

Exeter Plan – Regulation 19

Publication Plan

Topic policies: Summaries

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Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
EX1 1JN



The Exeter Plan

The Exeter Plan will shape the future of Exeter for the period up to 2041 and will be the basis for how the city continues to evolve and meet the needs of the community.

Once adopted the Exeter Plan will be the Local Plan for the city. It will be the main planning policy document for Exeter, setting out where development should take place and providing the policies which will be used in making decisions on planning applications.

This document provides a summary of each of the 'topic-based' policies in the Publication Draft Plan.

Spatial strategy and Liveable Exeter principles

The policies in this section of the plan provide the overarching direction for the future of Exeter and development in the city.

S1: Spatial strategy

Policy S1 includes the new spatial strategy for Exeter. The spatial strategy guides the pattern and characteristics of development in the city and the proposed development sites included in the Exeter Plan. A key strand of the new spatial strategy is to steer the majority of development to brownfield sites in order to protect the city's landscape and retain Exeter's environmental and heritage quality.

S2: Liveable Exeter principles

Policy S2 includes the Liveable Exeter principles. These set out the requirements for the standard of development that the City Council will expect for all large-scale brownfield developments. Liveable Exeter is a growth and place-making initiative governed by seven principles which have been drawn from Exeter's Vision 2040. In adopting the Liveable Exeter principles, we aim to strengthen and reinvigorate existing communities and repurpose and transform other parts of the city through high quality development.

Climate change

The policies in this section cover the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and work towards creating a net zero city.

CC1: Net zero Exeter

Policy CC1 brings together many climate change considerations to ensure they are addressed together. It requires development to demonstrate support to achieve net zero over its whole lifetime.

CC2: Renewable and low carbon energy

Policy CC2 sets out that where planning permission is required for renewable and low carbon energy-generating development, the City Council will support proposals where its impacts are acceptable. Development that is neither renewable nor low carbon will not be permitted.

CC3: Local energy networks

Policy CC3 identifies the areas where evidence suggests local energy networks are feasible and viable and requires that new development outside of these areas but in reasonable proximity to a network, be constructed to allow connection. Local energy networks are where energy (heat and/or power) is generated and distributed close to where it will be used rather than the conventional approach of large power plants providing energy (electricity and gas) through the national grid.

CC4: Ground-mounted photovoltaic arrays

Policy CC4 outlines criteria to be met in order for ground-mounted photovoltaic arrays to be supported.

CC5: Future development standards

Policy CC5 seeks to provide a local back-up to the Future Homes Standard and the Future Buildings Standard. These are standards which the Government is proposing to introduce to deliver buildings which are zero carbon ready, better for the environment and fit for the future.

CC6: Embodied carbon

Policy CC6 introduces the requirement to measure and to reduce embodied carbon emissions associated with the development. The policy also introduces a presumption against one-for-one demolition and replacement of existing housing. Embodied carbon is the amount of carbon emitted during the construction of a building and associated activities (e.g. through raw material extraction, manufacture, transport of materials and eventual material disposal).

CC7: Development that is adaptive and resilient to climate change

Policy CC7 requires development proposals to demonstrate how they will adapt to climate change and remain resilient throughout their lifespan by addressing key issues such as overheating, flood risk, biodiversity integration, reduced water availability and retrofitting renewable energy technologies.

CC8: Flood risk

Policy CC8 sets out how the City Council will consider flood risk. In all areas development will need to integrate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into the design and layout. SuDS mimic natural drainage processes.

CC9: Water quantity and quality

Policy CC9 requires new development to contribute to improving water quality and reduce water demand by installing features that naturally limit people's water usage such as aerated taps or rainwater harvesting.

Homes

The policies in this section set out to provide the quantity, type and quality of homes that Exeter needs and to ensure they are in the right locations.

H1: Housing requirement

Policy H1 sets out the City Council's proposed approach to meeting the Government's housing requirement for Exeter through homes already completed, homes with existing planning permission, allocated sites, and 'windfalls' (sites which come forward unexpectedly rather than those allocated). The Government updates housing requirements annually and as of 2024 it requires the City Council to plan for 642 new homes to be built in Exeter each year.

