

**Exeter Plan**

**Hearing statement**

**Matter 6: Energy, Climate  
Change and Flooding**

February 2026

**Exeter City Council**  
Civic Centre  
Paris Street  
Exeter,  
EX1 1JN



## Contents

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |    |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1.  | Introduction.....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 4  |
| 2.  | Issue 1: Net Zero, Low Carbon Energy, Renewable Energy and Local Energy Networks – Policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CC6 .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 5  |
| Q1. | Is it sufficiently clear what is meant by ‘net zero’ for the purposes of Policy CC1? How will the policy be implemented and how will it be effective? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 5  |
| Q2. | Does Policy CC1 apply to all development? Are the requirements set out in Policy CC1 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? Have these requirements been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 5  |
| Q3  | Should Policy CC1 acknowledge that targets will be dictated by national policy and up to date building regulations, rather than local policy? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 6  |
| Q4  | What is the justification for rejecting any proposal for energy generation from a source that is not renewable or low carbon in Policy CC2? Is this approach consistent with national planning policy and guidance? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 6  |
| Q5  | Is it sufficiently clear what is meant by ‘unacceptable impacts’ for the purposes of Policy CC2? How will the policy be implemented and how will it be effective? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 7  |
| Q6  | Policy CC3 requires all new development with a floorspace of at least 1,000 square metres or comprising ten or more homes and located in certain areas, to have heating system that are compatible with either a proposed or existing local energy network. What is the justification for this approach? Is the policy sufficiently flexible in this regard to be effective? Has this requirement been adequately tested to ensure that it is viable and deliverable? ..... | 7  |
| Q7  | Is it clear to users of the Plan how all development proposals (excluding householder developments) should connect to ‘local energy networks’ under Policy CC3? Will this be possible for all development types and locations? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 8  |
| Q8  | How has the potential impact of any necessary underground infrastructure on archaeology been considered in the formulation of policies CC3 and CC4? ....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 8  |
| Q9  | Criterion e) of Policy CC4 requires the protection of the setting of heritage assets. Is this approach consistent with national planning policy in particular paragraph 207 of the Framework? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 9  |
| Q10 | Are the other requirements set out in Policy CC4 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? Does the Written Ministerial Statement for solar, food security and best and most versatile land published on 15 May 2024 have any implications for soundness of this Policy CC4? .....                                                                                                                                                                 | 9  |
| Q11 | Do the minimum standards in Policy CC5 go beyond the relevant current and future Building Regulations and Future Homes Standard? If so, is there a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale including in respect of development viability, housing supply and affordability? If Policy CC5 does not go beyond the future Building Regulations, why is the policy necessary?.....                                                                                         | 10 |
| Q12 | Is Policy CC5 consistent with the national policy position towards achieving net zero and the expectations of the Government’s Written Statement “Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update” made on 13 December 2023? .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 10 |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |    |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Q13         | Is it sufficiently clear what is meant by ‘adequate steps’ for the purposes of Policy CC6? How will the policy be implemented and how will it be effective? Is the policy sufficiently flexible to be effective? .....                                                                                                                        | 10 |
| Q14         | Policy CC6 only allows the one-for-one replacement of existing dwellings where it can be demonstrated that refurbishment is not feasible or viable, or where it is demonstrated that the proposed new build would perform better than refurbishment in terms of lifecycle carbon footprint. What is the justification for this approach?..... | 11 |
| Q15         | Is it sufficiently clear what Policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CC6 require from decision-makers and developers? Have the requirements been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable? .....                                                                                                                             | 11 |
| Q16         | In terms of this issue, are any of the suggested modifications in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications necessary for soundness?.....                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 12 |
| 3.          | Issue 2: Climate Resilience, Flood Risk and Drainage – Policies CC5, CC7, CC8 and CC9 .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 13 |
| Q1.         | Will Policy CC7 provide an effective framework for climate change resilience in new development? Is it sufficiently clear how plan users should respond to the policy requirements?.....                                                                                                                                                      | 13 |
| Q2.         | Is Policy CC8 positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national planning policy? In particular paragraph 173 of the Framework and the inclusion of safe access and escape routes where appropriate?.....                                                                                                                | 13 |
| Q3          | Policy CC9 requires all new development to achieve a minimum estimated water use of not more than 110 litres per person per day. What is the justification for this approach? Is it consistent with national planning policy and based on robust, up to date evidence? .....                                                                  | 13 |
| Q4          | Has this requirement been adequately tested to ensure that it is viable and deliverable? How would this requirement be effectively implemented and monitored? Is the policy sufficiently flexible in this regard to be effective? .....                                                                                                       | 14 |
| Q5.         | Is it sufficiently clear what Policies CC7, CC8 and CC9 require from decision-makers and developers? Have the requirements been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable?.....                                                                                                                                        | 14 |
| Q6          | In terms of this issue, are any of the suggested modifications in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications necessary for soundness?.....                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 15 |
| 4.          | Summary .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 16 |
| APPENDIX A: | Policy CC6 - Evidence regarding carbon footprint (refurbishment v new build) .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 17 |

