

Exeter Plan

Hearing statement

Matter 14: Infrastructure, Facilities and Viability

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Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter,
EX1 1JN



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This hearing statement provides Exeter City Council's (the City Council's) response to the Examination Inspectors' questions raised in relation to Matter 14: Infrastructure, facilities and viability.
- 1.2. The statement addresses each of the Issues within Matter 14 in turn:
 - Issue 1: Delivery of Infrastructure – Policy IF1
 - Issue 2: Viability – Policy IF2
 - Issue 3: Community Facilities – Policy IF3
 - Issue 4: Open Space, Play Areas, Allotments and Sport – Policy IF4
 - Issue 5: New Cemetery Provision – Policy IF5

2. Issue 1: Delivery of Infrastructure – Policy IF1

Q1. Is the Plan consistent with paragraph 20 of the Framework, which states that strategic policies should make sufficient provision for, amongst other things, new infrastructure including community facilities such as health and education?

2.1. The Plan is consistent with paragraph 20 of the NPPF because it makes sufficient provision for new infrastructure including community facilities. Specific policies are included to address infrastructure provision as set out below:

- Policy IF1: Delivery of infrastructure
- Policy IF3: Community facilities
- Policy STC3: Supporting active travel
- Policy STC4: Supporting public transport
- Policy STC5: Supporting more sustainable forms of car use
- Policy STC7: Safeguarding transport infrastructure
- Policy STC9: Digital communications
- Policy HW1: Health and wellbeing
- Policies SBA1-5: Strategic mixed use brownfield allocations
- Policy TI1: Topsham Infrastructure Delivery Framework.

2.2. Together, these policies provide an appropriate framework to ensure that development is supported by a range of infrastructure including community facilities, education, health, transport, digital communications, utilities, open space, sport, recreation and leisure. The policies also support the delivery of new infrastructure through developer contributions, safeguard potential future transport projects and protect against the loss of community infrastructure as appropriate.

2.3. Policies SBA1-5 set out specific infrastructure requirements for each of the strategic mixed use brownfield allocations, including (amongst other requirements for the individual sites):

- Contributions to early years, primary, secondary and SEND education provision.
- Contributions to GP provision.
- Public realm including space for community and cultural activities.
- Provision for active travel and public transport.
- Green infrastructure provision.

2.4. Policy TI1 provides for coordinated infrastructure provision over a group of allocations in Topsham and an urban extension to be included in policy WS10 of the emerging East Devon Local Plan¹. The Topsham Infrastructure Delivery Framework will be produced by the respective councils and partners.

2.5. The policies are supplemented by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which has been updated slightly in advance of this examination hearing session (EXM-02ab). The IDP, which has been developed and kept up to date through

¹ Available at: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/dghmhbre/first-reg-19-vs-second-reg-19-comparison-v2.pdf>, page 75

engagement with infrastructure providers throughout plan-making, sets out the infrastructure requirements needed to support the development planned for through the Exeter Plan. The IDP includes a column which identifies how each infrastructure project is expected to be funded, and whether developer contributions will be sought.

- 2.6. Finally, the City Council's Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024/25 (EXM-02k: PDF pp14-16) lists a range of infrastructure projects which may be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Q2. How will primary and secondary education be provided for effectively? Will the allocation at Water Lane (SBA1) deliver a new primary school? Is Policy IF1 positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy, in particular paragraphs 20 and 22 of the Framework?

- 2.7. To ensure that the Plan provides effectively for primary and secondary educations, the City Council and Devon County Council (DCC), as Local Education Authority, have engaged throughout plan-making on relevant infrastructure planning matters and with a particular focus on education. The Statement of Common Ground (DTC-03b: pp27-35) sets out an agreed position regarding the Plan's requirements for education provision, addressing issues raised in DCC's Regulation 19 representation (A-01-various). The requirements are included in the IDP (EXM-02ab: pages 9-11).
- 2.8. Early years, primary, secondary education and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision will be funded through a well-established approach of securing section 106 contributions as part of residential development applications (as set out in Policy IF3 and paragraphs 15.24-25 of its supporting text) and in accordance with the Education Infrastructure Plan (EXM-02i). DCC will assess applications in terms of their impact on the need for additional school places in accordance with an established methodology (EVB-IF-10), which draws upon costings in the latest Department for Education school place scorecards. This approach is well established within existing development management processes at Exeter City Council.

