

Exeter Plan and Corporate Plan Alignment Report

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Exeter City Council has developed two key strategic documents: The Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028 and the emerging Exeter Plan. While each plan serves a different function, one setting the direction for corporate governance and service delivery, the other shaping land use and physical development, they are united by a shared purpose: To realise the Exeter Vision 2040.
- 1.2. This report has been prepared to assess and demonstrate the alignment between these two documents. It explores how the objectives of the Exeter Plan support and reinforce the four strategic priorities of the Corporate Plan:
 - **Local Economy**
 - **People**
 - **Homes**
 - **Sustainable Environment**
- 1.3. Using a structured and colour-coded matrix approach, the report evaluates each Exeter Plan objective against the priorities of the Corporate Plan. The analysis is supported by commentary to explain where the Exeter Plan objectives align, complement, or provide indirect support.
- 1.4. The report uses a colour coding matrix to consider how each Exeter Plan objective aligns with the Corporate Plan priorities:
 - Green = positive/supportive effect
 - Yellow = neutral/mixed effect
 - Red = negative/conflicting effect

Context: The Exeter Vision 2040¹

- 1.5. At the heart of both the Exeter Plan and Corporate Plan is the Exeter Vision 2040 - a bold and inclusive roadmap adopted by the City Council in 2019. The Vision sees a future Exeter that is:

¹ Available at: <https://exeter.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-information/exeter-vision-2040/>

- An innovative and analytical city;
- A healthy and inclusive city;
- The most active city in the United Kingdom;
- A city of accessible world class education;
- A liveable and connected city;
- A leading sustainable city; and
- A city of culture

- 1.6. The Exeter Plan implements these outcomes by setting policies for how land will be used, homes delivered, employment supported, infrastructure coordinated, and natural assets protected over a 20-year horizon. Meanwhile, the Corporate Plan ensures that council services and resources are directed towards the local economy, people homes and a sustainable environment.

2.0 Exeter City Council Corporate Plan (2025 - 2028)

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028² outlines the City Council's strategic priorities for the next three years. It has been reviewed and updated to respond to local needs and align with the shared ambitions of the Exeter Vision 2040. The Plan ensures that the Council remains focused on delivering positive outcomes for residents, communities, business and the environment, while making the best use of its resources and partnerships.
- 2.2 The updated Corporate Plan identifies four key priorities, each supported by clear outcomes to guide decisions, service delivery, and investment:
- **Local Economy** - This priority focuses on creating a strong, diverse, and inclusive local economy. It supports a thriving city and local centres, encourages independent businesses, and promotes growth in future-facing sectors such as the knowledge economy, digital innovation, and creative industries. The aim is to boost business success, increase city centre footfall, and ensure economic opportunity reaches all communities.
 - **People** - This priority is about improving the wellbeing of everyone who lives in Exeter. It aims to reduce health inequalities, strengthen community resilience, and increase participation in sport, culture, and leisure. The Council is committed to building inclusive, safe, and active neighbourhoods where all residents can thrive.
 - **Homes** - Access to quality, affordable homes is a key issue for Exeter. This priority supports the delivery of more energy-efficient housing, reducing homelessness and reliance on temporary accommodation, and reducing social housing waiting times. The Plan promotes well-designed new developments that are integrated into existing communities and supported by the right infrastructure.
 - **Sustainable Environment** - This priority sets out the Council's commitment to environmental sustainability and climate action. It focuses on reducing carbon emissions, protecting biodiversity, and maintaining high-quality green spaces across the city. A central goal is to support Exeter's transition to a net-zero carbon city.
- 2.3 Together, these four priorities provide a clear and balanced framework for delivering a fairer, greener, and more resilient Exeter. They are supported by outcomes to ensure transparency, accountability, and progress toward the city's long-term vision.