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This hearing statement responds to the Exeter Plan Inspectors' questions relating to Matter 6 which addresses energy, climate change and flooding.
- 1.2. The statement is divided into sections which cover each of the following issues:
  - Issue 1 - Net Zero, Low Carbon Energy, Renewable Energy and Local Energy Networks – Policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CC6
  - Issue 2 - Climate Resilience, Flood Risk and Drainage – Policies CC5, CC7, CC8 and CC9

## **2. Issue 1: Net Zero, Low Carbon Energy, Renewable Energy and Local Energy Networks – Policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CC6**

### **Q1. Is it sufficiently clear what is meant by ‘net zero’ for the purposes of Policy CC1? How will the policy be implemented and how will it be effective?**

- 2.1. It is considered that the addition of a definition of ‘net zero’ in the glossary of the Exeter Plan would be helpful in ensuring clarity; this is suggested in the Exeter Plan Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD02: page 119, SAMM135). This definition is consistent with definitions used more widely including that used by the Devon Carbon Plan<sup>1</sup> (which the City Council have also signed up to). This modification together with the evidence document ‘Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan’ (EVB-CC-01), ensures it is clear what is meant by ‘net zero’ for the purposes of policy CC1.
- 2.2. This policy will be implemented through Development Management. By setting the high-level requirement for development to consider and support the achievement of net zero, policy CC1 will be effective in delivering development that contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change over the plan period. The policy sets out the considerations that apply. There will be a key role for the planning officer as part of the decision-making process to consider if sufficient actions have been taken to meet the policy requirements.

### **Q2. Does Policy CC1 apply to all development? Are the requirements set out in Policy CC1 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? Have these requirements been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable?**

- 2.3. Yes, policy CC1 applies to all development requiring planning permission. The requirement to submit a Net Zero Statement applies to all major development.
- 2.4. Yes, the requirements set out in policy CC1 are justified drawing on the Net Zero 2030 Plan (EVB-CC-01), as well as the evidence work undertaken by the Centre for Energy and the Environment - University of Exeter (EVB-CC-04 to EVB-CC-11).
- 2.5. Yes, by setting the high-level requirement for development to consider and support the achievement of net zero, policy CC1 will be effective in delivering development that contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change over the plan period and in accordance with the aspirations of all duty to cooperate parties as stated in the Duty to Cooperate Statement: Submission (DTC-01, paragraphs 5.1-5.4).
- 2.6. Yes, policy CC1 is consistent with the NPPF that requires ‘a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change’ (paragraph 158), and the Government’s wider commitments to reaching Net Zero by 2050 and seeking to ensure development mitigates carbon emissions (Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, 2025<sup>2</sup>).

---

<sup>1</sup> Available at: [Full-Carbon-Plan-22-11-2022.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> Available at: [Carbon budget and growth delivery plan - GOV.UK](#)

- 2.7 Yes, requirements have been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable. The Local Plan Viability Assessment (LPVA) assessed the policy requirements of CC1 and applied specific building standards and BNG allowances to the testing (EVB-IF-01a: page 57, Appendix B).
- 2.8 The viability implications from policy CC1 relate to type of development, building standards and biodiversity. The LPVA responds through the range of typologies used in the testing (EVB-IF-01a: tables 3.1 and 3.2; EVB-IF-01b: table 3.1), along with allowances for building standards (EVB-IF-01a: table 4.13 Future Homes and para 4.34) and for biodiversity net gain/green infrastructure (EVB-IF-01a: table 4.13 and para 4.35). The testing shows that the CC1's policy requirements are viable in combination with other policies in the Plan (EVB-IF-01a: paras 5.18-5.20).