Primary education

- 2.9. For primary education, the need for additional school places will be provided for effectively through the expansion of an existing school, the provision of a new 420 pupil primary school at Water Lane and, if necessary, the provision of a second new 420 pupil primary school which may be required later in the Plan period.
- 2.10. The City Council and DCC have agreed through the Statement of Common Ground (DTC-03b: pp31-35) a suggested modification to address this. SAMM100 of the Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD-03: p104-106) would insert into the supporting text a statement that '...should any development come forward, prior to a new primary site being provided at such a time in the plan period where the additional places are required, this shortfall in school places will be taken into consideration when determining any relevant planning application', and that 'An ongoing review of the need for education

provision in the context of types of housing will be undertaken alongside Devon County Council as part of a wider, future review of the Exeter Plan’.

- 2.11. DCC’s submitted education evidence base (EVB-IF-08: section 4.5, p10) also reflects this approach to primary education.
- 2.12. The City Council considers this to be a justified and proportionate response to the evidence regarding the potential need for a second new primary school. There is potential for a new primary school site within an emerging East Devon Local Plan allocation adjacent to the city boundary to accommodate pupils from Exeter (WS10: Development next to the M5 and north of Topsham in the Regulation 19 East Devon Local Plan: page 75)². East Devon District Council are comfortable with this approach. This is also noted in Policy T11 which was written jointly with East Devon District Council, and in the Statement of Common Ground with the County Council (DTC-03b: pages 31-34).
- 2.13. The potential need for a second new primary school will depend upon the types of housing coming forward in Exeter during the Plan period, and how much housing comes forward in the form and size of housing types that do not yield pupils. The Plan adopts a flexible approach to which housing types can come forward on site allocations in the context of need and market demand. On this basis there is some resultant uncertainty for school place planning. The City Council’s Exeter Plan Housing and School Places document (EVB-IF-07) considers three possible scenarios for projecting how much of the housing delivered on allocated sites will be of a type that will not yield additional pupils. If these scenarios materialise, the number of pupils generated by development may be lower than that assumed in the forecasts which have determined education infrastructure needs.

Secondary education

- 2.14. For secondary education, the need for additional school places will be met effectively through expansions to existing schools across the city without the provision of a new secondary school site. DCC has confirmed that existing school sites can accommodate these expansions.

New primary school at Water Lane

- 2.15. The allocation at Water Lane will deliver a new primary school. There is agreement between the City Council and DCC about the need for a new primary school at Water Lane and therefore this requirement is set out in policy SBA1: Water Lane and is also included in code W04 of the Liveable Water Lane Supplementary Planning Document (EVB-S-03: page 58). The school is also in the IDP (EXM-02ab: page 9).
- 2.16. There is a clear expectation from the City Council and DCC that the site for the school will be within the neighbourhood centre. This is indicated in the development framework for the allocation in the SPD (EVB-S-03: Figure 3.2, page 29) and the land use plan (EVB-S-03: W02, page 55). As agreed following discussion with DCC and as documented in the Statement of Common Ground, the specification for the school will need to comply with the DfE’s Building Bulletin 103 (DTC-03b: pages 38 and 39). This is subject to

² Available at: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/dghmhbre/first-reg-19-vs-second-reg-19-comparison-v2.pdf>

suggested modification SMM93 in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD-03: page 41).

- 2.17. Land ownerships will facilitate the provision of the school. The expectation is that the school will be located on City Council land which currently provides Haven Banks car parks 2 and 3. This equates to approximately 0.6ha. The City Council estates team are working on this assumption. Additional land will be required to supplement this area from the neighbouring parcel of land named Isca House (also known as the 'gas holder' site). This land is currently owned by National Grid and Wales and West but Homes England (as confirmed in a letter to the City Council: EXM-02ai)) are in advanced discussions over the purchase of this land and have begun early pre-application discussions with the City Council. Homes England are aware of this requirement and it is informing the pre-application discussions. The parcels of land are shown in the Water Lane: Delivery and viability position statement (EXM-02aa: figure 1.1, page 4).
- 2.18. The well-established approach to securing developer contributions will provide the funding for the school through the development management process. The requirement to provide contributions is set out in Policy IF3: Community Facilities and DCC's established methodology (EVB-IF-10).

