrastructure required to support the Exeter Plan is underpinned by the policies and principles as set out in the approved Devon County Council's Education Infrastructure Plan (EIP) (2016-2033) and the Education Approach for Securing Developer Contributions (2021)² which includes details of pupil yields and infrastructure costs in relation to mainstream and specialist education provision. It also sets out the statutory requirement to support Home to School transport.

2. The Plan and Education Requirements

- 2.1 Exeter City Council has produced a Local Plan which proposes to deliver circa 14,000 new homes over the plan period across the city. Of this figure 2,311 homes

¹ [Devon County Council's Education Infrastructure Plan \(2016-2033\)](#)

² [Devon County Council's Education Approach for Developer Contributions \(December 2021\)](#)

have been built in Exeter between 2021/22 to 2023/24, with planning consents in place for a further 5,289 homes.

The plan proposes the following new allocations for Exeter in total, and this has informed the Local Education Authority response. These figures do not include windfall sites which is anticipated to yield around a further one thousand homes.

Location	Total Yield Number of Dwellings
Mixed Use Brownfield Sites	
Water Lane	1,861
East Gate	609
Red Cow	442
Exe Bridges Retail Park	201
South Gate	81
Residential Sites – Large Scale	
Land at Old Rydon Lane	357
St Bridget Nurseries	350
Heavitree Road Police Station	350
Mary Arches Car Park	154
Whipton Community Hospital	110
Other Residential Sites -major	823
Other Residential Sites – minor	31
Total	5,369

Table 1: Distribution of new homes proposed in Exeter Local Plan (Regulation 19 Version)

3. Methodology

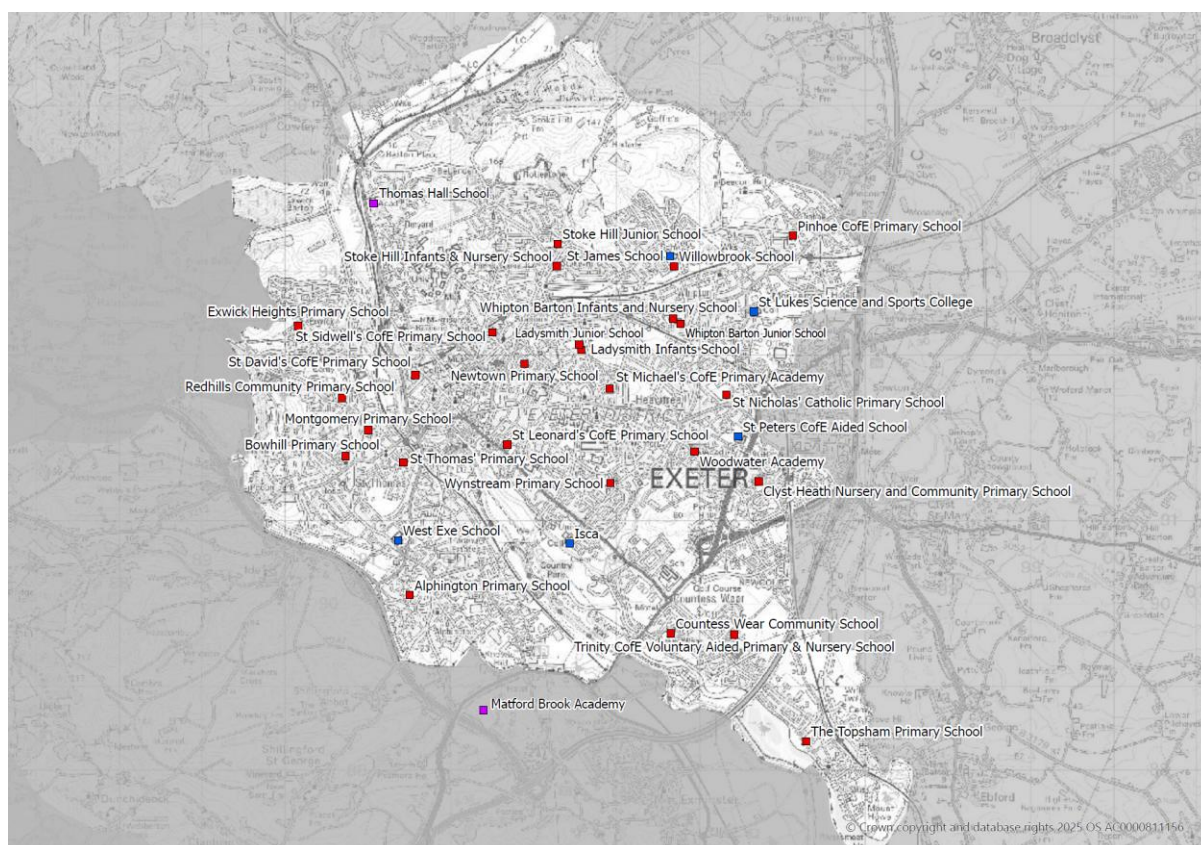
- 3.1 The following section outlines the methodology used by Devon County Council to evaluate the impact of the proposed level of development in Exeter and the associated education infrastructure requirements.
- 3.2 DCC has analysed nearly two decades of pupil population data to provide an estimate of the average combined cohort size. This data provides a benchmark of the average population and need for education places and provides an overview of the inevitable peaks and troughs to support infrastructure planning.
- 3.3 Historic data on the number of children who do not seek a place in Exeter schools has been applied to these forecasts to reflect parental choice, or those children requiring other education provision, for example the independent sector or specialist provision. In Exeter, this rate is on average 85% of the pupil yield from the proposed housing at both primary and secondary level. This average figure has been applied in forecast calculations to establish the level of surplus capacity, or otherwise, and to ensure that the data does not over-forecast the expected number of pupils requiring a school place within Exeter.
- 3.4 The expected pupil yield has been assessed against the expected housing due to come forward from existing consents and the new allocations. It does not include any growth from windfall sites.
- 3.5 The cohort data used by the County Council is provided by the National Health Service (NHS) and underpins all our place planning, including statutory returns to the Department for Education (DfE).