**Q3 Should Policy CC1 acknowledge that targets will be dictated by national policy and up to date building regulations, rather than local policy?**

- 2.9 The supporting text to policy CC1 (paragraph 5.5) acknowledges that certain targets will be dictated by national policy, specifically the Future Homes Standard and the Future Buildings Standard, as well as through updates to Building Regulations. There is no need to restate this in the policy text itself. The policy requirement to maximise renewable and low carbon energy generation (criteria d) and to minimise operational and embodied carbon emissions (criteria e) are consistent with the Government's commitment to reach Net Zero by 2025 and to the Government's Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard that seek to deliver zero carbon ready development.

**Q4 What is the justification for rejecting any proposal for energy generation from a source that is not renewable or low carbon in Policy CC2? Is this approach consistent with national planning policy and guidance?**

- 2.10 The UK is committed to reaching net zero by 2050. The UK Government has adopted a suite of policies in order to reach net zero. Its most recent strategy document, published under the Labour Government, is the 2025 Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.11 All decisions to grant planning permission must have regard to downstream greenhouse gas emissions that will inevitably arise from the energy generation from a source that is not renewable or low carbon (R (on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group) (Appellant) v Surrey County Council and others (Respondents) [2024] UKSC 20).
- 2.12 This policy accords with both local and national aspirations to reach 'net zero' and also accords with the NPPF requirement to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change (paragraph 158).

---

<sup>3</sup> [Carbon budget and growth delivery plan - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carbon-budget-and-growth-delivery-plan)

**Q5 Is it sufficiently clear what is meant by ‘unacceptable impacts’ for the purposes of Policy CC2? How will the policy be implemented and how will it be effective?**

2.13 This policy will be implemented through Development Management. It will be effective in ensuring the benefits of renewable and low carbon development are given proper consideration in the decision-making process. The impacts on amenity and the natural, historic and built environment will be assessed by officers with regard to statutory consultee responses, design and access statements, other evidence submitted in support of the application in relation to these issues, policies in the Exeter Plan (in particular policies H16: Residential Amenity and Healthy Homes, D1: Design Principles and HH1: Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets), and any adopted design-related Supplementary Planning Document and/or design code. This is a similar approach to other forms of development where proposals need to be assessed on their merits and there is an important role for the decision maker.

**Q6 Policy CC3 requires all new development with a floorspace of at least 1,000 square metres or comprising ten or more homes and located in certain areas, to have heating system that are compatible with either a proposed or existing local energy network. What is the justification for this approach? Is the policy sufficiently flexible in this regard to be effective? Has this requirement been adequately tested to ensure that it is viable and deliverable?**

2.14 The overarching justification is to ensure that opportunities are not missed to connect new heat loads to emerging DH schemes in the city, as increased heating load and customers will help with the overall viability of these schemes. Heat networks will play a crucial role in decarbonising heat in buildings, which is currently a major driver of carbon emissions. The Exeter specific evidence is set out in ‘Heat network evidence to support emerging Exeter Plan policy CC3’ (EVB-CC-06).

2.15 Exeter is part of the DESNZ Pilot programme which showcases the potential heat networks in the city. The approach taken in policy CC3 accords with the ‘Exeter – Heat Network Zoning – Zone Opportunity Report’ (EVB-CC-07) which ‘indicates the heat network investment opportunity at a city scale, the potential location of heat network zones, and key opportunities for initial heat network development within those potential zones’ (EVB-CC-07: Introduction, page 6).

2.16 The policy is flexible as it does not require connection, stating development must be ‘constructed to have heating (water and space) systems compatible with the proposed or existing local energy network and include provision for the necessary pipework connection from those in-building systems up to the appropriate site boundary’ and only where this is feasible and viable.

2.17 The policy builds on existing policy (policy CP13 within Exeter’s adopted Core Strategy: SUP-DPD-01) and the effectiveness of the approach has already been proven through the implementation of existing policy and the subsequent delivery of energy networks in Exeter.

2.18 It is also important to see Exeter’s approach alongside the national policy direction: the Energy Act 2023 introduces significant powers to the secretary of state to introduce regulations that will require areas of the country to be

designated as heat network zones. The 2023 Heat Network Zoning consultation makes clear that the Department intends to introduce such regulations with the expectation that they will be brought into law this year.

