

Exeter Plan 2021-2041

Publication Stage (Regulation 19)

Representation Form

Ref:

**(For official
use only)**

Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates: Exeter Plan 2021-2041

Please return to Exeter City Council, Local Plans Team, Paris Street, Exeter, EX1 1JN, upload onto our consultation portal at <https://exeterplanpublication.commonplace.is/> or email to planning.policy@exeter.gov.uk by **11:59 pm on 6 February 2025**.

This form has two parts:

Part A – Personal Details: Needs to be completed only once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A: Personal details

1. Personal details*

*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation (if application) boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in section 2.

Title	c/o Agent
First Name	
Last Name	
Job Title (where relevant)	
Organisation (where relevant)	Firstplan
Address Line 1	
Line 2	
Line 3	
Line 4	

Post Code

Telephone number

E-mail address

2. Agent's details if applicable

Title

First Name

Last Name

Job Title (where relevant)

Organisation (where relevant)

Address Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

Post Code

Telephone number

E-mail address

Part B – Representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation

3. To which part of the Exeter Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph

Policy

Policies Map

4. Do you consider that this part of the Exeter Plan is legally compliant?

Yes

No

4 (a). If yes, and you wish to support the legal compliance of this part of the Exeter Plan, please use this box to set out your comments.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

4 (b). If no, please give details of why you consider this part of the Exeter Plan is not legally compliant. Please be as precise as possible.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

4 (c). Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this part of the Exeter Plan legally compliant, in respect of any legal compliance matters you have identified at 4(b) above. You will need to say why each modification will make this part of the Exeter Plan legally compliant. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording for the relevant policy or paragraph. Please be as precise as possible.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

5. Do you consider that this part of the Exeter Plan is Sound?

Yes

No ☒

5 (a). If yes, and you wish to support the soundness of this part of the Exeter Plan, please use this box to set out your comments.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

5 (b). If no, please give details of why you consider this part of the Exeter Plan is unsound. Please be as precise as possible.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please refer to enclosed letter submitted on behalf of our client National Grid Property Holdings (NGPH) and Wales and West Utilities (WWU).

5 (c). Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this part of the Exeter Plan sound, in respect of any soundness matters you have identified at 5(b) above. You will need to say why each modification will make this part of the Exeter Plan sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording for the relevant policy or paragraph. Please be as precise as possible.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please refer to enclosed letter submitted on behalf of our client National Grid Property Holdings (NGPH) and Wales and West Utilities (WWU).

6. Do you consider that this part of the Exeter Plan complies with the Duty to Co-operate?

Yes ☐

No ☐

6 (a). If yes, and you wish to support this part of the Exeter Plan's compliance with the duty to co-operate, please use this box to set out your comments.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

6 (b). If no, please give details of why you consider this part of the Exeter Plan fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination.

7. If you would like to make representations on the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) please provide your comments here, stating to which part of the SA your comments relate.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

8. If you would like to make representations on the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) please provide your comments here, stating to which part of the HRA your comments relate.
(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please note In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

9. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

☐

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

☒

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

10. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

National Grid Property Holdings (NGPH) and Wales and West Utilities (WWU) are the owners of the operational gasworks site at Water Lane which forms a substantial part of the Water Lane redevelopment area. As highlighted in our representations there are a few outstanding concerns in relation to access, viability and the need to ensure that a future school and grounds are not developed within the former gasworks site. These matters are relevant to the progression of development at this site.

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

For more information on how we use your data – please read our privacy notice at the following website: <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/5750/planning-policy-privacy-notice.pdf>

Our Ref: 22482
Your Ref: n/a
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Broadwall House
21 Broadwall
London SE1 9PL

[REDACTED]
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firstplan.co.uk

05 February 2025

Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
EX1 1JN

By Email

Dear Sir / Madam,

THE EXETER PLAN: PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION – REGULATION 19 REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF NATIONAL GRID PROPERTY HOLDINGS

Introduction

We are instructed on behalf of our client, National Grid Property Holdings (NGPH) and Wales and West Utilities (WWU) to submit representations in respect of the Exeter City Council Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) consultation.

NGPH and WWU are the owners of the operational Gasworks site at Water Lane, for the avoidance of any doubt (as shown within Image 1, overleaf). This, as can be clearly seen, forms a considerable part of the land forming the Water Lane redevelopment area, which is one of the largest sites within the Council's Liveable Exeter initiative. Our clients have engaged with senior members of Exeter City Council on a number of occasions over the last three years in respect of the existing implications and potential future operations of the gas infrastructure at the Gasworks site, and associated remediation proposals, both fully funded, and future redevelopment plans for the site, and further details on this are provided below.

NGPH and WWU are in discussions to sell the site. As such, we have commented only on the policy where it deals with strategic matters as relevant to the landowner.

Representations were previously made to the First Draft Exeter Local Plan and the now adopted Liveable Water Lane SPD. Copies of these representations are provided in **Appendix 1** of this letter.

Background

The Gasworks site is bound to the south-east by Cotfield Street, to the south-west by Water Lane and to the north-west by an industrial estate. Haven Road and the River Exe are situated to the north-east of the site. The extent of the Gasworks site can be seen in Image 1, below.

As the Licensed Gas Transporter for the area, WWU must maintain a reliable gas supply to the City of Exeter and some 33,000 residential customers, together with around 800 industrial and commercial users. The responsibilities of WWU extend to ensuring provision of such supply and ensuring any future modifications supports and meet the high engineering and safety standards to be expected for infrastructure of this nature.

The Gasworks site contains an existing Pressure Reduction Station (PRS), and associated gas mains, which are required to allow our client to discharge its statutory function. The key infrastructure here is the existing high-pressure gas main, which is protected by way of an easement. For health and safety reasons, there are 'build and proximity distances' which materially restrict any building operations both on and off site, including the wider Water Lane area. This has previously been communicated to the Council.

Image 1. The Gasworks site at Water Lane



Representations

It is acknowledged that the Gasworks site is allocated under 'Strategic mixed use brownfield allocation: SBA1 – Water Lane (Strategic Policy)'. This policy is in line with the Liveable Water Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted by the City Council in July 2024. NGPH and WWU wholly support the site's allocation under Policy SBA1 – Water Lane (Strategic Policy), however, maintain concerns in relation to access (see below), and refer officers again to the points made previously around the siting of any future school and playing fields which will need to take into full consideration of the operational and HSE restrictions together with the existing ground conditions (see **Appendix 1**).

Our representations are set out below.

Policy SBA1 – Water Lane (page 137)

Supporting paragraph 16.14 states

“The site is currently in multiple ownerships, including areas owned by the City Council. 341 of the total homes identified at Water Lane already benefit from a resolution to approve planning consent, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement (under planning application reference 22/1145/FUL). These homes are not included in the housing capacity specified in policies SBA1 and H2. An outline planning application for mixed use redevelopment of another part of the site is pending consideration.”

It is encouraging to see that the outline application has now been approved.

Approximately four of the 36 hectares of the Water Lane strategic site is owned by NGPH and WWU, forming a significant proportion of the central part of the strategic site. As set out in our previous representation it is requested that Paragraph 16.14 is amended to reflect the importance of the Gasworks site as part of the wider regeneration plans, to read (inserted text provided in red and underlined):

“The site is currently in multiple ownerships, including areas owned by the City Council and the operational Gasworks site owned by National Grid and Wales and West Utilities. 341 of the total homes identified at Water Lane already benefit from a resolution to approve planning consent, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement (under planning application reference 22/1145/FUL). These homes are not included in the housing capacity specified in policies SBA1 and H2. An outline planning application for mixed use redevelopment of another part of the site is pending consideration.”