4. Exeter Education Infrastructure – Primary & Secondary Provision

- 4.1 The following section of this report sets the context and need for additional education provision required because of development proposed within the Exeter Plan.

Within Exeter, there are 3 Local Learning Community (LLC) areas; these are grouped around secondary school catchments areas and feeder primary schools. The LLC areas within Exeter are Exeter Beacon, Exeter Central and Chestnut and Exeter West Exe. However, as a small city there is greater pupil movement and parental choice across Exeter due to the proximity of local schools compared to smaller market towns and rural areas. Devon County Council therefore plan education infrastructure strategically across the whole of Exeter, including the impacts of adjacent development in neighbouring Districts, in particular East Devon and Teignbridge.

Figure 1: Distribution of Primary and Secondary Schools in Exeter



Exeter Primary and Secondary Schools and the capacity of each school:

Table 2 – Exeter Primary and Secondary Schools

Exeter Beacon Primary Schools	Age Range	NET Capacity (SCAP 2024)	Year R PAN* 2025	Average Combined Cohorts ** (2019-2029)	Scope of Site for Future Expansion
Ladysmith Infant School	3-7	270	90	862	Not capable on existing site
Ladysmith Junior School	7-11	360	90	As above	Not capable on existing site
Pinhoe Church of England Primary School	2-11	420	60	482	Not capable on existing site
Monkerton Primary School	2-11	420	60	591	Yes, increase of 210 places (PAN 90)
St Michael's Church of England VA Primary School	5-11	420	60	Faith School no catchment	Not capable on existing site
St Nicholas Catholic Primary School	3-11	300	45	Faith School no catchment	Not capable on existing site
Stoke Hill Infant & Nursery School	3-7	270	90	508	Not capable on existing site
Stoke Hill Junior School	7-11	359	90	As above	Not capable on existing site
Whipton Barton Infant & Nursery School	2-7	270	90	753	Not capable on existing site

Whipton Barton Junior School	7-11	360	90	As above	Not capable on existing site
Willowbrook School	3-11	432	60	752	Not capable on existing site
Exeter Beacon Totals		3881		3948	
Exeter Central & Chestnut Primary Schools	Age Range	NET Capacity 2024	Year R PAN* 2025	Average Combined Cohorts ** (2019-2029)	Scope of Site for Future Expansion
Clyst Heath Nursery & Community Primary School	3-11	315	45	304	Not capable on existing site
Countess Wear Community School	2-11	315	45	270	Not capable on existing site
Newtown Primary School	4-11	208	30	185	Not capable on existing site
St David's Church of England Primary School	5-11	105	15	263	Not capable on existing site
St Leonard's Church of England Primary School	5-11	630	90	512	Not capable on existing site
St Sidwell's Church of England Primary School	3-11	210	30	260	Not capable on existing site
Thomas Hall School	4-16	420	60	No catchment	All-Through School any expansion scope is required for secondary provision
The Topsham School	3-11	208	30	236	Not capable on existing site
Trinity Church of England Primary & Nursery School	2-11	420	60	490	Not capable on existing site
The Woodwater Academy	3-11	315	45	340	Not capable on existing site
Wynstream School	4-11	420	60	524	Not capable on existing site
Exeter Central & Chestnut Totals		3566		3384	
West Exe Primary Schools	Age Range	NET Capacity 2024	Year R PAN* 2025	Average Combined Cohorts ** (2019-2029)	Scope of Site for Future Expansion
Alphington Primary School	2-11	406	60	316	Not capable on existing site
Bowhill Primary School	5-11	525	75	550	Not capable on existing site
Exwick Heights Primary School	3-11	630	60	534	Not capable on existing site
Ide Primary School	2-11	136	15	90	Not capable on existing site
Montgomery Primary School	2-11	420	60	259	Not capable on existing site
St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School	2-11	385	30	335	Not capable on existing site
St Thomas Primary School	5-11	204	30	280	Not capable on existing site
Matford Brook Academy	2-16	0**	60	No catchment	Not capable on existing site