H2: Housing allocations and windfalls

Policy H2 lists the development sites that the City Council, after assessment, suggests should be allocated to help meet the housing requirement. In line with the spatial strategy set out in policy S1, there is a focus on large, brownfield sites located close to the city centre and key transport hubs, with good access to green infrastructure including our Valley Parks.

H3: Regeneration opportunity areas

Policy H3 encourages development in regeneration opportunity areas that efficiently use brownfield land, supporting residential and mixed-use projects. These proposals must align with the spatial strategy, enhance the urban environment, ensure appropriate amenity, avoid negative impacts on existing uses, and retain employment floorspace. Marsh Barton and an area around North Street called North Gate are included as examples.

H4: Affordable Housing

Policy H4 sets out the broad requirements for when developments are required to deliver affordable housing, where, and the types and proportions of affordable housing required. Affordable housing can be summarised as subsidised housing for people whose needs are not met by the market and includes affordable housing both for rent and for ownership.

H5: Build to rent

Policy H5 requires 20% of homes on build to rent schemes to be for affordable private rent. Build to rent is high quality housing that is purposely built for private sector rent.

H6: Co-living housing

Policy H6 explains when co-living developments may be appropriate including in locations where day-to-day needs can be met without using a private car. Co-living housing is high quality accommodation that is purposely built for private sector rent. It is a type of non-self-contained housing with an emphasis on communal living and social interaction, often for young professionals.

H7: Custom and self-build housing

Policy H7 supports custom and self-build housing by stating that, on developments of 20 or more homes, 5% of homes should be made available as serviced plots for sale to custom or self-builders. A custom or self-build home is a home built or commissioned by an individual (or group of individuals) for their own occupation, where they have meaningful input into the final design and layout. Custom and self-build housing can include houses and flats.

H8: Homes for older people

Policy H8 supports the development of good quality homes for older people, for which there is an identified housing need.

H9: Supported housing

Policy H9 supports the provision of good quality specialist housing for people with support needs and for which there is an identified housing need.

H10: Purpose built student accommodation

Policy H10 sets out the criteria that proposals for purpose-built student accommodation must meet. Purpose built student accommodation provides students with good quality, well managed housing and it eases pressure on existing housing in the city. Since 2006/07, the University and City Council have also shared a target for at least 75% of additional student numbers to be housed in purpose-built student accommodation.

H11: Gypsy and traveller accommodation

Policy H11 aims to facilitate the provision of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in a way that considers the travelling community's wellbeing and traditional way of life whilst respecting the interests of Exeter's settled community. It requires development to be within the urban boundary. Occupants must meet the Government's definition of, or culturally be, Gypsies and Travellers.

H12: Residential conversions and houses in multiple occupation

Policy H12 sets out the requirements that must be met in order for a planning application for a house in multiple occupation (HMO) to be supported. This includes consideration of whether the HMO will cause or exacerbate an over-concentration of HMOs in the locality. A HMO is a property rented out by at least three people who are not from one 'household' (i.e. not a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen.

H13: Loss of residential accommodation

Policy H13 will ensure that, in most cases, existing homes are retained through the development process. This aims to protect against the loss of residential accommodation.

H14: Accessible homes

Policy H14 sets out the requirements for proportions of accessible homes required as part of new housing developments. It includes requirements for wheelchair user homes and accessible and adaptable homes, both standards defined by Building Regulations.

H15: Housing density and size mix

Policy H15 sets out criteria to ensure that developments propose the most optimal density of housing and mix of housing size (i.e. number of bedrooms) to ensure we meet housing needs and consider what is appropriate for the site and surrounding area.

H16: Residential amenity and healthy homes

Policy H16 is one of a raft of policies in the Exeter Plan intended to ensure that new homes are healthy and safe whilst considering the impact of development on existing residents and communities.

Economy and jobs

The policies in this section seek to develop the potential of the city for economic growth with a particular focus on the knowledge economy and ensure the benefits of jobs, skills and training are available to all.