- 2.19 The requirements of policy CC3 have been assessed as part of the Local Plan Viability Assessment (EVB-IF-01a and EVB-IF-01b). No specific allowances were made as the evidence suggests that if designed into proposals the cost implications are minimal (see paragraphs 2.31-2.32 of EVB-IF-01b) and also because the policy includes reference to feasibility and viability.

**Q7 Is it clear to users of the Plan how all development proposals (excluding householder developments) should connect to 'local energy networks' under Policy CC3? Will this be possible for all development types and locations?**

- 2.20 The policy text clearly sets out what is required; development must 'be constructed to have heating (water and space) systems compatible with the proposed or existing local energy network and include provision for the necessary pipework connection from those in-building systems up to the appropriate site boundary to allow for future connection to the network when available'.
- 2.21 Meeting the policy requirements will be possible for most, but not all, development types and this is why the policy includes the phrase 'unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant at the detailed design stage, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable.'
- 2.22 Meeting the policy requirements will not be justified in all locations and that is why the requirements to have compatible heating systems to allow for connection only applies in certain areas where the evidence suggests this is deliverable (see 'Heat network evidence to support emerging Exeter Plan policy CC3' (EVB-CC-06) and 'Exeter – Heat Network Zoning – Zone Opportunity Report' (EVB-CC-07)). Even in these areas, the policy wording allows applicants to demonstrate that this is not feasible or viable.

**Q8 How has the potential impact of any necessary underground infrastructure on archaeology been considered in the formulation of policies CC3 and CC4?**

CC3:

- 2.23 The requirements of policy CC3 will be largely met within the built form of the development and therefore impacts on archaeology will be minimal. However, if there are impacts of any heritage assets these will be assessed under policy HH1: Conserving and enhancing heritage assets.
- 2.24 A Local Development Order (LDO) has been in place since 2019 granting permitted development rights for local energy networks and associated infrastructure on or under land within large parts of the Exeter administrative area. The City Council has also set up an archaeological monitoring requirement in conjunction with Devon County Council Highways licencing. It is considered that the supporting text could helpfully be amended to refer to the

LDO and the archaeological monitoring requirement. Historic England supports this suggested text change (see CSD-03: Exeter Plan schedule of suggested modifications, SAMM4).

CC4:

- 2.25 Proposals for ground mounted photovoltaic arrays could have an impact on heritage assets, both above and below ground, and therefore a modification is suggested to policy CC4 to amend criteria e to read 'Protect heritage assets and their settings' to specifically acknowledge this and to ensure the policy is consistent with national policy. Historic England supports this suggested text change (see CSD-03: Exeter Plan schedule of suggested modifications, SMM4).
- 2.26 If there are impacts on a heritage asset, these will be assessed under policy HH1: Conserving and enhancing heritage assets. Heritage assets, including archaeological heritage assets, are also subject to their own legislation.

**Q9 Criterion e) of Policy CC4 requires the protection of the setting of heritage assets. Is this approach consistent with national planning policy in particular paragraph 207 of the Framework?**

- 2.27 Yes, the requirement to protect the setting of a heritage asset is consistent with the NPPF, but the requirement does not go far enough and therefore a modification is suggested to ensure that proposals will only be supported by policy CC4 where they 'Protect heritage assets and their settings'. This suggested main modification will ensure the policy is consistent with national policy. Historic England supports this suggested text change (see CSD-03: Exeter Plan schedule of suggested modifications, SMM4).

**Q10 Are the other requirements set out in Policy CC4 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? Does the Written Ministerial Statement for solar, food security and best and most versatile land published on 15 May 2024 have any implications for soundness of this Policy CC4?**

- 2.28 The approach taken in policy CC4 is justified by the evidence (EVB-CC-05: Exeter's potential for wind and solar energy), effective in delivering renewable energy and consistent with national policy (NPPF, paragraph 160).
- 2.29 The evidence document 'Exeter's potential for wind and solar energy' (EVB-CC-05) for ground-mounted PV resource has accounted for agricultural land (i.e. it excludes development on the best agricultural land).
- 2.30 Grades 1 and 2 were explicitly excluded. Whilst comprehensive mapping of grade 3a and 3b land is unavailable (only being distinguished in post-1988 mapping), where mapping was available approximately half is grade 3a and half is grade 3b. The analysis of total generating potential has taken this into account by applying this assumed split. Table 5 shows the total potential resource excluding grade 3a (EVB-CC-05, page 17).