West Exe Total		2706		2364	
All Exeter Primary Totals		10,153		9696	
Exeter Secondary Schools	Age Range	NET Capacity 2024	Year 7 PAN 2025*	Average Combined Cohorts ** (2024-2035)	Scope of Site for Future Expansion
ISCA	11-16	980	196		Limited options on existing site
Matford Brook Academy	2-16	150***	90		Not capable on existing site
St James School	11-16	980	196		Not capable on existing site
St Luke's Church of England School	11-16	980	196		Yes on existing site
St Peter's Church of England Aided School	11-16	1311	261		Yes on existing site
Thomas Hall School	4-16	300	90		Yes on existing site
West Exe	11-16	1300	260		Limited options on existing site
All Exeter Secondary Totals		6001		6725	

* **PAN** = Planned Admission Number at Entry Level - Year Reception for primary entry and Year 7 for secondary entry.

** **The Average Combined Cohort** is the total number of primary school aged children living in the school designated area over a 10-year period.

Exeter secondary schools are grouped together as sufficiency of places is considered City-wide.

*** **Matford Brook Academy** – School to serve the Southwest Exeter allocation under the existing Core Strategy, Teignbridge Local Plan (2013-2033) and new Teignbridge allocations. Once factored in there is no surplus primary provision to serve the new Exeter plan and only 150 surplus secondary places for Exeter children.

4.2 Exeter Beacon Local Learning Community

There are eleven primary schools within the Exeter Beacon Local Learning Community, which covers schools within the east of the city. There is a total average cohort size of 3,948 primary age pupils, compared to a capacity of 3,881 primary school places, an average shortfall of sixty-seven places.

These primary schools feed into St Lukes and St James secondary schools. Children in this LLC will also attend St Peters, however as a faith school St Peters is its own admissions authority.

Under the previous Exeter Core Strategy extensive investment has been made into delivering new primary provision within the LLC to serve the housing growth and resulting demand for additional school places. Monkerton Primary School opened in 2020, with expansions undertaken at Willowbrook Primary School and Pinhoe

Primary School. In addition, West Clyst Primary School, just outside the Exeter border, was delivered to serve adjacent development within East Devon District.

There is sustained pressure for primary school places in the Monkerton, Tithebarn, and West Clyst due to existing local plan growth. Monkerton was foot-printed to expand to serve future growth from its existing 420 places to 630 places. Other primary schools in the LLC cannot be expanded.

The impact of development from adjacent East Devon development has been considered in our assessment. East Devon will need to mitigate its own education impact and cannot be served within Exeter.

4.3 Exeter Central and Chestnut Local Learning Community

There are eleven primary schools within the Exeter Central and Chestnut Local Learning Community, which covers schools within the central areas of the city. There is a total average cohort size of 3,384 primary age pupils, compared to a capacity of 3,566 primary school places, an average surplus of 182 places.

These primary schools feed into ISCA secondary school. As above children in this LLC will also attend St Peters, however as a faith school St Peters is its own admissions authority. Thomas Hall All-Through School also sits within this LLC but does not have a catchment as an Academy Free School.

Under the previous Exeter Core Strategy new school provision was delivered across the LLC to serve the Newcourt allocation with the opening of Trinity Primary School, as well as the expansion of St Leonard's School. New free school provision was also provided at Thomas Hall All-Through School.

4.4 Exeter West Exe Local Learning Community

There are eight primary schools within the Exeter West Exe Local Learning Community, which covers schools within the west and southwest areas of the city. There is a total an average cohort size of 2,364 primary age pupils, compared to a capacity of 2,706 primary school places, an average surplus of 342 places.

These primary schools feed into West Exe and St James secondary school.

Under the previous Exeter Core Strategy Ide Primary School and Exwick Heights Primary School were expanded.

In addition, a new All-Through school, Matford Brook Academy is being delivered to serve the Southwest Exeter allocation under the existing Core Strategy and Teignbridge Local Plan (2013-2033). The school has been built within the Teignbridge administrative boundary and currently supports both Exeter and Teignbridge.

Once the Southwest Exeter allocation is fully built out, and factoring in the impact of additional Teignbridge Local Plan development at both Markham Village and Peamore, there will be no surplus primary capacity and only 150 secondary places at Matford Brook Academy to support Exeter development. Adjacent Teignbridge development at Attwells Farm will be considered as Exeter-facing for education

given its proximity to the city and contributions will be sought from this development to support education infrastructure in Exeter.