EJ1: Economic growth

Policy EJ1 provides support for proposals that meet the economic needs of the city. It encourages appropriate development within transformational sectors, such as data analytics, environmental futures, digital innovation, green economy, health innovation and the creative industries. It also highlights the importance of working with partners to encourage growth and investment.

EJ2: Retention of employment land

Policy EJ2 seeks to protect defined employment land located in established employment areas that are key to meeting our future employment needs, whilst also allowing change of use where it could be acceptable and justified.

EJ3: New forms of employment provision

Policy EJ3 supports new forms of employment provision such as work hubs and collaborative work-space and ensures the delivery of these within strategic development sites.

EJ4: Access to jobs and skills

Policy EJ4 supports work towards building skills and improving pathways to work for young people and disadvantaged groups. It requires major development proposals to submit and deliver an Employment and Skills Plan and expresses support for development proposals that contribute to providing local residents with access to employment, skills and social value opportunities.

EJ5: Provision of local services in employment areas

Policy EJ5 supports the provision of local services within employment areas for the benefit of the workforce. These services could include a childcare nursery, a medical practice or walk-in centre, a dentist, a post office, a bank, a café or a small convenience store. In addition to benefitting the workforce, these would be attractive to potential businesses and investors and should also reduce the need to travel.

EJ6: New transformational employment allocations

Policy EJ6 allocates new employment sites to meet the specific requirements of the transformational sectors such as data analytics, environmental futures, digital innovation, health innovation and the creative industries. These transformational employment allocations

will provide additional floorspace, alongside the employment provision set out in policy EJ3, to help meet identified employment demand.

Retail and the future of our centres

The policies in this section seek to secure a successful future for the city centre and for local and district centres located throughout the city, providing a wide variety of facilities and services to communities.

RFC1: The future of our centres

Policy RFC1 focuses on enhancing the vitality and resilience of Exeter's city centre, district centres and local centres. It supports a diverse mix of uses to increase prosperity, extend hours of activity, and strengthen the night-time and visitor economy. The policy aims to improve public spaces, promote nature, enhance heritage assets, and provide high-quality facilities for active travel and public transport, ensuring these areas remain vibrant, attractive, and well-connected hubs for the sub-region.

RFC2: Development in, and affecting, within our centres

Policy RFC2 supports retail, town centre, and residential development in Exeter's city, district, and local centres to enhance their vitality and resilience. It promotes a mix of uses that support retail, leisure, and services while preserving the environment. Larger developments outside these centres must meet the sequential test and demonstrate no negative impact on existing centres. High-quality active travel, public transport, and public realm are required.

Sustainable transport and communications

The policies in this section seek to deliver development in appropriate locations with high quality infrastructure to minimise the need to travel, maximise sustainable transport and support emerging forms of mobility. It also sets the intention to work in collaboration with partners in delivering sustainable transport options and to support the improvement of digital communications.

STC1: Sustainable movement

Policy STC1 sets out an overarching approach to sustainable travel. It identifies the importance of locating development to minimise the need to travel, covers a variety of travel modes and explains the importance of the strategic transport role of Exeter.

STC2: The transport hierarchy

Policy STC2 sets out a hierarchy which priorities active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling), public transport and shared mobility (for example car clubs and cycle hire) over traditional highway improvements. It identifies the potential to secure contributions towards transport improvements from development.

STC3: Supporting active travel

Policy STC3 sets out that the City Council will work with other Authorities and stakeholders to create inclusive, safe, and attractive active travel environments. The policy identifies a set of key active travel proposals that the City Council will work to support.

STC4: Supporting public transport

Policy STC4 promotes a number of public transport proposals. For buses these include strategic bus improvements, the provision of electric vehicles and park and ride/park and change facilities. For rail, these include support for another new railway station at Monkerton/Hill Barton, better interchange facilities at St David's station and accessibility improvements to all city stations.

STC5: Supporting more sustainable forms of car use

Policy STC5 explains how new forms of car use will be supported, including provisions for electric vehicles and shared mobility where transport options are shared amongst users on a flexible basis.