Part E of Policy SBA1

“E. Transport infrastructure to deliver a low-car development:

i. A layout that accords with active design principles, with Water Lane providing an active travel spine connecting Haven Banks with the neighbourhood centre and Marsh Barton Station, improved active travel routes along the Canal frontage, a new neighbourhood street connecting Water Lane and the neighbourhood centre with the Canal, the transformation of Haven Road to an active travel priority street and frequent, active green streets and lanes running towards the River Exe;”

The Gasworks site is an existing, well-used industrial site that is still partially operational and if these changes are implemented prior to an alternative access being formed from Water Lane this will result in significant operational implications for the Gasworks site, and indeed the construction, and ongoing operation of, the recently approved pressure reduction system (PRS) (ref: 23/1489/FUL). The Gasworks site, from an operational viewpoint, supplies and provides gas to Exeter and the surrounding area, serving some 33,000 customers and businesses. It is imperative, therefore, that access is maintained at all times.

Therefore, we maintain our objection to the transformation of Haven Road until such time that an alternative access has been agreed / finalised. This should be made very clear in the policy or accompanying text. We request that the Council continue to update us on the access options for Water Lane to ensure access is unaffected and future development plans are not un impacted.

Part H of Policy SBA1

“H. Appropriate measures to respond to, and ensure the continued operation of, the gas and electricity infrastructure network across the site.”

NGPH and WWU welcome the inclusion of appropriate measures to ensure the continued operation of gas and infrastructure across the site. As mentioned in our previous representations to the Local Plan and Water Lane SPD, the key infrastructure within the wider site is the existing high pressure gas main, and it is encouraging to see in the recent decision for the adjacent outline proposal, that the high pressure gas main appears to be an integral part of the development proposals.

Part L of Policy SBA1

“L. Investigation and appropriate mitigation and remediation of any contaminated land, to ensure that the land is, or can be made suitable for, the proposed used.”

It is anticipated that there will be significant abnormal costs associated with the remediation of the Gasworks site, necessary to facilitate any redevelopment on the site. At the time of writing, this is anticipated to total circa £10 million, to include gas infrastructure rationalisation and remediation.

Policy IF2: Viability

Policy IF2 explains the approach that will be taken to considering the viability of development. The policy indicates potential viability changes which may be considered reasonable in discussions over what infrastructure and affordable housing could be provided by the development. The policy sets out that deviation from policy on the grounds of viability will only be considered where appropriate or where there have been abnormal development costs, adverse changes in building costs and worsening of local market conditions.

Given the extensive remediation costs, which are unique to the Gasworks site, and would be a necessary requirement to installing the recently consented gas pressure reduction system (ref: 23/1489/FUL) and any redevelopment proposal, we appreciate the content of Policy IF2 and support the recognition of abnormal development costs in assessing the viability of future development proposals.

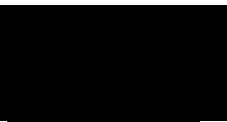
Conclusions

Overall, NGPH and WWU, subject to the existing operational constraints which have been clearly set out above, wholly support the wider allocation of Policy SBA1, but maintain concerns in relation to access, up until the site is developed and, for reasons of viability, reiterate the need to ensure that the school and grounds is not developed within the former gasworks site, as per our previous representations.

These points continue to be relevant in this important transition period as NGPH and WWU look to pass the site onto a future developer.

We trust the above representations will be taken into account as the draft local plan progresses and NGPH and WWU would welcome continued discussions with officers to at the appropriate time.

Please could you acknowledge receipt of these representations.

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Sam Harper.

SAM HARPER
Director

Appendix 1 – Previous representations to the Great Yarmouth First Draft Local Plan Consultation dated 8 May 2024 & Previous Representations to The Liveable Water Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) dated 7 September 2023



Our Ref: 23195/SH/cw
Email: [REDACTED]
Date: 15 January 2024

Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
EX1 1JN

By email only

Dear Sir/Madam,

THE FULL DRAFT EXETER LOCAL PLAN (REGULATION 18) REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF NATIONAL GRID AND WALES AND WEST UTILITIES

We are instructed by our clients, National Grid (NG) and Wales and West Utilities (WWU), to submit the enclosed representations to Exeter City Council in respect of the current consultation on the Full Draft Exeter Local Plan (hereinafter referred to as the 'Draft Local Plan').

NG and WWU are the owners of the operational Gasworks site at Water Lane, for the avoidance of any doubt (as shown within Image 1, overleaf). This, as can be clearly seen, forms a considerable part of the land forming the Water Lane redevelopment area, which is one of the largest sites within the Council's Liveable Exeter initiative. Our clients have engaged with senior members of Exeter City Council on a number of occasions over the last two years in respect of the existing implications and potential future operations of the gas infrastructure at the Gasworks site, and associated remediation proposals, both fully funded, and future redevelopment plans for the site, and further details on this are provided below.

Importantly, representations to the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD consultation were submitted to the Council on behalf of our clients on 4 December 2023. The representations, amongst other things, set out our objection in the strongest terms to any reference to the preferred location of a primary school at the southern part of the operational Gasworks site. A copy of the representations is provided at **Appendix 1** and should be read in conjunction with these representations to the Draft Local Plan. Fundamentally, a primary school cannot be built on or adjacent to a high pressure (HP) gas main, nor on contaminated land. As detailed, the combined costs for removing these site constraints would be significant.

We have also submitted a planning application on behalf of our client for a replacement Pressure Reduction Station (PRS) and associated infrastructure in the southern corner of the Gasworks site. The application was submitted on 4 December 2023 (application reference 23/1849/FUL) and is pending consideration. This proposal, which can be delivered without additional funding or third-party land, is critical to the delivery of the wider aspirations set out in the Water Lane SPD. Indeed, without it, the gas infrastructure cannot be replaced and the site, and the wider regeneration area, will remain sterilised.

Whilst the overarching aspirations of the Draft Local Plan are welcomed and supported by our clients, for the reasons set out below, we **object** in the strongest terms to any reference to the preferred location of a

primary school at the southern part of the operational Gasworks site. The Draft Local Plan does not provide the same level of detail as the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD in terms of location of amenities, however, it is considered that the Draft Local Plan is overly prescriptive and, fundamentally, in its current format, significantly limits the options within the Water Lane regeneration area for an alternative primary school location to be found, which, as we explain below, is absolutely essential for any redevelopment of the Water Lane area to come to realisation.

Description and Existing Function of The Gasworks Site

The Gasworks site is bound to the south-east by Cotfield Street, to the south-west by Water Lane and to the north-west by an industrial estate. Haven Road and the River Exe are situated to the north-east of the site. The extent of the Gasworks site can be seen in Image 1, below.

As the Licensed Gas Transporter for the area, WWU must maintain a reliable gas supply to the City of Exeter and some 33,000 residential customers, together with around 800 industrial and commercial users. The responsibilities of WWU extend to ensuring provision of such supply and ensuring any future modifications supports and meet the high engineering and safety standards to be expected for infrastructure of this nature.

The Gasworks site contains an existing Pressure Reduction Station (PRS), and associated gas mains, which are required to allow our client to discharge its statutory function. The key infrastructure here is the existing high-pressure gas main, which is protected by way of an easement. For health and safety reasons, there are 'build and proximity distances' which materially restrict any building operations both on and off site, including the wider Water Lane area. This has previously been communicated to the Council.



Image 1. The Gasworks site at Water Lane

Ongoing Engagement

Our clients have been actively engaged in discussions with senior members of the Council over the last two years, details of which have already been set out in our recent Water Lane SPD response.

As has been maintained in discussions with officers, it is our clients' vision that the gas infrastructure rationalisation proposals, together with the remediation of their site, will act as a catalyst for the wider development aspirations for the wider area. This is because these works will unlock the remainder of the Water Lane development area as they facilitate the necessary alterations to the gas mains and associated potential future gas infrastructure beyond the site boundary (subject to required costs being met by third parties).

