

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)

TT Group

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

Please see accompanying representations document.

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)

Please see accompanying representations document.

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)

Please see accompanying representations document.

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)

Please see accompanying representations document.

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

Yes

No

Please see accompanying representations document.

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)

Please see accompanying representations document.

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 see accompanying representations document.

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 see accompanying representations document.

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)

Please see accompanying representations document.

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 see accompanying representations document.

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)

Please see accompanying representations document.

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)

No.

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)

It is important that TT Group is present to participate in the hearing sessions owing to their interest at Exbridge House (within the former West Gate draft allocation) and to be given the opportunity to make their case in relation to the relevant draft policies.

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.

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Exeter Plan 2021-2041 Publication Stage (Reg. 19)

Representations by Savills on behalf of TT Group



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1. Introduction

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Introduction

These representations have been prepared and submitted by Savills on behalf of TT Group in response to Exeter City Council's (the "Council") Exeter Plan 2021-2041 Publication Stage (Reg. 19) consultation, including evidence base, published in December 2024.

TT Group has an interest in Exbridge House, 26 Commercial Rd, Exeter. A copy of the Site Location Plan is enclosed with these representations (**Appendix 1**).

Representations have been submitted to the previous consultation stages on behalf of TT Group, including the consultation on the Full Draft in October 2023.

Exbridge House previously fell within the 'West Gate' draft allocation which appeared in a previous stage of the draft Plan. Indeed, the previous West Gate allocation proposed approximately 200 dwellings for this area over the plan period. The West Gate allocation has since been removed from the plan, a point addressed in these representations.

These representations are intended to support the Council's preparation of a sound Local Plan, including comments on non-site specific development management policies. However, in its current form, TT Group do not consider that the Local Plan is sound, and that amendments should be made prior to the submission of the plan for examination.

These representations propose amendments considered necessary to enable the Plan to be found sound. Where relevant, revised text has been included, where red strikethrough text indicates a deletion and green underlined text indicates a proposed addition. All other text in quotations is original.

2. Local Plan (Reg. 19)

2. Responses to Proposed Submission Local Plan

S1 (Spatial Strategy)

Overall, TT Group support the proposed spatial strategy set out in draft Policy S1, particularly the importance of focussing where possible on brownfield land within the city centre to make most efficient use of land.

We also support the intention of the draft Plan to ensure that it provides for “good quality homes of a variety of types in the city to meet Exeter’s needs”. Further, the draft Plan should provide for a wide range of deliverable and developable sites across the city in order to provide competition and choice and to ensure that housing needs are met in full, with a range of sites proposed for allocation.

However, given the significant demand for housing in the city, maximising the use of sustainably located sites within the city centre will clearly be an important focus for the draft Plan. Indeed, key sites within the city centre, such as Exbridge House, can make a valuable contribution to the new plan, through the delivery of new homes.

It will therefore be important to ensure allocated sites are deliverable. In this respect, we consider that Exbridge House (**Appendix 1**), is very well placed to accommodate development in accordance with the draft spatial strategy, as a brownfield site close to the city centre and key public transport.

Given the significant demand for housing in the city, maximising the use of brownfield sites will need to be an important focus for the draft Plan.

CC1 Net Zero Exeter (Strategic Policy)

Whilst TT Group support the principle of managing climate change and working toward net zero, it is considered that draft Policy CC1 to be unsound for a number of reasons.

Most importantly, the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) of 13 December 2023, directly addresses the soundness of policies such as this.

The WMS stated that “*the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations*”, and “*any planning policies that propose local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulation should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale*”.

It is clear from the WMS that the Government considers Building Regulations to be the preferred and primary mechanism to deliver improvements in energy efficiency and setting guidance in relation to carbon emissions.

Secondly, the wording of draft Policy CC1 is too imprecise to act as an effective development management policy, and reads more as vision statement.

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Thirdly, much of the policy is already covered by other draft policies within the plan which are more specific and precise for development management purposes, therefore this draft Policy is not necessary. For example “*g. utilising SuDS and other nature-based solutions to deliver flood risk management*” is much better managed by the provisions of draft Policy CC8.

Finally, it does not appear from the viability evidence that any allowance has been made for the impact of this draft Policy beyond Building Regulations compliance, meaning that there is no justification to evidence the impact it could have on the viability of future development.