² Available at: <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/lwigo2ie/ecc-corporate-plan-2025.pdf>

3.0 The Exeter Plan

- 3.1 The Exeter Plan is Exeter City Council's emerging Local Plan, which will set the framework for how the city develops over the next 20 years. Once adopted, it will replace existing planning policies and become the key document for guiding decisions on where new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and community facilities will be delivered. It also sets out how the city will respond to climate change, support a growing population, and enhance quality of life.
- 3.2 The Plan is essential for managing sustainable growth and protecting the city's environmental and cultural assets. It aims to shape a city that meets the needs of current and future generations, and ensures that development happens in the right places, at the right time, and in the right way.
- 3.3 The Exeter Plan includes a series of elements linked to the 2040 vision:
- **A long-term vision**, the Exeter Vision 2040, which sets out Exeter's ambition to be a healthy, inclusive, sustainable, and forward-looking city. The vision underpins every part of the Plan and provides a shared direction.
 - **A set of thematic planning policies**, covering a wide range of topics such as climate change, homes, jobs and the economy, transport and movement, natural environment, infrastructure, heritage, design, health, and wellbeing. These policies set out clear criteria for how development proposals should be assessed.
 - **Development allocations**, which identify the specific sites where new housing, employment and mixed used development are proposed.
- 3.4 A key element of the Exeter Plan is its spatial strategy, which sets out how and where growth should be accommodated across the city. The strategy reflects Exeter's compact size, environmental setting, and the need to balance growth with sustainability. The main elements of the spatial strategy are:

- **Urban regeneration and brownfield development:** Focus significant elements of new development on brownfield sites, especially around the city centre, to improve place-making, minimise the need to travel, support healthy lifestyles, support the vitality of the city centre and use existing infrastructure efficiently.
- **Modest greenfield development:** Consider carefully chosen greenfield sites where necessary to complement the brownfield development sites.
- **Focus on walkable communities:** Plan neighbourhoods so that homes, shops, schools and services are accessible on foot or by bike, reducing car use and supporting healthier lifestyles.
- **Protection of the natural environment:** Safeguard Exeter's hills, river valley, and wildlife habitats, while enhancing green spaces and biodiversity.
- **Optimal densities and mixed-use development:** Promote compact, mixed-use, optimal-density schemes in central and transport-linked areas to create vibrant and sustainable communities.

3.5 This approach marks a shift away from large-scale urban extensions and towards a more compact, connected, and climate-resilient city. It supports Exeter's net zero ambitions while also meeting the city's needs in a way that protects its landscape and heritage.

4.0 Alignment of the Exeter Plan with the Corporate Plan Priorities

4.1 This section reviews how the emerging Exeter Plan objectives support the four priorities in the Corporate Plan. It draws from the plan's policy chapters to show how land use planning helps deliver the Council's strategic objectives for the economy, people, housing, and the environment.

4.2 The full assessment is set out in **Appendix A**, where each chapter of the Exeter Plan is mapped against the Corporate Plan priorities using a colour coding system.

4.3 The colour coding is explained below:

- Green = positive/supportive effect
- Yellow = neutral/mixed effect
- Red = negative/conflicting effect

4.4 Spatial Strategy and Liveable Exeter Principles

- **Local Economy:**  The spatial strategy underpins a strong local economy by directing growth to accessible urban locations that support commercial vibrancy, city centre regeneration, and footfall for local businesses. It enhances the city's competitiveness and creates the spatial framework for long-term economic resilience.
- **Homes:**  Through the Liveable Exeter initiative, this chapter enables the delivery of new homes on brownfield land. These are well-integrated into existing neighbourhoods, supporting compact growth and minimising land-take.
- **People:**  The plan promotes neighbourhoods designed around access to services, open space, and active travel, improving the quality of life and reducing isolation. It supports inclusive, healthy communities in line with the People priority.
- **Sustainable Environment:**  Compact development and brownfield policies reduce reliance on cars, protect greenfield land, and enable investment in sustainable infrastructure advancing the city's climate goals.

- 4.4.1 The commitment to significant brownfield development and compact city form enables integrated outcomes across all priorities. The approach aligns with the Vision 2040 goal of creating a liveable, connected, and inclusive city. There are no red issues only strong or neutral effect cross the board.

