



Examination of the Exeter Plan

Matter 7 – Meeting Housing Needs

Questions 2

Historic England, Hearing Statement

February 2026

Historic England is the principal Government adviser on the historic environment, advising it on planning and listed building consent applications, appeals and other matters generally affecting the historic environment. Historic England is consulted on Local Development Plans under the provisions of the duty to co-operate and provides advice to ensure that legislation and national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework are thereby reflected in local planning policy and practice.

The tests of soundness require that Local Development Plans should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Historic England's representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan are made in the context of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") in relation to the historic environment as a component of sustainable development.

Historic England Hearing Statement

1 Introduction

- 1.1. This statement addresses the Inspector's questions with regard to Matter 7 of the Exeter Plan Examination: Matters, Issues and Questions.
- 1.2. This hearing statement should be read alongside Historic England's comments submitted during the Regulation 19 consultation on the Local Plan, along with our [Statement of Common Ground](#) (SoCG) with Exeter City Council, dated September 2025.

2 Matter 7 – Meeting Housing Needs

Issue 7 - Housing Density and Mix – Policy H15

10. The Exeter Density Study recommends densities between 50 and 150 dwellings per hectare for residential development depending on locational and other 'drivers of density' such as increasing the population within the city centre and proximity to public transport nodes and strategic cycle routes.

Q2. What are the implications of this drive towards higher densities in Exeter? Would this approach lead to more tall buildings within the city? If so, should the Plan include a tall buildings policy? How has the Exeter Skyline Study been considered in formulating this approach?

- 2.1 It is important to note that compact, low and mid-rise typologies can achieve reasonably high densities while delivering high quality, people centred places. The density ranges of a number of typical typologies are helpfully illustrated in Figure 10 (p14) of the [National Model Design Code](#).
- 2.2 Due to the particular significance, and sensitivity, of the skyline and heritage assets in central Exeter, low and mid-rise typologies are likely to be more appropriate than tall buildings in most circumstances.
- 2.3 The Exeter Skyline and View Report and associated Stage 2 Sites Report therefore provides evidence on potential heights and densities on Exeter's key strategic sites. On the basis of these reports, we consider that the plan's policies could do more to ensure an appropriate response to character in terms of grain, permeability and activation of frontages, particularly at North Gate and South Gate. We will discuss this further in our hearing statements for the relevant Site Allocations and Regeneration Opportunity Area.