STC6: Travel plans

Policy STC6 sets out the requirements in relation to travel plans. Travel plans are long-term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable travel into the planning process and new developments. These plans aim to minimise car travel by addressing factors like development layout, sustainable transport infrastructure, multi-modal parking, and providing incentives for sustainable transport use.

STC7: Safeguarding transport infrastructure

STC7 identifies land and structures which are needed to either facilitate sustainable transport or support the large development allocations proposed in the plan. This includes land for the proposed new Monkerton/Hill Barton railway station and access routes to proposed large development sites like Water Lane.

STC8: Motorway service area

Policy STC8 states that the City Council supports redeveloping the motorway service area near Junction 30 on the M5 for employment uses, provided an appropriate replacement is provided. This would provide relief for the local highway network and free-up a potential site for employment development.

STC9: Digital communications

Policy STC9 sets out a number of requirements for new development in order to drive better digital communications. Digital infrastructure will need to be planned into new developments from the start and viewed as an essential utility to ensure high quality, comprehensive connections.

Natural Environment

The policies in this section seek to protect and enhance the city's unique natural setting provided by the hills, the valley parks and River Exe, improve access to natural greenspaces and provide net gains for biodiversity.

NE1: Landscape setting areas

Policy NE1 provides identified landscape setting areas in the city with protection from inappropriate development. This land is of intrinsic landscape value to the city and its residents.

NE2: Valley Parks

Policy NE2 seeks to protect the Valley Parks and only permit development that supports their functions. Exeter has ten Valley Parks (including three new Valley Parks proposed in the Exeter Plan) which provide informal recreation to the public and are also of significant wildlife value.

NE3: Biodiversity

Policy NE3 aims to protect biodiversity and ecological sites by providing criteria to ensure all development proposals follow the 'mitigation hierarchy' (which puts avoiding harm to biodiversity ahead of mitigating harm, with compensation as a last resort) and provide a 10% net gain in biodiversity as is the legal requirement.

NE4: Green infrastructure

Policy NE4 seeks to ensure that development takes a positive approach to protection, enhancement and delivery of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure provides a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits.

NE5: Green circle

Policy NE5 aims to protect the Green Circle, a twelve mile walk that provides a great walking experience within the boundaries of Exeter, providing people with access to nature-rich, beautiful places and encouraging active and healthy lives.

NE6: Urban greening factor

Policy NE6 proposes to introduce a requirement for all major development to increase the level of greening in urban environments through requiring the inclusion of an urban greening factor calculation. This is a Natural England-generated measurement of the greenery proposed within planning applications and includes all forms of vegetation including trees, parks, gardens and green roofs.

NE7: Urban tree canopy cover

Policy NE7 seeks to ensure that new developments contribute towards meeting City Council targets for increasing the amount of tree cover in the city. This will provide enormous benefits to people and wildlife, helping to improve health and wellbeing, providing biodiversity and recreational opportunities, preventing flooding, reducing the impact of climate change and improving air and water quality.

History and heritage

The policies in this section seek to conserve and enhance the city's unique historic character by promoting development that complements and celebrates the city's heritage, identity and culture.

HH1: Conserving and enhancing heritage assets

HH1 requires development to make a positive contribution to the historic environment and identity of the city and sets out key considerations for development affecting heritage assets in Exeter.

HH2: Conservation areas

Policy HH2 ensures that development within Conservation Areas preserves their unique character, architectural value, and historic significance. Proposals that would cause significant harm to a Conservation Area will only be approved if the public benefits clearly outweigh the potential harm.

HH3: Archaeology

Policy HH3 safeguards nationally important archaeological sites from harm and requires their preservation in place, with improved access and interpretation where possible. Development affecting regional or local archaeological remains may be acceptable if the benefits outweigh the impacts. If preservation is not possible, a scheme for recording, analysing, and archiving the remains, with community involvement, should be implemented and records should be made publicly accessible.