- 2.31 It is considered that the policy is in accordance with the Written Ministerial Statement in that criteria (a) only supports proposals that are on brownfield land or agricultural land of classification 3b, 4 or 5.

**Q11 Do the minimum standards in Policy CC5 go beyond the relevant current and future Building Regulations and Future Homes Standard? If so, is there a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale including in respect of development viability, housing supply and affordability? If Policy CC5 does not go beyond the future Building Regulations, why is the policy necessary?**

- 2.32 No, the requirements of CC5 do not go beyond the future building regulations; the 'Statement on CC5: Future Development Standards' (EVB-CC-08) clearly sets this out (see specifically table on page 2). Also note the Council is suggesting a modification to the supporting text to ensure it is clear that this local back-up to the national ambition will be secured 'through condition or legal agreement until equivalent requirements are introduced through building regulations.' (CSD-03: SAMM6).
- 2.33 Whilst the policy does not go beyond the future Building Regulations proposed by Government, as this will happen in the future, there is still an element of uncertainty about when the new regulations will be introduced; Policy CC5 is a back up to ensure the future Building Regulations will be implemented from the time the Exeter Plan is adopted.
- 2.34 The requirements of policy CC5 have been tested by the Local Plan Viability Assessment to ensure that they are viable and deliverable with allowances being made in accordance with the Government's own assessed costs for Future Homes Standards (EVB-IF-01a: table 4.13, paragraph 4.34 and Appendix B, page 57).

**Q12 Is Policy CC5 consistent with the national policy position towards achieving net zero and the expectations of the Government's Written Statement "Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update" made on 13 December 2023?**

- 2.35 Yes – policy CC5 is consistent with the expectations of the Government's Written Statement 'Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update' made on 13 December 2023, and specifically the policy does not 'set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations.' The evidence document 'Statement on CC5: Future Development Standards' (EVB-CC-06) clearly sets this out.
- 2.36 See also the response to Q11 above.

**Q13 Is it sufficiently clear what is meant by 'adequate steps' for the purposes of Policy CC6? How will the policy be implemented and how will it be effective? Is the policy sufficiently flexible to be effective?**

- 2.37 Yes, the supporting text for Policy CC6 states 'In determining what action needs to be taken to meet the policy requirements, reference should be made to the Delivering Policy CC6: Embodied Carbon Report and the accompanying

Embodied Carbon Delivery Checklist, both of which support the delivery of this policy.’ (CSD-02: paragraph 5.28)

- 2.38 These evidence documents (see EVB-CC-09 and EVB-CC-10) provide clarity regarding what steps should be taken and explain how the policy will be implemented and how it will be effective. The Embodied Carbon Delivery Checklist (EVB-CC-10) sets out adequate steps, specifically requiring (1) a clear report, (2) a baseline and optimised assessment, (3) a list of four headline measures to consider, and (4) an approach to monitoring. It is proposed to endorse this checklist for Development Management purposes.
- 2.39 This policy is more flexible than one that requires a strict percentage reduction in embodied carbon emissions, and it has the advantage of allowing a site-by-site approach. There will still be a role for the planning officer to consider if adequate steps have been taken in the decision-making process.

**Q14 Policy CC6 only allows the one-for-one replacement of existing dwellings where it can be demonstrated that refurbishment is not feasible or viable, or where it is demonstrated that the proposed new build would perform better than refurbishment in terms of lifecycle carbon footprint. What is the justification for this approach?**

- 2.40 It is widely recognised that refurbishing a property is likely to have a significantly lower lifecycle carbon footprint than demolishing a property and then constructing a new building (some examples of the general body of evidence in this area are listed at Appendix A) and this is the central justification for the approach. However, it is also the case that some new builds can have a lower lifecycle carbon footprint, often due to lower operational carbon costs because of higher energy efficiency (again see evidence documents listed at Appendix A). It is also the case that in some instances refurbishment is just not feasible and viable. This is why the policy includes clauses to allow for these exceptions.