It is extremely disappointing, therefore, to learn that the Council is now recommending provision of a new primary school at the southern part of the Gasworks site, which will effectively undermine the viable delivery of the site and, therefore, the ability to deliver any of the required gas infrastructure rationalisation and improvement works set out.

Our clients are happy to continue to work with the Council to try and find an alternative solution / location for the proposed school having regard to the constraints and development challenges set out within this letter and the recent SPD response. Indeed, we are pleased that the Council has agreed to meet with senior representatives from NG and WWU later on 22 January 2024 to discuss the future of the Gasworks site.

A recent meeting has also taken place with the applicant of the surrounding site, clearly setting out the need for the gas infrastructure works and the wider benefits that these works will deliver.

Currently Pending PRS Planning Application at the Gasworks Site

As referenced above, in order for any redevelopment of the Gasworks site to take place, the existing PRS and associated infrastructure must be relocated. This will ensure that in particular the HP main, as it currently crosses the site, plus existing operational kit, can be relocated to a position on site which in turns removes the current restraints, supported by a new HP connection point for Water Lane for the future. The identified location on the Gasworks site, informed by detailed studies and specialist consultant input, will allow for gas main rationalisation and for WWU to continue to supply Exeter with gas, as per their obligations as the Licenced Gas Transporter.

This is a self-funded solution, together with future remediation works (if necessary), amounting to significant costs, which will unlock the development potential of this important brownfield site. Without it, as we have made clear on numerous occasions and in detail in our recent Water Lane SPD response, the Water Lane regeneration aspirations cannot and will not progress (see holding objection from HSE to the adjacent pending outline application, ref: 23/1007/OUT).

As such, Firstplan submitted a planning application for the replacement PRS and associated infrastructure in the southern corner of the site on 4 December 2023 (application reference 23/1849/FUL). The application has been validated and is currently pending consideration.

Representations to The Full Draft Exeter Plan

Draft Policy H2 (Housing Allocations and Windfalls) (Strategic Policy)

Draft Policy H2 allocates Water Lane as a strategic brownfield development site for mixed use and states that 1,600 new homes could be provided by 2040.

The supporting text at **Paragraph 5.8** sets out that the Water Lane Site is likely to take more than 20 years to be redeveloped.

The principle of new housing within the Water Lane site is fully supported by our clients.

Water Lane – Reference 15 (Strategic Policy), pages 115 – 118

Paragraph 15.21, page 115, states:

“The site is currently in multiple ownerships, including areas owned by the City Council while there are current planning applications for some parts of the site. The site boundary has changed slightly since the last Exeter Plan consultation to include the canal itself so it can be better enhanced by the proposals and include the road of Water Lane”.

Approximately four of the 36 hectares of the Water Lane strategic site is owned by National Grid and Wales and West Utilities, forming a significant proportion of the central part of the strategic site. As such, it is requested that Paragraph 15.21 is amended to reflect the importance of the Gasworks site as part of the wider regeneration plans, to read (inserted text provided in red and underlined):

“The site is currently in multiple ownerships, including areas owned by the City Council and the operational Gasworks site owned by National Grid and Wales and West Utilities, while there are current planning applications for some parts of the site. The site boundary has changed slightly since the last Exeter Plan consultation to include the canal itself so it can be better enhanced by the proposals and include the road of Water Lane”.

Part C of Strategic Policy 15, page 116, states that the following will be required:

“C. A locally accessible neighbourhood centre including:

i. Public realm that provides space for community and cultural activities;

ii. A community building with hall, meeting rooms and flexible space for potential library provision, youth, adult’s services, children’s services and cultural activities;

iii. New surgery providing GP, pharmacy and other community healthcare or contributions to GP provision;

iv. Retail or commercial units with active ground floors accommodating local shops and services; v. A work hub;

vi. A mobility hub;

vii. A 2-form entry primary school including early years and communal space for children’s centre service provision and contributions to secondary and special educational needs provision; and

viii. Provision of additional space for water-related activities and safeguarding of the infrastructure needed to support strategic water-related uses” (our underlining).

Subsection vii sets out that a 2-form entry primary school is required to be included within a locally accessible neighbourhood centre. Whilst Strategic Policy 15 does not provide any specific details on the proposed location of the school, as set out within our representations to the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD (provided at Appendix 1), the Draft SPD provides details as part of 'Code Requirement **'W04 - Primary school'** (Page 56). The three options for the primary school, including the preferred location (Option A), are provided below in Image 4.

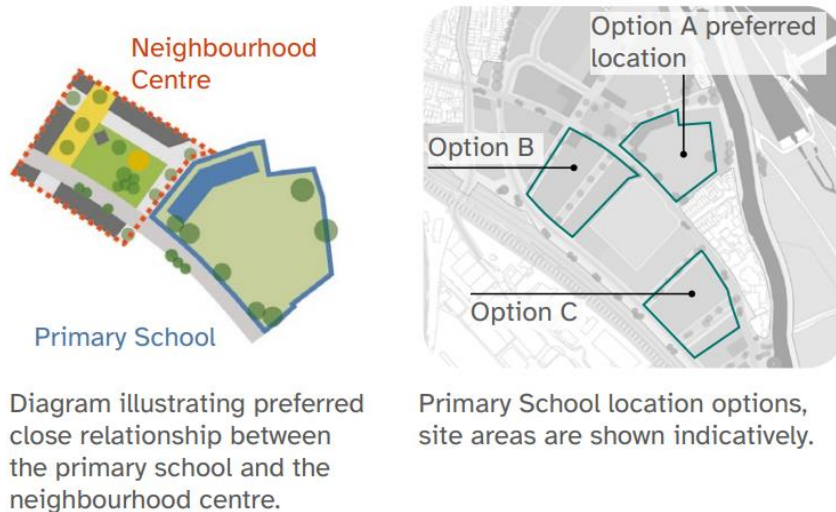


Image 4. The proposed primary school location options and proposed relationship with the preferred option primary school and neighbourhood centre from the Draft Water Lane SPD.

Whilst the wording of Draft Local Plan Strategic Policy 15 is not explicit about the preferred location of the 2-form primary school, it does set out that the school is required to be included within a neighbourhood centre. For the reasons discussed below, this cannot be located within the Council's preferred location, within the southern part of the Gasworks site. The wording of Strategic Policy 15, which requires a primary school to be included within a neighbourhood centre is, therefore, too restrictive and limits the options for an alternative primary school location to be found, which evidently must take place in order for any redevelopment of the Water Lane area to be realised.

As detailed within our representations to the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD (Appendix 1), whilst our clients have no objection in principle to the redevelopment of the Water Lane area, specific objection has been raised in respect of the preferred location of the primary school (Option A) at the Gasworks site. In summary, this is due to the fact that in order to enable any redevelopment of the Gasworks site, the existing PRS must be relocated to the only feasible location: at the southern corner of the Gasworks site, where the Council has shown its preferred option for the primary school (Option A). In doing so, this creates a potential development framework for the remainder of the former gasworks site and delivers great benefits further afield along Water Lane.

It is well established that the existing PRS and associated infrastructure, located at the north-western part of the Gasworks site, does not need to be replaced from an operational perspective. However, if the PRS is retained in its existing location and form, the surrounding blast zones would prohibit any redevelopment of a significant proportion of the Gasworks site, which forms the central part of the Water Lane regeneration area. By contrast, relocating the PRS to the southern part of the Gasworks site, and installing a new, efficient, and secure PRS, would result in a smaller blast area and would, therefore, unlock the majority of the

Gasworks site for redevelopment. The ability to alter the gas mains beyond the site boundary is of course a further significant benefit.