On the basis of the comments above, no alternative wording is proposed. Instead these representations encourage the Council to rework this draft Policy to acknowledge that targets will be dictated by national Government and up to date building regulations, rather than local policy.

CC3 Local Energy Networks (Strategic Policy)

Similar to our response to draft Policy CC2, whilst TT Group support the principle of managing climate change and working toward net zero, it is considered that draft Policy CC3 is currently unsound on the basis of its proposed requirement for all new development of a certain scale to consider connection to, or futureproof for connection to, heat networks within specified distances.

Firstly, this requirement appears to pre-judge that energy networks are more environmentally and economically sustainable than any site specific energy strategy which a development might be able to deliver independently. There is no evidence to justify this, nor would the developer have any control over the sustainability of the network the draft Policy requires them to consider connection to. This requirement could have the opposite effect and stymie opportunities for extremely environmentally sustainable solutions to come forward on individual sites.

Secondly, although “*feasibility*” and “*viability*” are caveats mentioned within the draft Policy, the requirements of draft Policy CC3 would create a scenario whereby owners of heat networks (which are entirely unregulated) could impose whatever commercial terms they like to developers with projects caught by the policy. This also offers no protection for future residents or occupiers of schemes in terms of energy costs, or the ability to shop around for lower energy costs. This is entirely unreasonable and unjustified.

Taking account of both points above, the viability evidence underpinning the draft Plan confirms that “*no specific allowances made*” for this draft Policy in the testing work undertaken, meaning that there is no evidence to consider the impact of this draft Policy on viability. Therefore it is unjustified.

On the basis of the comments above, no alternative wording is proposed. Instead these representations encourage the Council to reconsider this draft Policy.

CC5 Future Development Standards (Strategic Policy)

As above in relation to draft Policy CC1, the Government has been clear that these are matters to be addressed through Building Regulations, and not through local planning policy. Therefore this draft Policy is not consistent with national policy and there is no adequate justification for why it is needed as a “local back-up”.

On the basis of the comments above, this draft Policy should be deleted in full for soundness.

CC6 Embodied Carbon

As confirmed above, TT Group support the Council's ambitions for reducing carbon emissions, however, consistent with the concerns raised by the Home Builders Federation (HBF), TT Group do not consider that this draft Policy is justified or consistent with national policy.

The HBF representations highlight that there are currently significant gaps for collecting data and measuring whole life carbon consistently and comparatively. As a result, the Future Homes Hub have prepared a roadmap for the development of an industry-led approach for reducing embodied and whole life carbon in new homes which is expected to be aligned with emerging national Government policy. This will include a Future Homes Carbon Assessment Tool.

The HBF also highlight the issues with including assessment of carbon as part of the planning process, given the highly technical nature of the process, which much more naturally aligns with Building Regulations.

Given the Government's position on setting standards at a national level, TT Group do not believe this draft Policy aligns with national policy, nor is the need for it justified. As such, it should be removed in full to achieve soundness.

CC7 Development that is Adaptive and Resilient to Climate Change

As noted in relation to some of the other policies of this Plan, TT Group support the general principle of what this policy is seeking to achieve, however, it is far too unspecific to function effectively as a development management tool.

This draft Policy should be removed in full to ensure soundness.

CC8 Flood Risk (Strategic Policy)

TT Group encourage the Council to review the wording of this draft Policy in light of the publication of the latest National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). In particular, it should be acknowledged that there is not a requirement for development to undertake the sequential test if it has already been tested at plan-making stage.

Supporting text should also be amended accordingly to reflect this.

H1 (Housing Requirement)

It is acknowledged that the proposed housing requirement of 13,975 homes for the plan period (642 homes per year) is within 80% of the new local housing need set out within the standard method published alongside the NPPF in December 2024. The proposed requirement is therefore in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out in paragraph 234 of the NPPF. However, TT Group urge the Council to plan positively now as part of this draft plan to explore opportunities to increase this towards the standard method figure of 800 homes per year.

It is very clear from paragraph 234 of the NPPF that the 80% figure is a minimum, and therefore TT Group consider that to plan for the absolute minimum is contrary to the Government's objective set out in paragraph 61 of the NPPF to 'significantly boost the supply of homes'.

As set out within these representations, there are available sites within the city which the Council could allocate now in order to help boost housing delivery, a principle which the NPPF emphasises.