Is Policy IF1 positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy, in particular paragraphs 20 and 22 of the Framework?

- 2.19. Policy IF1 is positively prepared because it is an enabling policy which provides positive support to development proposals when accompanied by appropriate infrastructure which will deliver sustainable development.
- 2.20. Policy IF1 is justified because it is appropriate to deliver development accompanied by infrastructure which would support the delivery of the spatial strategy as out in Policy S1, point 15. It is also justified by the Sustainability Appraisal (EXM-02a, table 6.13, pages 234 and 235) which assesses the policy to have likely minor positive, uncertain or negligible effects on all the SA objectives, with no likely negative effects.
- 2.21. Policy IF1 is effective because it is deliverable over the plan period; its development, and the associated IDP (EXM-02ab) has been supported by significant discussion with infrastructure providers with whom a series of statements of common ground have been prepared.
- 2.22. Policy IF1 is consistent with national policy. It is consistent with paragraph 20b and 20c of the NPPF because it provides positive support for the delivery of the range of infrastructure and community facilities as set out in the IDP (EXM-02ab). The policy is consistent with paragraph 22 of the NPPF because, linked to the IDP, it supports long-term, major improvements in infrastructure.

Q3. Are the assumptions regarding infrastructure projects, delivery mechanisms and funding sources outlined in the table within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) still broadly accurate? What implications, if any, does the latest evidence in the IDP have on the viability of development and the ability to deliver it?

2.23. The assumptions regarding infrastructure projects, delivery mechanisms and funding sources outlined in the IDP are broadly accurate. The IDP is kept up to date through on-going discussions as demonstrated by the three versions of the IDP included in the evidence base. Furthermore, in the time since the Plan's submission, the City Council has continued to engage with infrastructure providers and a slightly revised IDP has been prepared in advance of the Examination hearing with updates indicated in red text (EXM-02ab). Much of the information in the IDP included at submission remains accurate and up to date.

2.24. The most noteworthy updates include:

National Grid

- Rather than seeking to create additional grid capacity for Exeter through (amongst other investments) providing a new bulk supply point outside of the city in East Devon (£39m), National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) has omitted this project from the IDP and has adopted an alternative solution of upgrading the Exeter City and Sowton bulk supply points (at a lower cost of £15m).
- The estimated cost for the new primary substation outside of the city at Peamore in Teignbridge has increased from £8million to £11million.

2.25. These projects will be funded by National Grid and so there will be no impact on development viability or deliverability; indeed, NGED consider upgrading the Exeter City and Sowton bulk supply points to be a more deliverable solution.

South West Water

- The estimated cost for the upgrade to Countess Wear sewage treatment works has been reduced from £15m to £4.79m.
- Two additional water utilities projects have been added to the IDP: a 3.2km long potable water main at Barley Lane, and a 650m long potable water main at Water Lane.

2.26. These projects will be funded by South West Water and so there will be no impact on development viability or deliverability.

Devon and Cornwall Police

- The existing project of 'Improvements to strategic police infrastructure' is identified as being potentially funded through CIL (subject to funding processes) to be consistent with the Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (EXM-02k: page 16).
- An additional city centre police base has been added.

- 2.27. The City Council does not anticipate that these projects will be funded through Section 106 contributions and therefore they will not impact on development viability.

DCC: Transport and Highways

- For all transport and highways projects, the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority has been added as a delivery partner alongside the DCC and others, and 'Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority / Local Transport Grant' has been added as a potential funding source in place of 'Devon County Council / Local Transport Plan'.
- 2.28. This is to reflect upcoming changes to local government responsibilities for transport and has no impact on development viability or deliverability.