Evidently, the preferred location of the primary school cannot materialise. As we have already stated within our representations to the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD consultation, failure to allow the PRS to be relocated to the southern corner of the Gasworks site, as per the currently pending planning application proposals, and failure to agree an alternative solution for the primary school will ultimately lead to the sterilisation of the redevelopment opportunity at the Gasworks site and the wider Water Lane regeneration area.

In the light of the above, the current wording of Part C of Strategic Policy 15, which requires a local accessible neighbourhood centre including a 2-form entry primary school, should be re-worded to allow for the primary school to also be able to be provided outside of the neighbourhood centre and / or within the surrounding area.

It is proposed that the wording for Part C of Strategic Policy 15 is amended to read (inserted text provided in red and underlined):

"C. A locally accessible neighbourhood centre and surrounding additional facilities including:

i. Public realm that provides space for community and cultural activities;

ii. A community building with hall, meeting rooms and flexible space for potential library provision, youth, adult's services, children's services and cultural activities;

iii. New surgery providing GP, pharmacy and other community healthcare or contributions to GP provision;

iv. Retail or commercial units with active ground floors accommodating local shops and services; v. A work hub;

vi. A mobility hub;

vii. A 2-form entry primary school including early years and communal space for children's centre service provision and contributions to secondary and special educational needs provision;

and viii. Provision of additional space for water-related activities and safeguarding of the infrastructure needed to support strategic water-related uses" (our underlining).

Part D of Strategic Policy 15, page 117, states that the following will be required:

"D. Transport infrastructure to deliver a low-car development:

i. A layout in accordance with active design principles, with Water Lane providing an active travel spine to the neighbourhood centre and Marsh Barton Station, improved

active travel routes along the Canal frontage and frequent, active green streets running towards the River Exe;

ii. Low-car development supported by active travel measures that include mobility hubs to provide for public transport, active travel and shared mobility;

iii. Provision of infrastructure for and contributions to public transport;

iv. Delivery of or contributions to a new pedestrian and cycle crossing of the Canal and River Exe;

v. Contributions to off-site active travel routes including priority schemes in the Exeter Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;

vi. The provision of improved active travel and public transport access at Tan Lane under the Great West Mainline towards Marsh Barton; and vii. Electric vehicle charging points throughout the sit”.

The promotion of low-car usage is also referenced within the supporting text at **Paragraph 15.18**. The Council’s aspirations for low-car use within the Water Lane regeneration area is at odds with their aspirations for a new 2-form primary school, which by its very nature, would introduce a significant number of vehicle trips during drop off and pick up times. As set out previously, our clients do not object to the principle of a new primary school located within the Water Lane area. However, the direct contradiction between the provision of a new primary school and low-car usage only serves to highlight that the provision of a new primary school, in the context of its surroundings, has not been given due consideration.

Part G of Strategic Policy 15, page 118, states that the following will be required:

“G. Appropriate measures to respond to, and ensure the continued operation of, the gas and electricity infrastructure network across the site”.

As set out above, WWU is the Licensed Gas Transporter for the area and must maintain a reliable gas supply to the City of Exeter and some 33,000 residential customers, together with around 800 industrial and commercial users. As such, the wording of Part G of Strategic Policy 15 is fully welcomed and supported, and further justifies our firm position that a primary school cannot be located at the southern part of the Gasworks Site as this would directly prevent the continued operation of the gas network across the site, in tandem with the regeneration of Water Lane.

Summary of Position

Our clients will continue to pursue communication with the Council and with adjacent landowners in respect of the future of the Gasworks site and its impact on the Water Lane Regeneration Area. The attendance by these respective parties at the recent and forthcoming meetings is very much welcomed.

The general aspirations of the Draft Local Plan are supported by our clients, however, in line with our recent representations to the Liveable Water Lane SPD consultation, in particular, the preferred siting of a primary school at the southern part of the Gasworks site is objected to in the strongest terms. As such, amendments to the wording of the Full Draft Plan are requested to reflect this.

Without the explicit removal of any reference to the southern part of the Gasworks site to be used for a primary school, both within the Draft Local Plan and Liveable Water Lane SPD, the existing PRS will remain

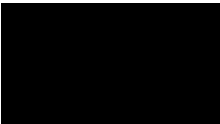
operational within the centre of the Gasworks site, which will sterilise the redevelopment opportunity within the Water Lane regeneration area. This ultimately means that 'Water Lane – Reference 15 (Strategic Policy)' within the Draft Local Plan, in addition to the contents of the Liveable Water Lane SPD would be undeliverable, which in turn will mean that the projected housing numbers proposed within the Draft Local Plan cannot be relied on.

Therefore, at this stage we have no alternative but to request that the wording of the 'Water Lane – Reference 15 (Strategic Policy)' is amended to be less prescriptive so as to allow alternative options for the primary school location to be found. This is in conjunction with our request for the allocation for the preferred location of the primary school within the Liveable Water Lane SPD to be altered or removed.

Our clients have continuously confirmed that they are keen to actively engage with the Council regarding a feasible alternative location for the proposed school and we look forward to discussing how all parties can work together to deliver development within a realistic timeframe.

I trust that the above provides clarity on our clients' positions. We look forward to further engagement, both in respect of the forthcoming meetings with the Council and landowners, and in future consultation on the Draft Local Plan in due course.

Yours sincerely,



SAM HARPER
Director

Enc.

cc.	Mark Roberts	-	National Grid
	Richard Williams	-	Wales & West Utilities
	Charles Whitworth	-	Cushman & Wakefield

Appendix 1

Our Ref: 23195/SH/cw
Email: [REDACTED]
Date: 4 December 2023

Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
EX1 1JN

By email only

Dear Sir/Madam,

THE LIVEABLE WATER LANE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF NATIONAL GRID AND WALES AND WEST UTILITIES

We are instructed by our clients, National Grid (NG) and Wales and West Utilities (WWU), to submit the enclosed representations to Exeter City Council in respect of the current consultation on the Liveable Water Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (hereinafter referred to as the 'Draft SPD').

As discussed further below, NG and WWU are the owners of the operational Gasworks site at Water Lane, for the avoidance of any doubt (as shown within Image 1, overleaf). This, as can be clearly seen, forms a considerable part of the land forming the Water Lane redevelopment area, which is one of the largest sites within the Council's Liveable Exeter initiative. Our clients have engaged with senior members of Exeter City Council on a number of occasions over the last two years in respect of the future operations of the gas infrastructure at the Gasworks site and future redevelopment plans for the site, and further details on this are provided below.

Whilst the overarching aspirations of the Draft SPD are welcomed and supported by our clients, for the reasons set out below, we **object** in the strongest terms to the preferred location of a primary school at the southern part of the operational Gasworks site.

Description and Existing Function of The Site

The Gasworks site is bound to the south-east by Cotfield Street, to the south-west by Water Lane and to the north-west by an industrial estate. Haven Road and the River Exe are situated to the north-east of the site. The extent of the Gasworks site can be seen in Image 1, below.

As the Licensed Gas Transporter for the area, WWU must maintain a reliable gas supply to the City of Exeter and some 33,000 residential customers, together with around 800 industrial and commercial users. The responsibilities of WWU extend to ensuring provision of such supply and ensuring any future modifications supports and meet the high engineering and safety standards to be expected for infrastructure of this nature.

The Gasworks site contains an existing Pressure Reduction Station (PRS), and associated gas mains, which are required to allow our client to discharge its statutory function. The key infrastructure here is the existing

high-pressure gas main, which is protected by way of an easement. For health and safety reasons, there are 'build and proximity distances' which materially restrict any building operations both on and off site, including the wider Water Lane area. This has previously been communicated to the Council.



Image 1. The Gasworks site at Water Lane

Engagement with the Council

Our clients have been actively engaged in discussions with senior members of the Council over the last two years, and a list of meetings attended is provided below at Table 1. This excludes follow-up email correspondence and telephone calls.