**Q15 Is it sufficiently clear what Policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CC6 require from decision-makers and developers? Have the requirements been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable?**

- 2.41 Yes, it is clear what policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CC6 require from decision-makers and developers.
- 2.42 Policy CC1 requires developers to demonstrate how their development will support the achievement of net zero and major applications will need to submit a Net Zero Statement. Decision-makers will need to consider if sufficient actions have been taken to meet the policy requirements (see responses to Q1 and Q2 above).
- 2.43 Policy CC2 supports developers proposing renewable and low carbon energy-generating development, whilst requiring them to consider impacts of the natural, historic and built environments. Decision-makers will need to consider if the impacts are unacceptable (see response to Q5 above).
- 2.44 Policy CC3 requires developers to construct development in certain areas so that the heating systems are compatible with the proposed or existing local

energy networks. Decision-makers will need to ensure policy requirements are met (see response to Q6 and Q7 above).

- 2.45 Policy CC4 supports developers proposing ground-mounted photovoltaic arrays in locations that meet the policy criteria. Decision-makers will need to consider if the criteria are met (see response to Q9 and Q10 above).
- 2.46 Policy CC6 requires developers of major development to take action to reduce embodied carbon emissions and for refurbishment to be proposed rather than one-for-one replacement of existing homes. Decision-makers will need to consider if sufficient measures have been taken (see responses to Q13 and Q14 above).
- 2.47 Note: Three modifications are suggested to ensure soundness (see below - response to Q16).
- 2.48 The requirements of policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CC6 have been assessed in the Exeter Plan Viability Assessment and, where necessary, allowances included in the testing. The assessment concludes that policies CC2, CC4 and CC6 have no viability implications. The viability implications of CC1, CC3 and CC5 are addressed in the responses to Q2, Q6 and Q11 above.

**Q16 In terms of this issue, are any of the suggested modifications in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications necessary for soundness?**

- 2.49 The Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD-03) suggests the following policy text changes:

SMM3 – Policy CC3: Local energy networks – Suggests amending the policy to ensure it is clear that proposals for new energy networks will be supported. This modification is required to ensure the Exeter Plan is consistent with national policy, which requires support to be given to the transition to a low carbon future and support to be given to renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure (NPPF, paragraph 157).

SMM4 – Policy CC4: Ground-mounted photovoltaic arrays – Suggests amending the policy to ensure it is clear that heritage assets themselves, as well as their settings, need to be protected. This modification is required to ensure the Exeter Plan is consistent with national policy which requires assessment of harm to heritage assets and their setting (NPPF, paragraphs 205, 206 and 207).

SMM5 – Policy CC5: Future development standards – Suggests deleting text related to 2025 as the Exeter Plan will not be adopted before 2026. This modification is required to ensure the Exeter Plan is effective and deliverable over the plan period.

- 2.50 The Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD-03) also suggest other additional (minor) modifications to the supporting text to improve clarity; however, these are not considered necessary for soundness.

### **3. Issue 2: Climate Resilience, Flood Risk and Drainage – Policies CC5, CC7, CC8 and CC9**

**Q1. Will Policy CC7 provide an effective framework for climate change resilience in new development? Is it sufficiently clear how plan users should respond to the policy requirements?**

- 3.1. Yes, policy CC7 will provide an effective framework for climate resilience in new development. The approach taken in the policy is justified by a comprehensive evidence document (EVB-CC-11). The policy sets out clearly the issues that developers will need to address and each of these is explained further in the supporting text (paragraph 5.32). This supporting text also provides details of the actions that should be taken to address each issue. The supporting text to policy CC7 (paragraph 5.33) also includes reference to the 'Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Report'; this could helpfully be updated to accurately reflect the title of the document 'Development that is adaptive and resilient to climate change' (EVB-CC-11); this would be an additional/minor modification.
- 3.2. Whilst the policy and supporting text are clear what issues developers need to address and how they might do this, the approach includes a degree of flexibility and has the advantage of allowing a site-by-site approach. There will still be a role for the planning officer as part of the decision-making process to consider if sufficient actions have been taken.

**Q2. Is Policy CC8 positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national planning policy? In particular paragraph 173 of the Framework and the inclusion of safe access and escape routes where appropriate?**

- 3.3. Yes, the policy has been positively prepared working closely with the Environment Agency and with a focus on delivering sustainable development. Supporting evidence includes the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment levels 1 and 2 (EVB-CC-13a and EVB-CC-13b). The policy requirements are consistent with the NPPF ensuring that flood risk is not increased elsewhere (NPPF, paragraph 173) and will be effective in delivering sustainable and resilient development.
- 3.4. Paragraph 173 of the Framework refers to determining planning applications and would apply in its entirety. Policy CC8 is consistent with this. Where safe access and egress is a known issue, the strategic mixed use brownfield site allocation policies require development to provide for the 'delivery of, or contributions to, an emergency access and egress route'.