4.5 Climate Change

- **Local Economy:**  While the economic links are indirect, this chapter sets the policy foundation for a green economy by encouraging clean energy investment, low-carbon innovation, and infrastructure upgrades that support sustainable business practices.
 - **Homes:**  The climate policies require new homes to meet high energy efficiency standards and promote retrofitting, directly contributing to warmer, healthier, and more affordable homes.
 - **People:**  Climate adaptation measures such as flood protection and cleaner air contribute to improved health and wellbeing, particularly in vulnerable communities.
 - **Sustainable Environment:**  This chapter forms the core of the city's response to climate change, supporting Exeter's transition to a carbon-neutral future through robust planning policies on emissions, resilience, and renewable energy.
- 4.5.1 This chapter makes the consideration of climate change a vital part of place-shaping, embedding carbon reduction, adaptation, and resilience. It supports Exeter's transition to net zero while delivering healthier homes, cleaner environments, and long-term security for communities.

4.6 Homes

- **Local Economy:**  The housing strategy stimulates the construction industry and creates local employment opportunities, while supporting economic inclusion by providing homes near workplaces.
- **Homes:**  This chapter directly enables the Council's ambition to deliver 642 new homes each year, including affordable, energy-efficient, and accessible units that meet a wide range of community needs.

- **People:** ● Improves wellbeing by reducing housing need, fuel poverty, and homelessness.
- **Sustainable Environment:** ● Prioritises brownfield development and low-carbon design.

4.6.1 The homes strategy directly responds to housing need by delivering affordable, energy-efficient, and inclusive homes. It strengthens neighbourhoods, supports economic growth, and advances the city's ambition for sustainable, high-quality living.

4.7 Economy and Jobs

- **Local Economy:** ● This chapter is central to economic growth, with policies supporting high-value and priority sectors. It reinforces the city's role as a regional economic hub.
- **Homes:** ● This chapter indirectly supports the homes ambition through promoting well-located jobs, reduce commuting distances and supporting neighbourhood sustainability.
- **People:** ● Access to jobs and skills training is promoted, especially in transformational sectors, thereby helping to reduce inequality and supporting inclusive economic activity.
- **Sustainable Environment:** ● While this chapter focuses on economic growth, opportunities exist to link business development with low-carbon operations, particularly in new employment allocations so provides indirect/mixed effects.

4.7.1 This chapter positions Exeter as a hub for innovation and high-value sectors, while ensuring access to jobs and skills for all. It will be helping to build a resilient, inclusive economy that supports prosperity across the city and wider region.

4.8 The Future of Our High Streets

- **Local Economy:** ● This chapter promotes a thriving retail and leisure offer; diversifying city centre uses and boosting local businesses through regeneration and flexible land use.
- **Homes:** ● Policies support the inclusion of residential development within city and district centres, contributing to urban development and housing supply.

- **People:** ● The continuation of high streets as vibrant, multifunctional spaces enhances liveability, cultural access, and social inclusion.
- **Sustainable Environment:** ● Mixed-use, accessible centres reduce the need to travel, supporting sustainable patterns of living and reducing emissions.

4.8.1 High street renewal drives vitality by blending retail, leisure, culture, and homes into vibrant centres. This approach fosters resilient businesses, active communities, and sustainable patterns of living.

4.9 Sustainable Transport and Communications

- **Local Economy:** ● Efficient transport networks enhance business productivity, improve connectivity for workers and customers.
- **Homes:** ● Well-planned transport infrastructure ensures that new housing developments are viable, connected, and sustainable.
- **People:** ● Improved public and active transport reduce transport inequality and improves access to services, education, and employment.
- **Sustainable Environment:** ● This chapter supports Exeter's carbon reduction targets by encouraging low-emission travel, reducing car dependency, and promoting walking, cycling and digital connectivity.

4.9.1 Transport and digital infrastructure are key supporters of connectivity, equality, and low-carbon growth. The chapter ensures new development is accessible, while cutting car dependency and supporting climate ambitions.

4.10 Natural Environment

- **Local Economy:** ● High-quality green infrastructure, landscape and ecology contribute to the attractiveness of Exeter as a place to visit, work, and invest supporting the city's visitor economy and overall image and attracting investment and skilled workers.
- **Homes:** ● New development is guided to protect and enhance natural assets, ensuring that residents have access to nature, recreation, and open space.