Date of Meeting	Details of Meeting
17 January 2022	Presentation to Karime Hassan, previous Chief Executive of Exeter City Council (ECC).
15 February 2022	Site visit with Karime Hassan, officers and LDA.
22 April 2022	Update briefing to ECC, which clearly identifies options for the PRS.
21 July 2022	Marketing commenced. Sent to Ian Collinson, Director of City Developments, which clearly identifies on site option for PRS.
12 October 2022	Meeting with ECC, CBRE and LDA design at LDA office, Kings Wharf.

16 November 2022	Meeting with ECC, CBRE and shortlisted developers at the Hotel du Vin, Exeter
21 March 2023	Meeting in C&W's office, Bristol with ECC (Ian Collinson & Dave Martin) to discuss proposed purchaser and next steps.
27 June 2023	Pre-app Teams call between Firstplan and ECC Planning Officer, Howard Smith
15 September 2023	Meeting with Cubex, ECC, Landowners in C&W's offices.
17 October 2023	2 nd pre-app meeting at Council offices with ECC Planning Officer, Howard Smith, Firstplan and Landowners; Meeting with LDA, ECC Officers, Landowners, C&W, Cubex, Firstplan.

Table 1. Table to show list of meetings attended over the last two years in respect of the Gasworks site

Within the meetings, the current development restrictions in relation to the existing gas equipment and associated mains was regularly discussed. In addition, discussions were had in respect of any potential options associated with rationalisation of the gas mains and replacement of the PRS, in the context of the wider proposals for the Water Lane redevelopment area. In our meeting on 17 October 2023 with officers, we presented the constraints imposed by the existing gas infrastructure, and the studies undertaken by WWU for the PRS relocation and gas mains rationalisation.

Our clients have continued to manage the site and have resisted demands for the intensification of its operational use and third-party lettings as they wish to focus their attention on the redevelopment of the Water Lane area.

From an operational perspective, the existing PRS and associated infrastructure does not need to be replaced and can remain operational in its current location, at the north-western part of the Gasworks site.

Image 2, below, shows the current location of the PRS and the HSE blast zones associated with the below ground gas mains. These comprise the 'inner zone' (pink), the 'middle zone' (green) and 'outer zone' (blue). With the PRS retained in its existing location and with the inner and middle zones comprising a significant part of the centre of the site, any future redevelopment of the wider site, which is so significant to the aspirations of the Water Lane development area, would be prohibited.

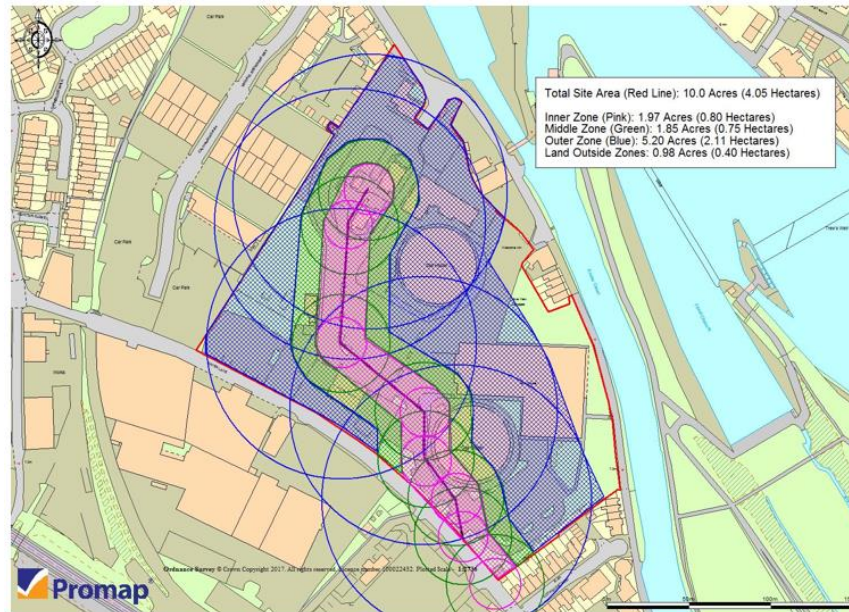


Image 2. The current PRS location and blast zones

By comparison, Image 3, below, identifies the HSE blast zones with the PRS relocated to the southern part of the site and the below ground gas mains rationalised to suit. Critically, only a small area of the southern part of the site would fall within the inner and middle zones, unlocking the majority of the site and wider area for redevelopment. There are benefits beyond the site boundary too, as the gas mains along Water Lane could be replaced, subject to third party funding, in modern, more suitable material once a new connection point is established to the new PRS. This, in turn, will significantly reduce the associated blast zones. This is discussed below.

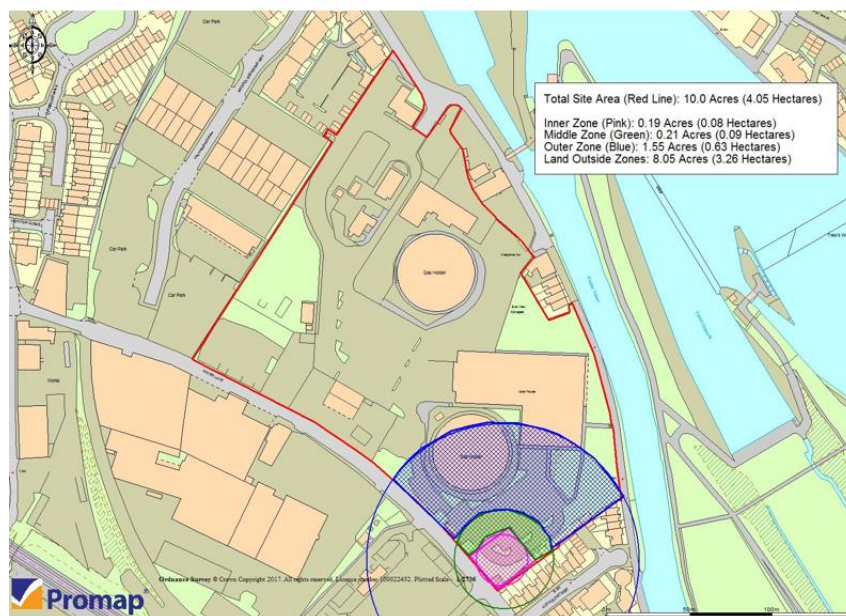


Image 3. The proposed PRS location and blast zones

With regard to our clients' development proposals at the Gasworks site, a robust marketing strategy and developer selection process has been undertaken and the Council was kept fully informed during this process and attended the final interviews with the three shortlisted developers. As the Council is aware, our clients now have an indicative scheme for the redevelopment of the Gasworks site, in conjunction with their preferred developer partner, Cubex, that provides c. 600 residential units together with ancillary commercial

space. Crucially, the delivery of residential units under this proposed scheme allows for the on-site relocation of the PRS, gas mains rationalisation and a proposed new high-pressure connection linked to the wider Water Lane area.

Alongside this, detailed analysis has been undertaken over the last two years in respect of the various options for the relocation of the PRS and, as discussed further below, the only acceptable option would be for the PRS to be relocated to the southern corner of the site. The proposed Cubex scheme works with the parameters associated with the relocation of the PRS. Furthermore, it not only supports the Council's housing provision targets, but also includes appropriate self-financing provisions supporting the essential relocation and rationalisation of the gas mains and the PRS together with a comprehensive land remediation strategy to deal with historic ground conditions, in a managed timeframe.

As has been maintained in discussions with officers, it is our clients' vision that the gas infrastructure rationalisation proposals, together with the remediation at their site, will act as a catalyst for the wider development aspirations for the wider area. This is because these works, subject to required costs being met by third parties, will unlock the remainder of the Water Lane development area as they facilitate the necessary alterations to the gas mains and associated potential future gas infrastructure beyond the site boundary.