**Q3. Policy CC9 requires all new development to achieve a minimum estimated water use of not more than 110 litres per person per day. What is the justification for this approach? Is it consistent with national planning policy and based on robust, up to date evidence?**

- 3.5. The justification for the approach taken in Policy CC9 is provided in the supporting text: 'Over recent years South West Water has reported unprecedented demand for water in the Exeter area; this is partly as a result of the trend towards staycations, but also as a result of changes in rainfall

patterns. This increase in demand, combined with the changes in climate, puts a strain on the water supply infrastructure and sources used for abstraction. This is an early sign of the pressures that are likely to be felt in the future regarding water supply as we experience more of the effects of climate change.' (CSD-02, paragraph 5.40).

- 3.6 The approach is consistent with national planning policy (NPPF: paragraphs 20 and 158), Planning Practice Guidance (Water efficiency standards: paragraph 013) and based on the robust and up to date evidence produced jointly by the EA and South West Water: 'Evidence for increased Water Efficiency' (EVB-CC-12). This evidence advocates 'as new Development Plans are formed or existing ones reviewed in Devon and Cornwall, water efficiency measures should be a policy requirement of development, and newbuild dwellings must be required to comply with and demonstrate the tighter building regulations requirement of 110 l/p/d.' (EVB-CC-12: page 10, paragraph 5.1).

**Q4 Has this requirement been adequately tested to ensure that it is viable and deliverable? How would this requirement be effectively implemented and monitored? Is the policy sufficiently flexible in this regard to be effective?**

- 3.7 Yes, the requirement has been adequately tested to ensure that it is viable and deliverable. The Local Plan Viability Assessment (see EVB-IF-01a: Appendix B, page 57) assessed the policy requirements of CC9 based on the Government's own impact assessment for the 110 litre standard (stated as £0-9 per dwelling) assuming a de minimis cost.
- 3.8 The requirement would be implemented through Building Regulations (as is the current 125 litre backstop standard). There is little need for flexibility as the requirement is justified by compelling evidence, straightforward and virtually cost free to implement.

**Q5. Is it sufficiently clear what Policies CC7, CC8 and CC9 require from decision-makers and developers? Have the requirements been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable?**

- 3.9 Yes, it is clear what policies CC7, CC8 and CC9 require from decision-makers and developers.
- 3.10 Policy CC7 requires developers to demonstrate how their development will adapt to a changing climate and remain resilient over their lifetimes by taking certain actions. The actions are listed in the policy and detailed in the evidence document 'Delivering Policy CC7: Development that is adaptive and resilient to climate change' (EVB-CC-11: pages 4-12). Decision-makers will need to consider if sufficient actions have been taken to meet the policy requirements (see response to Q1 above).
- 3.11 Policy CC8 requires developers to ensure their development satisfies the sequential test and where necessary the exception test, submit a site-specific flood risk assessment and mitigate against flood risk. Decision-makers, working with the EA, will need to consider if the development meets the policy requirements (see response to Q2 above).

- 3.12 Policy CC9 requires developers to ensure their residential development uses no more than 110 litres per person per day, and that development proposals do not harm the ecological status of Exeter's water bodies. Decision-makers will need to consider if development proposals meet the policy requirements (see response to Q3 above).
- 3.13 Two modifications are suggested (CSD-03: SMM6 and SMM7) and these are discussed below (Q6).
- 3.14 The requirements of policies CC7, CC8 and CC9 have been assessed in the Exeter Plan Viability Assessment (EVB-IF-01a, Appendix B, page 57) and where necessary allowances included in the testing. The assessment concludes that the viability implications of policy CC7 are addressed as appropriate in the response to other policies. For policy CC8, SuDS is considered a standard development cost. The viability implications of policy CC9 are addressed in the response to Q4 above.

**Q6 In terms of this issue, are any of the suggested modifications in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications necessary for soundness?**

- 3.15 The Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD-03) suggests the following two policy text changes:

SMM6 – Policy CC8: Flood risk – Suggests amending the policy text to ensure it is clear that some development is exempted by national standing advice. This modification is required to ensure the policy is consistent with national policy guidance 'Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice'.