- **People:** ● Access to green space, safeguarding the landscaping and ecology improves mental and physical wellbeing, enhances community life, and supports healthy lifestyles.
- **Sustainable Environment:** ● This chapter plays a key role in increasing biodiversity, expanding the urban tree canopy, and protecting natural landscapes and habitats.

4.10.1 This chapter protects Exeter's landscapes and ecosystems while expanding access to nature for all communities. It enhances health, supports biodiversity, and strengthens the city's identity as a green, resilient place.

4.11 History and Heritage

- **Local Economy:** ● Protection and enhancement of historic assets support Exeter's identity as a heritage city and underpins tourism and cultural industries.
- **Homes:** ● While direct links are limited, heritage-led regeneration contributes to attractive residential environments and neighbourhood character.
- **People:** ● Celebrating local heritage fosters civic pride, belonging, and a shared sense of place.
- **Sustainable Environment:** ● The reuse and sensitive adaptation of historic buildings supports sustainable development principles, though environmental impact is not a primary focus.

4.11.1 Heritage policies preserve Exeter's unique character while unlocking its potential for regeneration and tourism. They celebrate the past while enriching neighbourhoods and reinforcing civic pride for the future.

4.12 Culture and Tourism

- **Local Economy:** ● Cultural investment supports the visitor economy, creative industries, and Exeter's position as a regional cultural centre.
- **Homes:** ● Cultural facilities within mixed-use developments contribute to vibrant, liveable neighbourhoods.

- **People:**  This chapter promotes access to culture and recreation, supporting health, inclusion, and civic life.
- **Sustainable Environment:**  Environmental links are indirect, but there is opportunity to promote low-carbon cultural infrastructure and sustainable tourism.

4.12.1 Culture and tourism are presented as drivers of inclusion, identity, and economic vitality. Investment here enhances Exeter's profile, enriches daily life, and builds a sustainable visitor economy.

4.13 High Quality Places and Design

- **Local Economy:**  Good urban design enhances the commercial appeal and liveability of the city, attracting investment and footfall.
- **Homes:**  Design policies ensure that new homes are attractive, functional, inclusive, and meet high standards of sustainability and amenity.
- **People:**  Well-designed public spaces and buildings promote wellbeing, safety, and community engagement.
- **Sustainable Environment:**  Sustainable design principles such as considering local context, materials, and energy efficiency are embedded, advancing environmental goals.

4.13.1 This chapter makes quality design central to Exeter's growth, ensuring homes, spaces, and neighbourhoods are attractive, inclusive, and sustainable. It raises standards citywide, enhancing wellbeing and competitiveness.

4.14 Health and Wellbeing

- **Local Economy:**  A healthier population reduces pressure on services and boosts productivity, indirectly supporting economic sustainability.
- **Homes:**  Policies support housing quality and conditions that promote health, safety, and accessibility.

- **People:**  This chapter directly aligns with the People priority by addressing health inequalities, improving safety, and encouraging active lifestyles.
- **Sustainable Environment:**  Health is closely linked to clean air, walkability, green space, and access to sustainable modes of transport all supported by this chapter.

4.14.1 Policies here directly advance the People priority, reducing inequality and promoting active, healthy lifestyles. A healthier population strengthens communities and underpins long-term economic and environmental resilience.

4.15 Infrastructure and Facilities

- **Local Economy:**  Modern infrastructure, including education, and digital, supports business operations and competitiveness.
- **Homes:**  Infrastructure delivery is essential to ensure new homes work as part of complete communities.
- **People:**  Access to schools, health centres, community hubs, and social infrastructure is critical to individual wellbeing and community resilience.
- **Sustainable Environment:**  Infrastructure policies promote low-carbon energy, and resilience to climate impacts, directly supporting environmental goals.

4.15.1 Infrastructure is a critical enabler of success. This chapter supports service delivery, connectivity, and capacity for growth across all Corporate Plan priorities.