Given the good working relationship that our clients felt that they had developed with the Council over the last two years, it is therefore extremely disappointing to have been advised, without any prior notification, that the Council is now recommending provision of a new primary school at the southern part of the Gasworks site, which will effectively undermine the viability position and therefore the ability to deliver any of the required rationalisation and improvement works set out above.

As set out within Table 1, our clients have had numerous meetings with the Council, and specifically, no mention of the primary school allocation was made in the Teams discussion held as recently as June 2023, despite our clients then becoming aware of the draft allocation only shortly after in the 15 September meeting, immediately prior to the Draft SPD being approved by the Council's Executive.

Relevant Policy Context

Local Plan First Review (2005) (Saved policies)

The Gasworks site is identified within the Proposals Map as being suitable for a mix of tourist, leisure, housing, employment and retailing. **Policy KP6** sets out, amongst other things, that development for these types of uses in the Water Lane area could be acceptable, provided that they do not inhibit existing industry.

With this in mind, it is noteworthy that the proposed removal of the below ground gas main, which currently runs through the site and beyond, will benefit the existing industries along Water Lane as it will reduce and potentially remove existing restrictions in terms of build and proximity distances with this main.

The supporting text at **Paragraphs 14.25 – 14.27** set out that housing will be permitted provided there is scope to introduce landscape features or open space as a buffer between housing and existing industry where this is considered to be necessary.

The Core Strategy (2012)

Core Strategy **Policy CP17** sets out that development in the Water Lane Regeneration Area will, amongst other things, take a comprehensive approach to the delivery of development which ensures that new housing is compatible with other existing land uses in the area, particularly industry.

Full Draft Exeter Plan (currently being consulted on until 15 Jan 2024)

Draft Policy H2 (housing allocations and windfalls) identifies 'Water Lane – Site 15' as a 'strategic brownfield development site: mixed use'.

Water Lane – Site Ref 15 details can be summarised as:

- The majority of the proposed Water Lane allocation is already identified for mixed use, residential-led redevelopment in the Exeter Local Plan First Review. The site is also included in the Liveable Exeter initiative. The City Council proposes to roll this allocation forwards into the Exeter Plan.
- The proposed site allocation will be supported by a Liveable Water Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which is currently being prepared by the City Council and is also subject to consultation. The SPD will contain a development framework and design code for the site, alongside strategies for access and utilities provision, to help ensure that Water Lane is redeveloped in a comprehensive, coordinated way and at a high quality which reflects the Liveable Exeter principles.
- The requirements for the school are as follows: A 2-form entry primary school including early years and communal space for children's centre service provision and contributions to secondary and special educational needs provision.

Representations to The Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD

The Illustrative Development Framework is set out at Section 3.2 of the Draft SPD and is provided below, at Image 4.

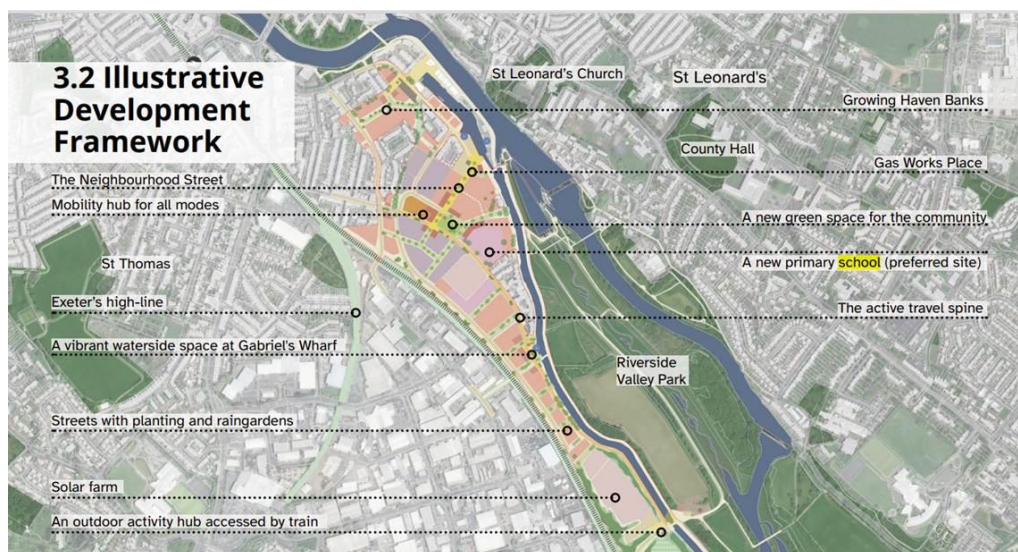


Image 4. An extract of Section 3.2 of the Draft SPD 'Illustrative Development Framework' Plan.

Further, the Regulating Plan (Section 4.2 of the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD), provided at Image 5, below, proposes the following uses for the Gasworks site:

- Primary School (W04 – preferred location);
- Residential led development;
- Neighbourhood Centre (W03);
- Employment Opportunity Area (W07);
- Boat Storage (W05 – preferred location);
- Local Green Space (S12)

- Primary mobility hub (A05 and A06)
- Water Spaces (W10 – W12)

A number of active streets are also proposed.



Image 5. The Regulating Plan (Section 4.2 of the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD)

Primary School Designation – W04

Code Requirement '**W04 - Primary school**' is provided on Page 56 of the Draft SPD and states:

“A two-form entry primary school with early years provision and space for a children’s centre should be provided at Water Lane. The school should provide a playing pitch, hard play area, outdoor classroom areas and preferably areas for forest school or wildlife areas. This will be balanced with a compact form appropriate to the central location and proposed higher density development. The school should incorporate minimal on-site parking provision and utilise the proposed mobility hub to make best use of land. Refer to the active streets chapter for further mobility hub details.

The school should be located adjacent to or near to the Neighbourhood Centre and must contribute to the street. This could include a prominent entrance and co-locating community uses with windows facing the street.

Three options have been identified for the school location. The preferred option to support successful placemaking is a portion of the former Gasworks site to the east of Water Lane, as this is closest to the neighbourhood centre and incorporates existing mature trees. Alternative options include to the north or south of the electricity substation on the western side of Water Lane.

The size of the school site is to be determined through discussions between applicants, Devon County Council and Exeter City Council.

Site constraints including, but not limited to, safe access and egress, contaminated land and proximity to existing utilities, including the high pressure gas main and electricity substation, will need to be addressed”.

The location of the three options for the primary school is shown in Image 6, below.

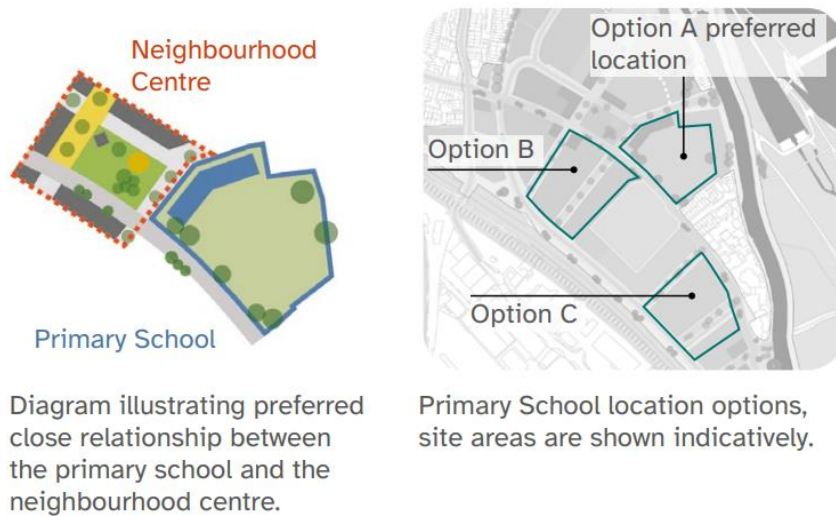


Image 6. The proposed primary school location options and proposed relationship with the preferred option primary school and neighbourhood centre.