SMM7 – Policy CC8: Flood risk – Suggests amending the policy to require development to mitigate against flood risk by making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques. This modification is required to ensure the policy is consistent with national policy which requires residual flood risk to be managed by making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management (NPPF: paragraph 167).

- 3.16 The Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD-03) also suggests other additional (minor) modifications to improve clarity; however, these are not considered necessary for soundness.

## **4. Summary**

- 4.1. This hearing statement has been prepared by Exeter City Council in response to questions asked in relation to Matter 6 of the Exeter Plan Examination.
- 4.2. All questions associated with both issues for Matter 6 have been answered.

**APPENDIX A: Policy CC6 - Evidence regarding carbon footprint (refurbishment v new build)**Academic sources:

- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360544222004881>
  - This article compares the carbon footprint of refurbished vs replaced properties in London
  - It shows that refurbished properties have a lifecycle footprint between 1,100-1,500 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup>; whereas the lifecycle carbon footprint for new builds ranges between 1,220-1,850 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> (refurbished is much lower!)
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360132319304287>
  - This article considers overall environmental life cycle impacts rather than just carbon, but it does show how refurbishing has a reduced impact as opposed to new build
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1364032117311309#f0030>
  - This article finds most refurbished buildings have a lower life cycle footprint than new builds, but some new builds performed better so the results are inconclusive
- <https://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/21929/>
  - This study looked at replacement vs refurbishment of a community centre in Liverpool
  - Refurbishment resulted in 215,084 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> whereas replacement resulted in 429,397 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup>

Non-academic sources:

- [https://www.leti.uk/files/ugd/252d09\\_45fb6295eff942548db4de3c6d5a2aec.pdf](https://www.leti.uk/files/ugd/252d09_45fb6295eff942548db4de3c6d5a2aec.pdf)
  - LETI Unpicker: Retrofit vs rebuild: Unpicking the carbon argument, March 2023
  - Provides guidance on how to fairly compare refurbishment with demolition and rebuilding.
  - Illustrative example shows conceptually lower life cycle emissions for the refurbishment.
- [https://www.leti.uk/files/ugd/252d09\\_8ceffcbcafdb43cf8a19ab9af5073b92.pdf](https://www.leti.uk/files/ugd/252d09_8ceffcbcafdb43cf8a19ab9af5073b92.pdf)

- LETI Embodied Carbon Primer Supplementary guidance to the Climate Emergency Design Guide, January 2020
- Guidance on embodied carbon including benchmarks and targets for different elements.
- States *“Adopt the circular economy principle of reuse and refurbish before new build”002E*
- [https://www.leti.uk/files/ugd/252d09\\_c71428bafc3d42fbac34f9ad0cd6262b.pdf](https://www.leti.uk/files/ugd/252d09_c71428bafc3d42fbac34f9ad0cd6262b.pdf)
  - LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide How existing homes can be adapted to meet UK climate targets, October 2021.
  - Examples of principles to follow when undertaking a retrofit, including considerations for embodied carbon.
- <https://www.netzerocarbondesign.co.uk/guide/early-decisions/retrofit-or-new-build/summary>
  - The Net Zero Carbon Guide was produced in 2020-2022 produced by Max Fordham and collaborators
  - *“A significant proportion of the carbon emissions associated with buildings arise from the materials used and the construction process itself, these are the “embodied carbon emissions” of a building. Extending the lifespan of a sound existing building which is capable of adaptation to meet an occupier’s future needs is almost certainly a lower carbon pathway than demolishing and building new. The embodied carbon associated with the construction of a typical new building can be equivalent to 20 years’ worth of its operational carbon emissions, in the future as our new buildings tend towards ultra low operational energy consumption, then this could conceivably stretch to 40 years. Over the timeframe of 10-30 years (depending on the particular deadline for net zero) then it is likely that retrofitting existing buildings, where possible, will have a more positive impact on climate change than building new.”*
- <https://aecom.com/without-limits/article/refurbishment-vs-new-build-the-carbon-and-business-case/#:~:text=In%20contrast%2C%20a%20deep%20refurbishment,as%20shown%20in%20Figure%202.>
  - AECOM 2020, The carbon and business case for choosing refurbishment over new build
  - This draws on work by LETI and gives an illustrative case study (Figure 3) that shows that the refurbished building results in significantly lower emissions over its life than a new build.