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 This report has set out an analysis of the alignment between the emerging Exeter Plan and the Exeter City Council Corporate Plan. It demonstrates how these two key strategic documents are not only compatible but mutually reinforcing, each playing a critical role in shaping the future of the city in line with the shared ambitions of the Exeter Vision 2040.
- 5.2 At the heart of this alignment lies a common commitment to delivering a healthier, more inclusive, sustainable, and economically resilient Exeter. The Corporate Plan identifies four strategic priorities Local Economy, Homes, People, and Sustainable Environment and the Exeter Plan provides the spatial policy to support them.
- 5.3 Taken together, the Corporate Plan and the Exeter Plan represent a coherent and future-focused framework for place-shaping in Exeter. Their alignment ensures that spatial growth, service delivery and investment are guided by a unified approach to delivering the Exeter Vision 2040.

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Appendix A

Appendix A presents the full spreadsheet assessment that underpins this review. It provides a visual matrix comparing each Exeter Plan chapter with the Corporate Plan priorities (Local Economy, People, Homes, and Sustainable Environment), using colour coding to highlight areas of strong alignment and, where relevant, more limited or neutral impacts.

	Corporate Plan priorities															
	Local economy					People				Homes				Sustainable environment		
Exeter Plan: Chapters and objectives	Outcome: A thriving, diverse and resilient city which can adapt to changing conditions	Outcome: An increase in independent shops and a low level of empty shops	Outcome: Businesses will be reporting increases in footfall and business success	Outcome: A vibrant cultural and tourism offer	Outcome: A safe and thriving night-time economy	Outcome: Health inequalities will reduce	Outcome: Communities will be more resilient	Outcome: More residents, including those from our priority neighbourhoods and communities, will be participating in leisure and cultural events and activities	Outcome: A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone	Outcome: Better quality, energy efficient and more affordable homes to buy or rent.	Outcome: New housing developments that are well integrated into existing communities	Outcome: Fewer people will be homeless or in temporary housing	Outcome: The number of people on the social housing waiting list will reduce	Outcome: A city taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change	Outcome: A carbon-neutral city	Outcome: Well-maintained parks, open spaces and biodiversity across the city
Chapter: Spatial strategy																
Objective: The spatial strategy will deliver on the Exeter Vision 2040 and the city’s ambitions for net zero, climate change adaptation and resilience, high quality development, health and wellbeing, the vitality of the city centre, the natural environment, heritage and cultural diversity. The City Council will work with partner authorities and other stakeholders to deliver these ambitions.																
Commentary	The strategy directs growth to accessible urban areas, boosting city centre regeneration, footfall, and business vibrancy. It supports long-term competitiveness and economic resilience.					By creating walkable, well-connected communities with access to services and green space, the strategy promotes healthier lifestyles, reduces isolation, and builds inclusive neighbourhoods.				The focus on brownfield development delivers thousands of well-located homes while minimising land take. This ensures new housing integrates with existing neighbourhoods and infrastructure.				Compact growth reduces car dependency, protects sensitive landscapes, and prioritises investment in low-carbon infrastructure, supporting Exeter’s climate and biodiversity goals.		
Chapter: Climate change																
Objective: Make the fullest possible contribution to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change working towards a net zero carbon city																
Commentary	Supports corporate outcomes by driving Exeter’s transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future which can have economic benefits.					Supports better health and stronger communities by promoting sustainable living and long-term environmental wellbeing.				Supports the development of energy-efficient homes, which can improve quality and affordability, but only partially impacts homelessness or integration.				Directly supports both carbon neutrality and climate mitigation and adaptation goals.		
Chapter: Homes																
Objective: Provide the quantity, type, quality and affordability of homes that Exeter needs in the right locations																
Commentary	Provides sustainable, affordable housing that strengthens communities and supports a thriving, inclusive city.					Delivers healthier, more inclusive neighbourhoods by focusing on sustainable, affordable housing that strengthens community life.				Directly targets all housing goals, including affordable, sustainable homes, integration into communities, and reducing homelessness and waiting lists.				Encourages sustainable housing aligned with carbon targets and adaptation.		
Chapter: Economy and jobs																