The Draft SPD does not provide detail in respect of the design of the school and operational requirements, including the area of land required for this (which the Draft SPD states will be discussed further between applicants, Devon County Council and Exeter City Council), although our understanding based on our most recent discussions is that over 1.3ha is earmarked in the current version, which amounts to around one-third of the total Gasworks site area. However, this has wider financial and developmental implications.

The Draft SPD does not provide any analysis or justification around the reasons for discounting the other two alternative options for the primary school, which sit outside of the Gasworks site to the south and west. Nor is there any consideration given to the relationship between the school and the remaining residential development. As discussed above, given that regular meetings have been held between our clients and the Council, and that the school allocation was not discussed until the meeting in September 2023 (but was specifically not mentioned in our initial pre-application advice discussion in June 2023), the justification for the preferred allocation is not clear. Further, on learning about the Liveable Water Lane SPD, our clients made a request to the Council that the public consultation be deferred to allow time for discussions between the parties, however, this was disregarded.

Critically, in order to enable any redevelopment of the Gasworks site, the existing PRS must be relocated. This, linked with gas main rationalisation is imperative in order for WWU to continue to supply Exeter with gas, as per their obligations as the Licenced Gas Transporter.

Having fully assessed a number of potential operational options over the last two years for the relocation of the PRS, the only feasible option, as supported by external consultants, is for the PRS to be located within the southern corner of the Gasworks site, where the Council has shown its preferred option for the primary school. Clearly the Council's preferred location for the primary school is not compatible with the only feasible option for the relocation of the PRS. This location for the PRS is crucial for a number of reasons, namely, that it falls outside the Flood Zone, it can connect to, and will facilitate future access to, the existing gas infrastructure that continues down Water Lane, and it would be at the edge of the site, allowing the remainder of the Gasworks site to be redeveloped. This location has been independently assessed by specialist engineers, Fingleton White, and they too have concluded that this location is the only realistic one

within the development site, having regard to a range of technical, operational and safety considerations. Access to the replacement PRS compound will also need to be provided for safety and maintenance checks.

This location also enables the removal of the high pressure main as it currently traverses the site, which is absolutely essential in order to facilitate any meaningful and viable redevelopment of the site. This has all been conveyed to the Council during previous discussions with our clients.

Under the proposed development scheme for the Gasworks site by selected development partner, Cubex, gas main rationalisation, the new PRS, and site remediation are all self-funded, without the need for any financial support from the Council or grant aid provision. Further, Cubex has taken on board the above parameters in designing the layout of a residential-led scheme, which includes a buffer around the replacement PRS and retained easements and access to the existing gas main, which will run diagonally across the Gasworks site. Notably the Cubex proposals also include the other elements of the Council's aspirations (neighbourhood centre, green space, boat storage etc).

The provision of a primary school in the Council's preferred location would negate the extensive works that our clients have undertaken to-date with Cubex and would inhibit the redevelopment of the site, principally because the value of the remaining parts of the site would be insufficient to outstrip the extensive outgoing costs necessary to facilitate any development on the site (totalling circa £10 million at the date of this correspondence, to include gas infrastructure rationalisation and remediation). It would also preclude the southern part of the Gasworks site being used for the replacement PRS which, as we have established, is fundamental for any alternative use of the wider Gasworks site and indeed any development beyond the site boundary.

No details have been provided within the Draft SPD on how the school would be funded, particularly relevant in the light of the aforementioned extensive works and costs.

Evidently, the proposed location of the primary school cannot materialise and failure to agree an alternative solution will most likely result in the significant proposed investment into the existing gas infrastructure being rescinded, which in turn will mean that the wider redevelopment aspirations for the Water Lane area, which rely so heavily on updated gas infrastructure and gas main replacement, not being realised.

Bearing this in mind, officers must remember that the Gasworks site is operational, and that there is a demand for additional storage and associated depot land in the area, which the site could easily be used for if a realistic, viable solution cannot be reached. Irrespective of the proposed relocation of the PRS and work to-date with Cubex, the proposed location of the school sits above an existing high-pressure gas main. Plainly a school cannot be built on or within close proximity to a high-pressure gas main. No detail has been provided on how this would be managed and such restrictions were made known to the previous Chief Executive and officers at an early site meeting. In addition, no input has been requested from our clients to demonstrate how the proposed school could be compatible with the high-pressure gas main and surrounding gas infrastructure at the Gasworks site, including how the existing/ proposed gas infrastructure could be accessed for maintenance. Another important consideration that appears to have been overlooked, both in terms of practicality and funding, is that the land on which the school is proposed is suspected to be contaminated. As such, there would be extensive works and costs associated with remediation.

Again, our clients preferred proposal manages and funds these costs on the assumption of a deliverable, viable end-development, as offered by the Cubex scheme. The addition of a primary school negates this entirely, creating a completely unviable development context.

To repeat, this plainly means that the identified constraints will not be removed and that the site will remain operational, the PRS will not be relocated, and the associated gas main will remain along Water Lane in its

current form, with associated blast zones. This effectively means that the content of the Water Lane SPD is not deliverable, and the projected housing numbers proposed will not materialise.

Other Designations at the Gasworks site

As detailed within the Regulating Plan (Section 4.2 of the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD), provided at Image 5 above, the following uses, alongside a number of active streets, are proposed for the Gasworks site:

- Primary School (W04 – preferred location);
- Residential led development;
- Neighbourhood Centre (W03);
- Employment Opportunity Area (W07);
- Boat Storage (W05 – preferred location);
- Local Green Space (S12)
- Primary mobility hub (A05 and A06)
- Water Spaces (W10 – W12)

We have reviewed the relevant sections of the Draft SPD in respect of the above designations. In principle, the range of proposed uses across the Gasworks site is supported, which will complement residential development, however, this is subject to further details being provided in due course. Critically, the provision of these uses should not jeopardise access to the existing/ future gas infrastructure, nor should it preclude the southern part of the Gasworks site being used for the replacement PRS which, as discussed, is fundamental to the redevelopment of the wider Gasworks site and beyond, and, of course, the continued provision of gas supply to the Exeter area.

Pending Outline Application

Officers will be aware that there is an outline planning application (ref: 23/1007/OUT) currently pending consideration by Exeter City Council in respect of *'demolition of existing buildings and structures and residential-led mixed use development providing new dwellings and workspace, retail, café/restaurant, community and cultural/leisure/education/hotel uses and associated infrastructure, including vehicular access, servicing, mobility hub, energy plant; alteration of ground levels; drainage and public open space; landscaping and public realm works; including pedestrian and cycle routes, with all matters reserved for future considerations, with the exception of access'* at Water Lane (South), Exeter.

Of note, there is a holding objection from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) relating to the hazard zones associated with the existing gas main that runs through the site and, as officers will know, links to the existing PRS. The proposals cannot therefore progress until such time as the HSE holding objection is overcome. The proposed rationalisation of the PRS and associated infrastructure could facilitate this, allowing a connection to the PRS and then in turn replacement of the existing gas main with alternative 'thick-wall' pipe which would considerably reduce the size of the safety zones, and, therefore, facilitate more development along its length.

Linking back to the proposed position of the school, it is noteworthy that the HSE response raises concerns about the proposed 'college establishments' in this application, which lie partly within the middle and outer zones of the major hazard establishment and are considered to come under the development type 'indoor use by public'.