4.5 Primary Infrastructure Requirements, including Early Years

Devon County Council has concluded that an additional 1,000 primary school places will be required over the plan period. This can be mitigated through the delivery of up to two new primary schools and expansion of Monkerton Primary School. The expansion of Monkerton from 420 to 630 places was previously included in Exeter's Core Strategy and remains available as mitigation for the Exeter Plan.

A new primary school to provide 420 places and early years provision will be required to serve the Water Lane allocation. This requirement was previously included in the Core Strategy when the allocation was 800 dwellings. With 1800 dwellings now proposed for Water Lane the allocation requires a new primary school. The new school site should comply with Department for Education's area guidelines for mainstream schools, Building Bulletin Guidance for Schools (BB103) or any subsequent guidance which may supersede BB103 in the context of the site constraints and to ensure there is sufficient land for the new school and the needs of the new community.

The need for the remaining 370 places will be towards the end of the plan period and may need to be mitigated through an additional school site within the Exeter administrative boundary. Due to the lack of available land, a second school site has not yet been identified, however Devon County Council acknowledge that emerging plans to allocate sites directly adjacent to the city, but outside its administrative boundary, could provide a strategic solution to mitigate the impact of the Local Plan. The additional school site will be reviewed as part of a future Local Plan review mechanism.

All new primary provision will include a nursery to support the statutory requirement to provide early years places for 0–4-year-olds.

Devon County Council will therefore require primary contributions, which may include land contributions, from all development to support the delivery of new infrastructure. Devon will also seek Early Years contributions from all development.

4.6 Secondary Infrastructure Requirements

Devon County Council has concluded that an additional 1,200 secondary school places will be required over the plan period. Exeter City Council is not allocating a development area that is sufficient to accommodate a new secondary site. Devon County Council will therefore need to review expansion options at existing secondary schools along with Academy/School partners. The expectation is that the need for additional secondary provision within the Local Plan can be mitigated at existing provision without the allocation of a new secondary school site.

Devon County Council will therefore require secondary contributions, which may include land contributions, from development to expand existing secondary school provision in the city.

5. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 5.1 Devon County Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure that children with an Education Health & Care Plan can access a specialist school place. This duty extends from the ages of 0-25 years.
- 5.2 When considering baseline capacity for SEND provision, a wider geographical area is considered due to the varying provision associated with this need and the fact pupils often need to travel to access the appropriate setting for their needs. All special schools in Devon are operating above their statutory registered capacity and there is a shortfall of specialist provision throughout Devon.
- 5.3 There are three Special Schools in Exeter, namely Barley Lane School, Ellen Tinkham School, and Southbrook School. Each school specialising in meeting distinct and different needs.

Table 4 – Exeter Special Schools

Special School	Primary Need	Age Range	Registered Places
Barley Lane	Social Emotional & Mental Health	7-16 years	72
Ellen Tinkham School	Severe Learning Difficulties, Profound & Multiple Learning Disability & Complex Needs	3-19 years	220
Southbrook	Moderate Learning Difficulties, Complex Needs & Autistic Spectrum Conditions	11-16 years	120

- 5.4 In addition, there is Resource Base provision within Countess Wear Primary School and St Lukes School. Resource Bases provide specialist education provision for pupils with additional needs alongside mainstream provision. Resource Bases provide increasingly specialist provision and enable children to stay within mainstream education settings.
- 5.5 Devon is also extending Special Post-16 places with the delivery of a new SEND teaching facility at Exeter College.
- 5.6 Central Government and Devon County Council policy is re-focusing on how SEND provision is delivered with a drive to provide specialist places within mainstream schools, as well as within Special Schools. This will increase SEND provision nearer to where pupils are living and build more inclusive communities. It is

therefore fundamental that new school provision can support this offer through adequately sized sites.

- 5.7 Devon County Council is currently forward funding additional SEND capacity. Contributions will therefore be sought towards specialist education provision from development that meets the policy threshold for SEND contributions. These contributions will be used both within and outside the city rather than the allocation of a new SEND school with the Exeter Local Plan. This approach recognises that Special Schools serve a wider geographic area and acknowledges the pressures on available land within the city for new school provision. Contributions will be used in both Special and mainstream schools to support additional SEND places.
- 5.8 Devon County Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient SEND. post-16 provision. SEND contributions will therefore also support the delivery of additional specialist post-16 places.
- 5.9 It is recognised that SEND provision will not necessarily be within close proximity to a proposed development due to the need to travel to access the appropriate provision for individual needs. However, the County Council does not seek contributions towards SEND transport due to the cost variations of SEND transport and individual nature of transport requirements.