Q4. Why are infrastructure phasing plans required for large scale residential development and not for other development? Is the Policy IF1 justified and effective in this regard?

- 2.29. The scale of large scale residential developments (defined in Exeter Plan glossary: SUP-02, page 7) means that they are likely to come forward in sections, meaning infrastructure phasing is likely to be a necessary consideration. In order to ensure that the policy is positively prepared and not unduly burdensome for developers of smaller schemes, an infrastructure phasing plan is not a policy requirement for developments below this threshold as infrastructure phasing is less likely to be applicable.
- 2.30. Infrastructure phasing plans are not required routinely for large scale non residential development because the infrastructure needs for such developments are likely to be narrower. For example, non residential development will not have education, health, habitat mitigation, sport and leisure infrastructure requirements. Infrastructure coordination is therefore less likely to need such broad coordination through a phasing plan.
- 2.31. The requirement for infrastructure phasing plans for large residential development does not preclude development management officers from securing the appropriate phasing of infrastructure through planning condition or Section 106 agreement should the need arise based on the specifics of a proposal. This case-by-case approach will also apply to large scale non residential developments.
- 2.32. The requirement for infrastructure phasing plans for large scale residential development is justified by its consistency with the NPPF (paragraph 8a) which makes reference to the importance of coordinating the provision of infrastructure as part of the economic objective of achieving sustainable development. The requirement is also justified by the Sustainability Appraisal (as part of the assessment of Policy IF1 as a whole) which assesses the policy

as having likely minor positive effects against various SA objectives without any likely negative effects (EXM-02a: table 6.13, page 234).

- 2.33. The requirement for infrastructure phasing plans for large scale residential development is effective because it will ensure that development supported by appropriate infrastructure is deliverable.

Q5. In terms of this issue, are any of the suggested modifications in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications necessary for soundness?

- 2.34. The City Council has not suggested any main modifications to Policy IF1.
- 2.35. There is one suggested additional minor modification, SAMM92, (CSD-03: p99) to paragraph 15.4 of the supporting text, replacing an incorrect reference to Highways England with National Highways. National Highways supports this modification which is agreed through the Statement of Common Ground (DTC-03j: page 43).

3. Issue 2: Viability – Policy IF2

The PPG³ advises that the role for viability assessment is “...at the plan making stage”. It also states that Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include the level and type of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure. These policy requirements should be informed by evidence of infrastructure and affordable housing need, and a proportionate assessment of viability that takes into account all relevant policies, and local and national standards.

The Local Plan Viability Assessment⁴ (LPVA) identifies three zones (VA1, VA2 and VA3) across Exeter where different house prices are achieved. Reflecting the viability of new residential development, this is translated into different levels of planned housing delivery in these different zones with the majority (75%) being in zone VA1 on brownfield land i.e. on the Strategic Brownfield Allocations, 19% being in zone VA2 on greenfield land with the remainder (6%) being in zone VA3 on a mixture of greenfield and brownfield land with the largest allocation being brownfield.

Q1. How were the zones defined and are they accurate and appropriate? How were the affordable housing assumptions determined for the viability testing for each zone? How was the 75% level of planned housing delivery for zone VA1 determined? Could residential development in zone VA1 viably contribute more affordable housing?

- 3.1. The zones have been defined through a combination of Land Registry sales value data analysis, local knowledge of the city (the consultants who prepared the LPVA live and work in the city) and the locations of the development proposed in the Exeter Plan (EVB-IF-01a: pages 23-24, paragraphs 4.9-4.11 and figure 4.1). The zones reflect geographical variations in values based on recent new build development sales as well as the different forms of existing and future development taking place/the subject of applications in the different parts of the city. Values and zones were also discussed with developers and site promoters as part of a developer workshop and individual consultations undertaken as part of LPVA (EVB-IF-01a: page 12, paragraph 2.12). Based on the best available evidence, the zones are considered accurate and appropriate for the purpose of supporting the policy approach.
- 3.2. The affordable housing in the different zones was explored in recent CIL viability work⁵ and informal testing used to inform the Council's affordable housing decisions (EVB-IF-01a: paragraphs 3.22-3.23, page 19) including tenure mix (EVB-IF-01a: paragraph 3.24, page 20). Preparation of the LPVA included consultation with registered providers to help inform affordable housing assumptions. Following this review, the LPVA tested the proposed affordable housing targets in the different value areas to confirm that they were

³ Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 10-002-20190509 and Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 10-001-20190509

⁴ Document EVB-IF-01a

⁵ Available at:

- <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/y0pbx40n/background-information-1.pdf>
- <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/zj5ns1ov/background-information-2-viability-evidence.pdf>

viable in combination with other plan policies (EVB-IF-01a: chapters 5 and 6, pages 40-50).

- 3.3. The 75% level of planned housing delivery for zone VA1 (EVB-IF-01a, table 6.2, page 48) is based on the number of allocated dwellings in each Zone, as set out in table 6.1 of the LPVA (EVB-IF-01a: page 46). Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show that delivery in zone VA1 is an important part of the Exeter Plan.
- 3.4. The proposed 15% affordable housing target in zone VA1 is based on the proportion of affordable housing with the preferred tenure mix that can be supported by most development in this zone, taking into account the form of development likely to be brought forward (i.e. higher density/flat-led development with some family housing) and the need to have some viability headroom for changes. The findings of the testing in LPVA (EVB-IF-01a: table 5.1, page 42 and table 5.6, page 44) show that, in the main, development is able to support 15% affordable housing with some headroom. It is considered that higher proportions of affordable housing in zone VA1 could put delivery at risk.

Q2. Does the LPVA and its addendum report accurately account for all likely development costs, from contributions towards healthcare and education to site specific design costs such as higher optional technical standards?

- 3.5. The viability testing in the LPVA (EVB-IF-01a) and the Local Plan Viability Assessment Addendum (LPVA-A) (EVB-IF-01b) includes all likely development costs as well as national and local policy costs (including CIL and Section 106). The testing in LPVA-A also includes allocation-specific costs. These can all be found in EVB-IF-01a table 4.12 and 4.13 within paragraphs 4.26-4.40; and EVB-IF-01b chapters 4-8 and Appendix B.
- 3.6. Specifically, education will be funded through Section 106 contributions and potential healthcare through a combination of Section 106 and CIL on a case by case basis (subject to ongoing discussions with the Royal Devon University Healthcare Trust. The nationally described space standards optional technical standard is included in the dwelling sizes (EVB-IF-01a: paragraph 4.4, page 21 and tables 4.1-4.2, page 22) and the testing includes the accessibility technical standards required by policy H14 (EVB-IF-01a: table 4.13, page 33 and paragraph 4.37, page 35).
- 3.7. Additional testing was undertaken to include the introduction of the Building Safety Levy and potential market changes, as set out in the LPVA-A (EVB-IF-01b: chapter 11). This suggests a conservative approach to testing which does not make unduly optimistic assumptions.

Q3. Does the LPVA differentiate between greenfield and brownfield sites, and if so, how is this reflected in the Plan?

- 3.8. The LPVA differentiates between greenfield and brownfield sites in terms of the typologies used and the assumptions applied to the viability modelling:

- Typologies were developed to reflect typical forms of development that are likely to come forward over the plan period. This includes separate greenfield and brownfield typologies (EVB-IF-01a: chapter 3, page 14).
 - The typologies also reflect the potential different forms of development on greenfield and brownfield locations, with generally higher densities on brownfield land and more suburban development on greenfield sites.
 - A range of different assumptions were applied including: sales values, plot and site infrastructure costs for flats compared to houses; BNG allowances; and CIL rates for flats compared to houses (EVB-IF-01a: paragraph 4.9, page 23) and
 - Separate benchmark land values were identified for brownfield and greenfield sites (EVB-IF-01a: paragraphs 4.14-4.15, page 25).
- 3.9. In terms of viability, the impact of developing on different types of sites (i.e. greenfield and brownfield) is reflected in the different policy approaches towards affordable housing. This is shown in policy H4: Affordable housing which differentiates between percentage requirements for greenfield (35%) and brownfield (15%).

