

Exeter City Council

Local Development Scheme -

Future planning policy work

July 2025



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We consider requests on an individual basis.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out a programme of planning policy documents which the Council proposes to prepare for the city council administrative area of Exeter.
- 1.2 The principal document the Council is progressing is the Exeter Plan, the new Local Plan for the city. This Exeter Plan has progressed through four public consultations since 2021. The Regulation 19 version of the plan was published on 12 December 2024 until 6 February 2025.
- 1.3 The Council has also recently adopted two Supplementary Planning Documents:
 - The Liveable Water Lane SPD (including a development framework and design code): Adopted in July 2024; and
 - The Householders Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD: Adopted in April 2024
- 1.4 In addition to these planning policy documents the Council has also made an updated Article 4 Direction to control the change of use of regular dwellings to houses in multiple occupation (this sits alongside the Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD). The revised Article 4 Direction came into force in December 2024. The Council also approved and implemented a new Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in January 2024.
- 1.5 This document replaces the previous LDS of February 2025.

2. Current planning policy for Exeter: The ‘development plan’

- 2.1 Planning legislation¹ requires all local planning authorities to produce what is called a ‘Development Plan’.
- 2.2 The current Development Plan for Exeter consists of a series of plans called Development Plan Documents. Taken together, these provide a vision and a framework for the future development of the city. More specifically, the documents set out the priorities for the city, identify areas for development and provide a comprehensive set of policies which are used to make decisions on planning applications.
- 2.3 In Exeter, the Development Plan currently includes the following documents:
- The adopted Exeter Core Strategy (2012) and saved policies from the adopted Exeter Local Plan First Review (2005).
 - The St James Neighbourhood Plan (made in in 2013). This is currently the only ‘made’ Neighbourhood Development Plan in Exeter. Because neighbourhood development plans are not prepared by the Council, they are not considered in detail here.
 - The adopted Devon Minerals Plan (2017) and adopted Devon Waste Plan (2014). These are produced by Devon County Council. Because minerals and waste planning policy are not prepared by the Council these matters are not considered in detail here.
- 2.4 The policies in all these documents must be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.

¹ [The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)

3. Supplementary planning documents

- 3.1 In addition to formal Development Plan Documents such as the Exeter Plan, the Council occasionally produces other documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs provide further explanation of formal Development Plan policies, how they should be interpreted and expectations for their implementation. SPDs can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or on a particular issue and are taken into account when making planning decisions. SPDs cannot not themselves set out policies.
- 3.2 The Council has a series of SPDs covering topics such as affordable housing, planning obligations, public open space and various areas in the city. The list of SPDs will gradually need to be reviewed in the context of the new policies which emerge in the new Exeter Plan and to reflect changes in national planning policy.
- 3.3 SPDs do not provide formal planning policy in the same way as a local plan and so the procedure for preparing them is simpler and shorter as explained by the planning regulations². They do however have to be prepared with supporting evidence, require public consultation and need to be formally adopted by the Council.
- 3.4 The Council is currently undertaking early work on a masterplan alongside the University of Exeter which in time could evolve into an SPD. This covers St Luke's University Campus.

² [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

4. The new Local Plan: The Exeter Plan (2021-2041)

- 4.1 The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for the city. This will be known as the Exeter Plan. The Exeter Plan will replace the adopted Core Strategy and adopted Local Plan First Review. It will include a vision and objectives for Exeter, a spatial strategy, sites for development (allocations) and a series of planning policies. Some of these policies will be strategic policies covering themes and topics whilst others will be non-strategic policies covering requirements for development or specific areas.
- 4.2 The topics to be covered by the Exeter Plan include:
- Spatial strategy;
 - Climate change;
 - Homes;
 - Economy and jobs;
 - Retail and the future of our centres;
 - Sustainable transport and communications;
 - Natural environment;
 - History and heritage;
 - Culture and tourism;
 - High quality places and design;
 - Health and wellbeing;
 - Infrastructure and facilities;
 - Site allocations; and
 - Monitoring
- 4.3 The Plan will also include a key diagram and policies map.
- 4.4 Four formal public consultations to consider the Exeter Plan have already been completed. An Issues Consultation was held between September and November 2021. This discussed the vision for the plan, a series of issues which the plan could cover and some of the principles to steer a future spatial strategy for the city. This was a regulation 18 consultation.
- 4.5 Following the Issues Consultation, work on the Local Plan evolved and the name of the document was revised to become the Exeter Plan. A further consultation on an Outline Draft of the Exeter Plan was held between September and December 2022. The Outline Draft plan included a vision for the city, a spatial strategy, a series of Liveable Exeter principles to achieve high quality development, a number of draft policies on various themes and a suite of potential development allocations for Exeter. This was a regulation 18 consultation.
- 4.6 A Full Draft Plan consultation was held between October 2023 and January 2024. The Full Draft of the Exeter Plan was a fully formed plan including a

vision, spatial strategy, a full set of thematic policies and site allocation policies. This was a regulation 18 consultation.

4.7 Following the regulation 18 public consultations, the Exeter Plan was published on 12 December 2024 for an eight-week representation period which ended on 6 February 2025. This was a regulation 19 process and met the transitional plan-preparation provisions set out in the national planning reforms in December 2024.

4.8 The next formal stage of plan preparation after publication is submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

4.9 The timetable for the Exeter Plan is set out below:

- Issues consultation (Regulation 18³): September 2021
Complete
- Outline Draft Plan consultation (Regulation 18): September 2022
Complete
- Draft Plan consultation (Regulation 18): October 2023
Complete
- Publication (Regulation 19): December 2024
Complete
- Submission to Planning Inspectorate (Regulation 22): September 2025

Indicative timetable (determined by Planning Inspectorate)

- Examination including hearings (Regulation 23 - 24): March/April 2026
- Adoption (Regulation 26): March 2027

4.10 It should be noted that the timetable after the submission is broadly outside the control of the Council due to the Examination process being managed by the Planning Inspectorate.

³ [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

5. St Luke's University Campus Masterplan/Supplementary Planning Document

- 5.1 The Council proposes to allocate the St Luke's University campus in the Exeter Plan as a transformational employment site providing employment, education, health, research and ancillary uses.
- 5.2 In order to provide high quality development, the Council is working with the University of Exeter to identify development parameters for the site. The University is doing the majority of work on this document with advice and input from Council officers. Consultation will be required as part of this process. This work will initially include a masterplan for the site to support future planning applications. This could be endorsed by the Council in future. Following the adoption of the Exeter Plan, additional work could be undertaken to evolve the document into an SPD.
- 5.3 The timetable for the preparation of the SPD is provided below:
- Evidence gathering: 2025
 - Consultation: 2025/2026
 - Further assessment: 2025/2026
 - Masterplan endorsement: 2026
 - Evolution into an SPD for adoption: 2027

6. Other work

- 6.1 As required by legislation, this Local Development Scheme sets out the key formal planning policy documents which the Council proposes to produce together with a timetable for this work.
- 6.2 It should be noted that the projects included in this document are not an exhaustive list. There is a series of other work which the Local Plans team carries out. This includes:
- Development delivery work, focusing on the Liveable Exeter initiative;
 - Housing monitoring and land supply calculations;
 - Infrastructure planning;
 - CIL and s106 collection and monitoring;
 - Maintenance of the brownfield land register;
 - Maintenance of the custom and self-build register;
 - Preparation of the Authority Monitoring Report;
 - Evidence preparation;
 - Partnership working particularly covering sub-regional issues across; Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge;
 - Responding to planning consultations; and
 - Wider consultation and engagement activity.