HSE's advice sets out, *inter alia*, that:

“HSE’s assessment therefore indicates that the risk of harm to people at the proposed development is such that HSE’s advice is that there are sufficient reasons, on safety grounds, for advising against the granting of planning permission for the outline planning application”.

The advice goes on to say that:

“HSE would not advise against the granting of planning permission for the outline planning application if the following conditions were to be included in the permission:

...Any Indoor Use by Public development located within the combined inner/middle zone of the Kenn/Exeter pipeline must have a total floor space of less than 250 m²”.

The preferred location for the primary school, at the southern part of the Gasworks site, would fall within the inner zone of the major hazard sites, and it is therefore obvious that in its preferred location the school could not be delivered. This highlights again why it is so critical that the existing and future gas infrastructure must be considered as a priority, ahead of, or at least as part of, considerations for the wider redevelopment of the Gasworks site and beyond. And without sensible consideration as to the cost, funding, deliverability and timescales for this, redevelopment of the wider area cannot progress.

Ongoing Engagement

Our clients continue to try and engage with the adjacent landowners and a meeting has been arranged for 11 December with the applicant behind the pending outline application.

In addition, our clients are very happy to continue to work with the Council to try and find an alternative solution / location for the proposed school having regard to the constraints and development challenges set out. Indeed, in response to a letter sent by our clients to the Council’s Chief Executive in October 2023, we are pleased that the Council has agreed to meet with senior representatives from NG and WWU in January 2024 to discuss the future of the Gasworks site.

PRS Planning Application

As referenced above, in order for any redevelopment of the Gasworks site to take place, the existing PRS and associated infrastructure must be relocated. The identified location on the Gasworks site, informed by detailed studies and specialist consultant input, will allow for gas main rationalisation and for WWU to continue to supply Exeter with gas, as per their obligations as the Licenced Gas Transporter.

As such, Firstplan has been instructed, on behalf of NG and WWU, to prepare and submit a planning application for the replacement PRS and associated infrastructure in the southern corner of the site. This will be submitted concurrently.

Summary of Position

Our clients will continue to pursue communication with the Council and with adjacent landowners in respect of the future of the Gasworks site, and the attendance by these respective parties at the forthcoming meetings is very much welcomed.

The general aspirations of the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD are supported by our clients however, in particular, the preferred siting of a primary school at the southern part of the Gasworks site is objected to in the strongest terms.

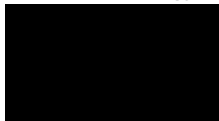
The proposed primary school would undermine the extensive works that our clients have undertaken to-date with Cubex, rendering the site development unviable. Instead, the site will remain in operational use. This, in turn, will prevent the relocation of the PRS and the gas mains and the associated benefits that would, as we have set out, result, both on this site and in the wider Water Lane regeneration area.

Indeed, by retaining an operational use of the site and the gas main in its current form, the development opportunity along Water Lane would be sterilised (as is evident by the current HSE holding objection to the pending outline planning application 23/1007/OUT). This ultimately means that the content of the Liveable Water Lane SPD would be undeliverable and the projected housing numbers proposed within the SPD cannot be relied on.

Therefore, at this stage we have no alternative but to request that the allocation for the preferred location of the primary school is removed and that an alternative location is sought. Our clients have confirmed that they are prepared to actively engage with the Council regarding a feasible alternative location.

I trust that the above provides clarity on our clients' positions. We look forward to further engagement, both in respect of the forthcoming meetings with the Council and landowners, and in future consultation on the Draft Liveable Water Lane SPD in due course.

Yours sincerely,



SAM HARPER
Director

Enc.

cc.	Mark Roberts	-	National Grid
	Richard Williams	-	Wales & West Utilities
	Charles Whitworth	-	Cushman & Wakefield

Our Ref: 23/195
Your Ref: n/a
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02 July 2024

FAO: Katharine Smith
Exeter City Council
City Development
Civic Centre
Paris Street
EX1 1JN

By Email

Dear Katharine

LIVEABLE WATER LANE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

I write on behalf of my clients, National Grid (NG) and Wales and West Utilities (WWU) who are the owners of the operational Gasworks site at Water Lane, in response to the roundtable session on 6 June 2024 relating to *The Liveable Water Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)*. Since our meeting, we note that the *Liveable Water Lane: Development Framework and Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* has been published and is due to be reported to Executive on 9 July 2024 for adoption to guide future development proposals at Water Lane.

We submitted representations to the *Liveable Water Lane SPD* on 4 December 2023 that confirmed we supported the general aspirations of the SPD but, we strongly objected to the 'preferred' siting of the primary school on the southern part of the Gasworks site and requested that the school was removed, and an alternative location sought. The proposed primary school would have rendered our client's site unviable as well as present a series of other development challenges, not least its relationship with the contaminated former gasworks land, below ground gas mains and the other essential gas infrastructure, including the Pressure Reduction Station (PRS). You will be aware that we continue to progress our planning application for the relocated PRS, predominantly as a result of queries around its relationship with future development plans outside of the NG/WWU site.

Whilst the overarching aspirations of the final version of the SPD are welcomed and supported by our clients, as we discussed in our meeting, it is appropriate that we make comments on three key topics as set out below.

a) Primary school

We welcome the relocation of the primary school off the Gasworks site and the updated reference within the SPD to refer to the school's location as '*indicative*'. The Water Lane Primary School Options Appraisal prepared by LDA Design provides three test options for how a school could be brought forward and it is noted that the three options show development comprising a grass pitch / all-weather pitch associated with the school on a portion of the Gasworks site.

We acknowledge that the locations remain indicative, but noting our previous representations, and real concerns around viability and deliverability, we ask that all elements of the school are removed from the Gasworks site.

We would like to be kept updated on the preferred / final location of the primary school as discussions progress in order to ensure that the proposals are deliverable and do not impact the Gasworks site, either in terms of current operations or future redevelopment plans.

b) Access

The SPD seeks to transform Haven Road as an active travel priority street, by limiting vehicle volumes, rerouting public transport and redirecting traffic via Water Lane. The SPD does not acknowledge that the Gasworks site is also accessed via Haven Road nor how the site will be accessed until a future connection is made from Water Lane.

The Gasworks site is an existing, well-used industrial site that is still partially operational and if these changes are implemented prior to an alternative access being formed from Water Lane this will result in significant operational implications for the Gasworks site, and indeed the construction, and ongoing operation of, the proposed PRS. The Gasworks site, from an operational viewpoint, supplies and provides gas to Exeter and the surrounding area, serving some 33,000 customers and businesses. It is imperative, therefore, that access is maintained at all times.

Therefore, we maintain our objection to the transformation of Haven Road until such time that an alternative access has been agreed / finalised. We request that the Council continue to update us on the access options for Water Lane to ensure access is unaffected and future development plans not unnecessarily impacted.

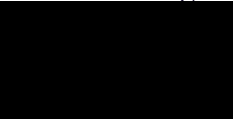
c) Gas Infrastructure

The key infrastructure at the site is the existing high-pressure gas main, which is protected by way of an easement and identified as a constraint in the SPD. Without a viable redevelopment prospect the Gasworks site is likely to remain in operational use, and the PRS and the gas mains will remain as they are. As you know, without improvements and alterations to both the PRS and gas mains, very limited development can take place across the site or indeed further along Water Lane as a result of the large blast zones identified in the HSE holding objection to the WLDMC application – although we note that in our meeting on 6 June a solution was to be tabled imminently by WLDMC demonstrating how this would be overcome (which we have not yet had sight of).

Currently, without improvement, the development opportunities along Water Lane would be sterilised and the Liveable Water Lane SPD would be undeliverable. As a result, we remain committed to continuing to work with the Council and stakeholders to try and find an agreeable solution for all parties.

I trust that the above provides clarity on our clients' position, however, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



SAM HARPER
Director