We therefore request that the Council considers the local housing need as only the minimum starting point and fully considers all of the issues that may result in a need for a higher housing requirement, including the need to provide a range and choice of sites, the need for flexibility, viability considerations and whether higher levels of open-market housing are required in order to secure increased delivery of affordable housing.

H2 Housing Allocations and Windfalls (Strategic Policy)

Further to our comments above in relation to Policy H1, any increase to the overall housing requirement would result in the need for additional allocations. Albeit we strongly encourage the Council to allocate additional suitable sites now in any case. Allocating additional sites now will mean they can be easily and quickly brought forward to address any under-delivery of housing supply.

Given this context, we remain concerned that Exbridge House, which was previously identified within the draft West Gate allocation is no longer identified in the draft plan. Instead, the latest version of the plan continues to omit the West Gate area and Exbridge House would remain as 'white land' / 'windfall' land within the city centre.

In our view, given the importance to plan positively for an increase in housing delivery following the publication of the new NPPF, the West Gate allocation should therefore be reinstated, and given our comments about the need for additional allocations, is a clear candidate for inclusion.

Furthermore, our comments at the previous consultation stage argued that the West Gate area could accommodate far more than the 200 dwellings proposed at the time, and highlighted the 617 homes referred to in the previous Liveable Exeter Vision which informed the Local Plan Review.

Therefore, in our view, not only should the West Gate allocation be reinstated but the quantum of development and number of homes within the allocation should be increased. In order to provide additional flexibility, the allocation for the West Gate area should also make reference to the potential for different residential uses to contribute to local need, including market homes, affordable housing, purpose built student accommodation and PRS / BTR.

If the Council is not minded to reinstate the West Gate allocation, then as a minimum it should include Exbridge House as an allocation in the submission version of the plan for examination.

The land comprises a large red brick building of up to 5 storeys situated between Western Way and Commercial Road. Whilst the site falls within a Conservation Area, it has no meaningful architectural merit. The building is located in a sustainable location with excellent opportunities to redevelop the site for development served by sustainable travel modes. The site is also located in a prominent position at a key intersection and with frontage to Western Way. As a result, there is an excellent opportunity to deliver a scheme which significantly raises the architectural quality, and acts as a prominent feature in this location. In addition, there are opportunities to significantly improve the public realm and permeability through the redevelopment of the site.

With the exception of the Conservation Area, other environmental constraints are limited although the land does fall within Flood Zone 3. This is not considered to be an overriding constraint, and a flood risk strategy can easily be developed to ensure living accommodation is situated on the upper floors and safe access and egress can be delivered.

H4 Affordable Housing

TT Group are in general support of the delivery of affordable housing subject to viability, however, have the following comments in relation to draft Policy H4. These comments should be read alongside the response to draft Policy IF4 (Viability) below.

- Although the supporting text to draft Policy H4 (paragraphs 6.16 and 6.17) references the Exeter Local Housing Needs Assessment as evidence, it is not clear from our review how the proposed tenure splits have been arrived at on the basis of the evidence available. Therefore in the first instance we have to assume this is unjustified.
- Notwithstanding the above, there will inevitably be locational variations in need for different tenures of affordable product, even within a modestly sized administrative area such as Exeter City's. To ensure that the Plan helps to deliver development that truly meets the needs of Exeter City, the draft Policy or its supporting text should be updated to acknowledge that the specified tenure splits are a starting point and that up to date evidence on need and site specific constraints, as well as viability, can and should be matters to be taken into account at planning application stage for all major schemes, regardless of whether they are on greenfield or brownfield land.

Subject to justification and/or the amendments proposed above, TT Group consider this draft Policy would be sound.

H7 Custom and Self-Build Housing

Whilst TT Group support the Council's efforts to deliver a diversified range of housing, at present, they do not consider the draft Policy to be sound for the following reasons:

- As an overarching point, there is no justification provided for the requirement of 5% on sites of 20 dwellings or more. Justification should consider absolute need moving forward, but also take into account consented supply as well as realistic levels of demand for self-build plot purchase within larger "host" development sites.
- At a practical level, there remains a fundamental conflict between the characteristics that typically attract demand from custom / self-build purchasers and trying to accommodate such plots on a wider "host" development site:
 - With the need for at least some design continuity between the "host" site and the self/custom build plots, this takes away the freedom within the self-build plots.
 - That being the case, the developer would be able to achieve economies of scale and deliver the same product at a lower price than it would cost a self-builder to achieve a building of the same floorspace.
 - Unless a self-build site can have its own separate access (which in most cases is unachievable and unviable), the contracting associated with multiple self-build units, on top of any contractors associated to the "host" site is a significant health and safety challenge.

