

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

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

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)

See enclosed representation

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)

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)

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)

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>

**The Exeter Plan – Publication Draft Regulation 19 Consultation
Representations on behalf of The Guinness Partnership Ltd**

Introduction

The representations are submitted in response to The Exeter Plan – Publication Draft Regulation 19 consultation, on behalf of The Guinness Partnership Ltd that owns a group of buildings at Heavitree Road, namely The Pyramids, John Hannam House and Eaton House / Eaton Drive, collectively referred to as the Pyramids Site. These buildings are identified in The Exeter Plan as part of a wider proposed mixed use allocation known as East Gate.

The Guinness Partnership is one of the country's best-known housing providers and operates in 125 local authority areas across England. Most of its homes are homes for rent at prices significantly lower than those charged in the private market and on tenancy terms which offer far greater security. Affordable home ownership options and homes that people can purchase outright on the open market are also provided, recognising that the shortage of housing in this country affects those seeking to buy a home too.

This range of housing provision meets a range of needs, and any profit they make on homes for outright sale helps them invest in and build more affordable homes.

The Guinness Partnership purchased The Pyramids building from Exeter City Council in late 2022 with an agreed view to redeveloping the site as part of its continued provision of affordable housing. A condition of the sale agreement was that the site should not be used for student accommodation.

Strategic mixed use brownfield allocation: SBA2 - East Gate (Strategic policy)

The Guinness Partnership supports the aspirations set out in the proposed East Gate mixed use allocation, in particular the Liveable Exeter Principles to deliver a compact and well-connected neighbourhood, incorporating the highest standards of design.

In support of the Regulation 19 Consultation, the Council has prepared a Views, Density and Heights Study – Stage 2 Sites report, December 2014 (the Heights Study). In respect of the Pyramids Site, as shown below, the Heights Study sets a range of 3 to 8 storeys in height.





We do not wish to comment on the specific findings of the reported storey heights, however we wish to ensure that building heights are not be fixed at this stage. It may transpire through further, more detailed site assessment, that taller buildings would be appropriate in heritage or any other terms, thus allowing for more efficient use of land.

For example, the Heights Study refers to key constraints in relation to the Southerhay Conservation Area. There is, however, no interrelationship with the site and the Southerhay Conservation due to the presence of the modern Central Living building on the junction of Western Way and Paris Street. Equally, there is no impact upon the Southernhay URC and Sidwell Methodist Chapel, which is mentioned as a constraint. The Heights Study acknowledges that there are no view corridors of the Cathedral. Given the above, the Pyramids site is relatively unconstrained in terms of heritage impact and as such, storey heights should be flexible and determined through appropriate massing assessment taking into account urban design, heritage and other factors.

As will be a common theme in these representations, it would assist developers and planning officer's determining planning applications if the Exeter Plan contained a tall buildings policy, which makes clear the circumstances where such buildings would be acceptable. All other cities in the South West have such a policy, except Exeter.

One matter that we wish to reiterate from our Regulation 18 consultation comments, is that the East Gate allocation refers to a number of mixed uses, however it should be noted that The Guinness Partnership intends to deliver an affordable housing-led scheme on the parts of its ownership that are to be developed. Affordable Housing is a significant benefit to the community and we would not like to see insistence that certain proposed uses within the draft allocation are imposed upon The Guinness Partnership. For example, it should not be insisted upon that The Guinness Partnership provide the employment or live-work allocation requirements, when it is an affordable housing provider. There should therefore be appropriate flexibility within the policy to allow for this provision.



Policy S1: Spatial strategy

The Guinness Partnership supports the draft Spatial Strategy that seeks to shift the emphasis for housing delivery towards brownfield sites. In order to achieve the Council's housing requirement prescribed by the national Standard Methodology, it must be recognised that this shift in emphasis can only be achieved with a matched shift towards increased densities and scale/height of buildings to maximise the efficiency of sites. In order to provide certainty to developers, the Exeter Plan should contain a tall buildings policy and further clarity over appropriate density scales.

Policy S2: Liveable Exeter principles

These principles are supported, however in common with comments made above in relation to Policy S1, Principle 2 refers to "Build at optimal density and maximise the development footprint, incorporating the highest densities in the most accessible and sustainable locations". Again, it should be noted in the Exeter Plan that a step change in the acceptance of an increased scale/height of buildings is required to achieve this aim and should be specifically referenced in this policy.

Policy CC1: Net zero Exeter

This policy is supported in principle, however the Exeter Plan needs to define exactly what is meant by 'net zero' and how this is measured. Perhaps in a glossary. Without this definition, the true impact of build cost and viability cannot be established (noting that a viability assessment of the Exeter Plan has not been carried out).