HH4: Heritage assets and climate change

Policy HH4 outlines how historic buildings can help address climate change through sensitive repairs, retrofitting, and adaptive reuse. It supports changes to both designated and non-designated heritage assets that minimise carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and adapt to climate change, while preserving the design and significance of the asset.

HH5: Conserving and enhancing Exeter City Walls

Policy HH5 recognises the importance of the Exeter City Walls scheduled monument. It sets out the way in which development should respond to the City Walls and includes the potential to secure funding to support a programme of works to conserve, repair, maintain and enhance the Walls and improve public access and their visibility.

Culture and tourism

The policies in this section seek to explore, enhance and celebrate the cultural richness of the city and its profile as a prominent tourist destination.

C1: Protecting and enhancing cultural and tourism facilities

Policy C1 seeks to protect Exeter's cultural and tourist facilities while supporting development that enhances the city's profile as a cultural and tourist destination. It emphasises the need for viable use of cultural sites and encourages temporary cultural activities that animate public spaces without inappropriately harming local amenity.

C2: Development and cultural provision

Policy C2 sets out the expectation for large scale development to contribute to and reflect local culture through providing high quality, creative public spaces, cultural projects and public art. The cultural contribution should be identified through engaging with local communities. Developers of large proposals are required to submit a Cultural Plan and engage with local communities to ensure the provision aligns with local cultural practices.

High quality places and design

The policies in this section seek to deliver the development we need in high quality, liveable, connected places.

D1: Design principles

Policy D1 sets clear design principles for development and will ensure that planning permission will not be granted for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

D2: Designing-out crime

Policy D2 aims to create safe environments. It encourages developments that promote security through well thought-out layouts, lighting and clear public/private boundaries. Proposals should focus on reducing opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour by ensuring good visibility, appropriate levels of activity and well-maintained areas.

D3: Advertisements

Policy D3 sets out the considerations when making decisions on proposals for advertisements. These are focused on amenity and public safety and prescribed by national legislation/policy.

Health and wellbeing

The policies in this section seek to promote inclusive development which supports communities in becoming healthier and more active.

HW1: Health and wellbeing

Policy HW1 requires large residential development proposals to consider a number of key health and wellbeing priorities including promoting community inclusion, encouraging safe and healthy neighbourhoods, promoting active lifestyles, enhancing nature, providing quality housing, supporting job creation, improvements in air quality and the delivery of the health infrastructure we need. Developers must address potential health impacts and contribute to GP provision if needed.

HW2: Environmental quality, pollution and contaminated land

Policy HW2 requires development proposals to minimise and mitigate potential adverse impacts from pollution (air, noise, water, land) during both the construction and operational

phases of development. Developments on contaminated land will only be permitted if the land can be made suitable for the proposed use and appropriate measures are in place to minimise impacts on future occupants and surrounding areas.

Infrastructure and facilities

The policies in this section plan for new infrastructure and facilities at the right time and in the right places and protect existing services that play an essential role in the lives of our residents.

IF1: Delivery of infrastructure

Policy IF1 sets out the approach to delivering new infrastructure in the city. An infrastructure delivery plan is being prepared to go alongside the Exeter Plan. In addition, more detail about the specific infrastructure and community facilities required to go alongside the various development proposals is included in the allocation policies.

IF2: Viability

Policy IF2 explains the approach that will be taken to considering the viability of development. The policy sets the expectation that development delivers the requirements of Exeter Plan policies.

IF3: Community facilities

Policy IF3 sets out the approach for protecting existing community provision and supporting new or improved facilities including schools. Existing facilities will be protected unless they are no longer viable, surplus or replaced by suitable alternatives. New facilities will be supported with local community engagement.

IF4: Open space, play areas, allotments and sport

Policy IF4 sets out the approach for protecting existing open space and sports provision. It includes proposals to provide or contribute to a range of improved provision. Existing spaces will be protected unless they are unfit, unviable, surplus, or replaced by suitable alternatives. New spaces must meet technical standards, be inclusive, accessible, integrated into active travel networks and designed to be safe and secure.

IF5: New cemetery provision

Policy IF5 sets out criteria that must be met in order for proposals for additional cemetery provision to be supported in the city.