Fundamentally however, there are sites within the city centre, such as Exbridge House, that are simply unsuitable for self build housing. Indeed, development in the city centre would be accommodating the highest density developments given the need to maximise the use of finite brownfield land in the most sustainable location. Such sites would therefore predominantly deliver flats / apartments. It is considered entirely impractical to consider serviced plots for self build housing on city centre sites such as this.

TT Group's position more generally is that if there is demonstrable and viable demand for self and custom built plots, the delivery of these would be more appropriate on sites specifically allocated for self-build (ie not on city centre sites and not part of larger host developments), or on sites where an element of self/custom build is expressly supported by the land owner.

Given the extensive nature of the comments, TT Group do not propose specific wording changes and urge the Council to consider substantive changes to this draft Policy prior to submission.

H10 Purpose built student accommodation

TT Group support the continued acknowledgment by the Council, through draft Policy H10, that purpose built student accommodation will be supported in principle within the city centre.

However, it is considered that specific allocations should make specific mention of the potential to provide purpose built student accommodation. Purpose built student accommodation, particularly where part of mixed use schemes, can ensure the viability and deliverability of schemes in the city centre, and indeed can often 'unlock' key sites.

As highlighted in our response to draft Policy H2, it is considered that either West Gate should be reinstated or Exbridge House allocated in isolation. As part of the allocation, specific reference should be made to the potential to accommodate purpose built student accommodation on the site.

H14 Accessible Homes

TT Group support the inclusion of a Policy relating to the need for accessible dwellings to meet need, however, they object to the draft Policy as currently worded as its requirements are not justified by evidence.

The Written Ministerial Statement of 25 March 2015, national Planning Practice Guidance (as at time of writing) and the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) are clear that optional standards, including adaptable and accessible dwellings, should make use of the Government's optional technical standards "*where this would address an identified need for such properties*". The test of "*need*" sets a high bar, which extends beyond the Council simply considering an increase to be desirable.

The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (December 2024) contains an assessment of the potential need for adaptable and accessible dwellings. The evidence of need contained in Section 7 does not justify the draft Policy's requirement for all market and affordable to be to at least M4(2) and 10% of affordable to be M4(3). To reiterate the above, any policy requirements must be justified by evidence.

In addition to the above, the draft Policy should also include recognition that notwithstanding targets, the application of this draft Policy can and must take account of site specific circumstances such as topography and the impact of installing lifts within apartment blocks. I.e. there may be circumstances where it is impractical, undesirable or impossible to meet target requirements, but that this should not render the development unacceptable.

In light of the comments above, TT Group do not propose any specific rewording and urge the Council to revisit the evidence behind this proposed draft Policy.

H16 Residential Amenity and Healthy Homes

As noted in relation to some of the other policies of this Plan, TT Group support the general principle of what this policy is seeking to achieve, however, it is far too unspecific to function effectively as a development management tool.

Notwithstanding the above, the draft Policy also seeks to apply Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). The NPPF (footnote 51) makes it clear that these should only be applied, “*where the need for an internal space standard can be justified*”. There is currently no such evidence available, therefore this requirement is unjustified.

This draft Policy should be removed in full to ensure soundness.

STC1 Sustainable Movement (Strategic Policy)

In the same way as the response to draft Policy CC1 and the pathway to net zero by 2030, whilst TT Group support the principle of this draft policy, draft Policy STC1 is considered to be unsound.

TT Group therefore encourage the Council to rework this draft Policy to acknowledge that targets will be dictated by national Government and up to date building regulations, rather than local policy.

STC2 The Transport Hierarchy (Strategic Policy)

In the same way as the response to draft Policy CC1 and the pathway to net zero by 2030, whilst TT Group support the principle of this draft policy, draft Policy STC2 is considered to be unsound.

TT Group therefore encourage the Council to rework this draft Policy to acknowledge that targets will be dictated by national Government and up to date building regulations, rather than local policy.

STC4 Supporting Public Transport (Strategic Policy)

Whilst TT Group support the principle of supporting development that is well served by public transport, they object to this draft Policy as written for the following reasons.