Policy CC3: Local energy networks

This policy requires developments within 500m of the City Centre to connect with existing energy networks or to provide the necessary pipework to connect to any future energy network. There is significant resistance within the development industry to future proof buildings so that they can be connected to theoretical energy networks due to the additional costs associated with the necessary upgrades, when several such schemes have been proposed and not come forward. This Policy should propose a cut off point whereby if an energy network scheme is not being considered, or has fallen through, that there should not be a future proof requirement.

Policy CC5: Future development standards

This policy seeks a 78% carbon dioxide emissions reduction from that required under the 2013 Building Regulations and is not supported for three reasons.

Firstly, the carbon reduction requirements of the 2023 Building Regulations are significantly improved beyond the now out of date 2013 versions. We note that the Council has ceased reference to the 2013 Regulations in planning conditions referring to carbon reduction and now refers to the 2023 Regulations. It seems nonsensical to reference the 2013 Building Regulations in this context.



Secondly, the Future Homes Standard will apply in 2025, with the stated aim of ensuring that new build houses are future-proofed with low carbon heating and “world-leading levels of energy efficiency” by embracing smart and low carbon technologies.

Thirdly, NPPF paragraph 159 b) states that “any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards”, i.e. they should not exceed the Building Regulation or other requirements.

Given these three reasons, reference to the 2013 Building Regulations is therefore out of date.

Policy CC6: Embodied carbon

This policy seeks to ensure that adequate steps have been taken in the design of developments to reduce embodied carbon emission. This requirement is supported as drafted as it acknowledges that it can be difficult to fully mitigate embodied carbon emissions on brownfield sites, especially where demolition of existing buildings is required. As the Exeter Plan Spatial Strategy relies heavily upon the use of brownfield sites, the policy requirement to reduce embodied carbon emissions where possible is supported.

Policy NE7: Urban tree canopy cover

This policy requires major development proposals to increase tree canopy cover on-site when compared to the pre-development baseline. Again, as the Exeter Plan Spatial Strategy relies heavily upon brownfield sites, this requirement may not be achievable on certain sites, for example, where the application site area is the footprint of an existing building there would be no space to plant new trees. Historically, there have also been issues with Devon County Council not adopting street trees. This policy therefore requires greater flexibility for circumstances where a development site physically cannot increase tree canopy.

Furthermore, if an existing site already has adequate tree canopy coverage, why should it be required to increase provision when it is already acceptable in this regard? This policy should therefore take account of the retention of existing trees as part of the provision equation.

Policy H4: Affordable housing

This policy seeks a requirement of 35% affordable housing on greenfield sites and 15% affordable housing on brownfield sites. In both scenarios, a tenure split of 50% social rent and 50% affordable home ownership. Part B of the policy refers to at least 30% of any First Homes delivered to meet the affordable home ownership requirement should be sold at a discount from market prices of at least 50%.

Firstly, the Exeter Plan should not be prescriptive about a particular tenure split as the actual requirement will almost certainly vary backwards and forwards multiple times over the 20 year plan period. For example, there is mention of First Homes that was recently introduced into the NPPF



definition of affordable housing, however many Local Authorities aren't insisting on this provision due to lack of uptake of this model.

Secondly, the prescribed split doesn't take into account potential future changes in the NPPF definition of affordable housing that may introduce alternative tenures and/or remove current tenures included in the Policy.

Thirdly, assuming this split is based upon a current housing needs survey, that would only represent need at a snapshot in time. Over the course of the 20 year plan period, the particular tenure need is likely to fluctuate considerably beyond that contained in the draft policy. The appropriate tenure split will also be influenced by viability, with certain tenures performing better or worse at various points within the economic cycle. A ridged tenure split requirement over a long period of time is therefore not supported without the ability for adaption and flexibility.

It is recommended that the tenure split of affordable housing is better dealt with in an accompanying Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The benefit of SPD's is that they can be reviewed more regularly than a Local Plan to take account of changes in the need and tenure for affordable housing.

Conclusions

The Guinness Partnership supports the proposed East Gate mixed use proposals and intends to work collaboratively with the Council towards the delivery of much needed affordable housing on land in its control within the allocation area.

The Spatial Strategy that seeks to shift the emphasis for housing delivery towards brownfield sites is supported, however it must be recognised that a step change in the acceptance of an increased scale/height of buildings is required to achieve this aim. A tall buildings and density policy would assist developers as it would provide clarity and guidance as to what would be acceptable in this regard.

The strategy towards achieving carbon 'net zero' is supported, however for clarity to developers this requirement should be better defined. Reference in Policy CC5 to the 2013 Building Regulations is however out of date given current updated standards and the proposed Future Homes Standards that will apply over the plan period.

The approach in Policy CC6 reduce embodied carbon emissions where possible is supported, however this should not impose any more onerous requirement than drafted bearing in mind that the Exeter Plan Spatial Strategy relies heavily upon the use of brownfield sites.

The Exeter Plan should not prescribe a particular affordable housing tenure mix within Policy H4 as this is almost certainly going to fluctuate over the plan period.



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