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Objective: 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															
Commentary	Directly contributes to business growth, job opportunities, and a strong, diverse local economy.					Builds community resilience and supports vibrant city life by expanding access to jobs, skills, and cultural engagement.				Supports residents' ability to access and maintain housing through improved employment and income, with some indirect effects on homelessness and affordability.				Offers indirect support through innovation and green job creation.	
Retail and the future of our centres															
Objective: Enhance the vitality of the city, district and local centres so they continue to provide a key role in our day-to-day lives, supporting communities, prosperity and cultural identity															
Commentary	Enhances the role of local centres, supporting independent shops, reducing vacancies, and boosting footfall.					Revitalises neighbourhoods through active, inclusive, and culturally rich centres.				Helps foster vibrant, community-centred places where housing can thrive, but housing-specific outcomes are only partially influenced.				Promotes localism and reduced travel needs, supporting climate change mitigation.	
Sustainable transport and communications															
Objective: Deliver development in appropriate locations with high quality infrastructure to minimise the need to travel, maximise sustainable transport and support emerging forms of mobility to improve health, placemaking and to support net zero															
Commentary	Promotes cleaner, connected travel options that support healthy lifestyles, accessibility, and climate goals.					Improves health and resilience by making travel more accessible, cleaner, and better connected across communities.				Strengthens connectivity and supports appropriately located housing, aiding integration and accessibility.				Strongly contributes to carbon goals by promoting low-emission mobility.	
Natural environment															
Objective: Protect and enhance the city's unique natural setting provided by the hills, the Valley Parks and River Exe, and improve, extend and connect natural green spaces and deliver net gains for biodiversity.															
Commentary	Protects and improves green spaces, helping create a healthier, more attractive and resilient city.					Enhances wellbeing by connecting people to green spaces and wildlife.				Improves housing and quality of life through green space access, encouraging integration.				Directly enhances biodiversity and green space quality citywide.	
History and heritage															
Objective: Conserve and enhance the city's unique historic character by promoting development that complements and celebrates the city's heritage, identity and culture															
Commentary	Celebrates Exeter's unique character, enriching culture, tourism, and a sense of place.					Strengthens city identity and supports cultural inclusion by celebrating Exeter's rich historic character.				Ensures new homes complement existing neighbourhood character, slightly helping integration but not housing delivery or affordability.				Indirectly contributes by preserving green historic settings.	
Culture and tourism															
Objective: Explore, enhance and celebrate the cultural richness of the city and its profile as a prominent tourist destination															
Commentary	Drives cultural growth, visitor appeal, and supports both daytime and night-time economies.					Directly boosts participation and city vibrancy by promoting a rich cultural life and inclusive events for all.				Can support community vibrancy and attractiveness but does not directly impact housing access or quality.				Supports biodiversity through heritage landscapes and public spaces.	
High quality places and design															

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Objective: Deliver the development we need in high quality, liveable, connected places to support our local communities, economy, local environment and push towards net zero																
Commentary	Delivers well-designed, liveable spaces that support community life, business success, and sustainability.					Creates healthier, safer, and more engaging places to live, supporting community wellbeing and urban quality of life.				Strongly aligns with goals around well-designed, affordable, and liveable homes that integrate into communities.				Supports sustainable city design that helps reduce emissions.		
Health and wellbeing																
Objective: Promote inclusive development which supports communities in becoming healthier and more productive and helps Exeter to become the most active city in the United Kingdom																
Commentary	Encourages active, healthy living and supports social inclusion, productivity, and resilience.					Tackles inequalities, builds stronger communities, and encourages active cultural participation to make Exeter healthier and more inclusive.				Promotes inclusive, healthy living and development that directly supports reducing housing stress, homelessness, and inequality.				Promotes active green spaces and wellbeing linked to environmental quality.		
Infrastructure and facilities																
Objective: Planning for new infrastructure and facilities at the right time and in the right places and protecting existing services that play an essential role in the lives of our residents and the success of the local economy																
Commentary	Provides essential services and spaces that enable growth, support communities, and sustain the local economy.					Supports all people-based outcomes by ensuring essential services and facilities are in delivered appropriately.				Ensures housing is supported by essential services and timely infrastructure, helping meet growing demand and reduce homelessness.				Offers indirect support via green infrastructure and energy infrastructure.		