Firstly, the draft Policy sets out a series of requirements for developments of one hundred homes or more. In relation to this paragraph:

- There does not appear to be any justification for why these requirements apply at a threshold of 100 dwellings.
- There is no consideration of the viability and/or feasibility of accommodating “*new local multimodal transport hubs and interchanges*”. Nor is there any provision for this not being required if similar facilities already exist or are deemed not necessary or desirable.

In the absence of justification, these requirements should be removed.

Secondly, the final paragraph states that “*Contributions will be sought toward new or improved public transport services and/or infrastructure in the city ...*”, which indicates that contributions will be sought from all developments. This fails to acknowledge:

- The need for any planning obligations to be meet the limitations set out in s122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regs; and
- The role of CIL in delivering strategic infrastructure, separate to s106 contributions.

This does not accord with legislation and must therefore be amended.

To positively remedy the issues raised above, the draft Policy wording should be amended as follows:

~~“Large scale development proposals of one hundred homes or more and major commercial development must:~~

- ~~a. Be located where high quality public transport is or can be provided through developer contributions;~~
- ~~b. Deliver appropriately located bus stops with raised kerbs for inclusive bus access, high quality shelters and real time information and, where appropriate, suitable routes for bus priority; and~~
- ~~c. Provide new local multi-modal transport hubs and interchanges making best use of existing bus, rail and walking and cycling routes.~~

Contributions, subject to meeting the tests set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, and / or CIL may
~~will~~ be sought towards new or improved public transport services and/or infrastructure in the city, appropriately phased to provide high quality travel options early in the development balanced with efficiently supporting the long term future of the service.”

The changes proposed above would remedy the issues of legislative compliance and lack of justification, making the draft Policy sound.

STC9 Digital Communications (Strategic Policy)

In the same way as the response to draft Policy CC1 and the pathway to net zero by 2030, whilst TT Group support the principle of this draft policy, draft Policy STC9 is considered to be unsound.

TT Group therefore encourage the Council to rework this draft Policy to acknowledge that targets will be dictated by national Government and up to date building regulations, rather than local policy.

NE3 Biodiversity (Strategic Policy)

TT Group support the principle of enhancing biodiversity, however, as currently drafted this draft Policy does not appear to align with national policy, guidance and legislation on Biodiversity Net Gain. This is particularly important as the PPG is clear that there is no need for local planning policy to repeat national BNG requirements.

- This draft Policy must not deviate from the Environment Act's requirement for at least 10%.
- As is allowed for in the PPG, the draft Policy does not appropriately allow for BNG on large phased sites being considered as a whole, rather than 10% needing to be delivered in each phase.
- It is unclear whether the costs of BNG have been considered in full within the Council's viability evidence.

As a result of the above, we urge the Council to review this draft Policy prior to progressing. As such no specific edits are proposed here.

NE6 Urban Greening Factor

TT Group support the principle of delivering soft landscaping and planting as part of development schemes and acknowledges the value of this across many different issues including biodiversity, climate change and townscape. However, as drafted this draft Policy is unsound as there does not appear to be any evidence available as to the impact that this will have on the delivery and viability of schemes.

The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) scores that the draft Policy requires development to meet will create pressure on the density of new developments and challenge how land is best used. Many groups have undertaken studies to explore the implementation on this and have noted that a major impact can occur on the amenity of new development when trying to address nature aims to meet UGF. TT Group consider that the application of mandatory BNG, and existing criteria for new play and amenity space, already encourage the aims pursued by this policy and therefore the additional requirements of this draft Policy are not justified.

Furthermore, the standards being proposed by Exeter are more onerous than those that are contained within the London Plan and other south west authorities including Bristol City Council.

In addition to the above, the Viability Assessment does not attribute any costs associated to the application of this draft Policy over and above standard external works and BNG. This is entirely insufficient given the onerous impact of this draft Policy's requirements.

In the absence of justification or viability testing, this draft Policy should be deleted in full.

C2 Development and Cultural Provision (Strategic Policy)

TT Group object to this draft policy, which, at present, states that "*All planning applications for large scale development proposals should be accompanied by a Cultural Plan ...*".

We object to this draft Policy as written on the following grounds:

- Firstly, there is no definition of what "large scale" means. This is not effective enough for development management purposes.
- Secondly, there does not appear to be justification or evidence published as part of the consultation to support the blanket requirement for such a document on large scale development proposals.

TT Group therefore urge the Council to reconsider this policy, and unless sufficient evidence is prepared to justify its inclusion it is deleted in full.

HW1 Health and Wellbeing (Strategic Policy)

TT Group support the principle of the delivery of infrastructure that encourages and enables people to live healthy lives. Whilst there are no objections to the requirement for Health Impact Assessments on large scale residential proposals, it is considered that two changes are required to make the draft Policy sound, effective and justified:

- "Large scale residential development" must be defined.

- It is well established from precedent decisions that it is the responsibility of the NHS to engage at plan making stage to ensure that appropriate provision is planned to meet the needs of forthcoming allocations. Therefore, the requirement for a Health Impact Assessment at application stage, as a means of determining any future contributions, should apply only to non-allocated developments, or those that are delivering a quantum over and above numbers anticipated at Plan making stage.

Incorporation of these amendments would make this draft Policy sound.

IF2 Viability (Strategic Policy)

TT Group support inclusion of a policy relating to viability, however, they object to the current wording of Policy IF2.

The draft Policy proposes to limit the circumstances under which viability evidence as part of a planning application would be considered “*appropriate*”, and it also goes on to note that these circumstances must have arisen “*since the Exeter Plan’s adoption*”.

Firstly, this approach does not accord with the NPPF and PPG’s position on viability, which does not place any limit on the circumstances or timing for viability review.

Furthermore, the Council’s viability evidence underpinning this Plan does not include any site specific viability testing of allocations. Given that viability testing prior to adoption of the Plan will only ever be typology based, it is entirely unjustified for policy to assume that any individual site is viable at that point in time, as it does not take into account any site specific considerations.

Finally, the closing paragraph of the draft Policy proposes a three year review for any applications granted pursuant to a viability appraisal. TT Group accept that a review mechanism is supported by the PPG, however they consider that the triggers for this review are more appropriately determined on a site specific basis, accounting for the degree of shortfall against policy expectations and the specific circumstances causing the impact on viability.

As a result of the comments above, the following changes are required to ensure compliance with national policy, guidance and soundness more generally. Subject to these changes, we consider that the draft Policy would be sound.

~~“To ensure that development provides the necessary policy requirements, affordable housing and infrastructure to create and maintain sustainable communities, deviation from policy on the grounds of viability will only be considered appropriate where one or more of the following have occurred to a significant degree following the adoption of the Exeter Plan:~~

- ~~a. Increases in infrastructure or abnormal development costs which could not reasonably have been foreseen at the time of the Exeter Plan’s adoption;~~
- ~~b. Adverse changes in building costs relative to sales values; and~~
- ~~c. Worsening of local market conditions caused by a recession or an extraordinary event demonstrably affecting incomes and development values.~~

~~A viability appraisal will need to be submitted explaining the circumstances which have led to the changes in viability since the Exeter Plan’s adoption. Any variation from the proposed policy and affordable housing requirements, and deviation from the assumption that required infrastructure will be funded by development, will need to be justified robustly.~~

The City Council will recover from applicants their reasonable costs associated with an independent assessment of submitted viability appraisals where a deviation from policy requirements is sought. The submitted viability appraisal and the independent review will be published by the City Council with the planning application documentation.

Where policy compliant infrastructure requirements and/or contributions are not provided due to an agreed viability reason, the viability of the proposal will be reviewed ~~every three years~~ in accordance with triggers to be agreed at application stage, taking account of site specific circumstances ~~with the requirements of this policy~~ to seek to achieve full policy compliance in later development phases.”

IF4 Open Space, Play Areas, Allotments and Sport

Whilst TT Group support the delivery of open space, play and sports facilities to support increases in population as a result of new development, subject to a demonstrable need and viability, there is one element of this policy, which is currently unsound and must be removed.

The second paragraph states that residential development proposals must provide or make contributions toward facilities in accordance with “*the relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Documents or their successors*”.

In practice, this requires development to accord with any and all as yet undefined, unevidenced and untested supplementary planning documents and guidance. This is policy by the backdoor.

Either the Council should remove this reference in full, or any standards that the Council will seek to apply should be included within the Policy itself, to enable proper consideration and viability testing.

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan

Exbridge House - Site Location Plan