Q4. Does the LPVA differentiate between strategic and non-strategic site allocations, and if so, how is this reflected in the Plan? Have all the proposed site allocations in the Plan been subjected to viability testing?

- 3.10. The LPVA tests a series of development typologies which differentiate between the strategic and non-strategic allocations anticipated to come forward (EVB-IF-01a: paragraph 5.3, page 40). This includes a variety of brownfield typologies at various scales (up to 150 dwellings) and various unit types (including houses, flats, PBSA, co-living and other specialist house types).
- 3.11. In addition to the brownfield typologies, the LPVA testing includes appropriate greenfield typologies reflecting likely housing supply. Table 6.1 (EVB-IF-01a: page 46) shows how the typologies respond to the individual allocations in policy H2.
- 3.12. Following the Regulation 19 consultation, an exercise was undertaken to review the representations and consider the need for additional viability testing and evidence. This took the form of the LPVA-A (EVB-IF-01b) which presents further site specific work for all of the strategic and large scale brownfield allocations (EVB-IF-01b: chapter 3, page 14 onwards). The report also covers employment allocations.
- 3.13. Taking this work into account, all of the allocations have been considered either individually or through representative typologies as per the viability Planning Practice Guidance at paragraphs 003-005.

Q5. When taking into account the need for and cost of likely development contributions, will the policies in the Local Plan undermine its deliverability?

- 3.14. The policies in the Local Plan will not undermine its deliverability. This is considered through the LPVA (EVB-IF-01a), the LPVA-A (EVB-IF-01b) and the

Water Lane: Delivery and viability position statement (EXM-02aa).

- 3.15. The LPVA (EVB-IF-01a: paragraph 6.5, page 48) discusses viability across each value area assessing development of the various typologies. The LPVA states for each that the development type is 'viable as tested'. In addition, the LPVA sets out that '...the types of development expected to deliver the supply on the allocations are viable with all the policies set out in the Local Plan' (EVB-IF-01a: paragraph 6.6, page 49).
- 3.16. The LPVA-A assesses the strategic brownfield site allocations in more detail and concludes that these are viable in the context of plan costs (EVB-IF-01b: Executive summary, paragraphs 5-7).
- 3.17. Further detailed assessment has also been undertaken on Water Lane. This work concludes that 'taken as a whole, the evidence demonstrates that the draft Local Plan policy requirements are viable' (EXM-02aa: paragraph 4.1, page 15).
- 3.18. Costs of developer contributions will therefore not undermine plan deliverability.

Q6. How would the viability exemption set out in Policy IF2 work in practice if there were no significant changes as set out under criteria a, b and c? Is this approach consistent with national planning policy?

- 3.19. If there were no significant changes as set out under criteria a, b and c, the policy as written would not allow for the re-consideration of viability at planning application stage because the policy states that 'deviation from policy on the grounds of viability will only be considered appropriate where one or more of the [criteria] have occurred to a *significant degree* following the adoption of the Exeter Plan'.
- 3.20. The Viability Planning Practice Guidance states that 'Where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that fully comply with them should be assumed to be viable'. The PPG goes on to state that 'It is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage' (paragraphs 006 and 008). This reiterates the position in the NPPF (page 58).
- 3.21. The City Council accepts that, while the PPG is clear that the onus is on applicants to demonstrate that sufficient justification exists for the re-consideration of viability at application stage, it does not impose limitations on the circumstances that would provide such justification. Rather, it lists some circumstances where this could apply (paragraph 008).
- 3.22. Therefore, to ensure consistency with national planning policy, the City Council has suggested main modification SMM82 (CSD-03: page 34-35) which reframes criteria a, b and c as an inexhaustive list of examples of circumstances which will be considered to provide sufficient justification, whilst

reiterating the principles set out in PPG in relation to viability at the application stage.

- 3.23. Subject to SMM82, the City Council considers the approach in Policy IF2 to be consistent with national planning policy as set out in the NPPF (paragraph 58) and viability PPG (paragraphs 6 and 8).
- 3.24. This approach has recently been tested through the Teignbridge Local Plan, with the Inspectors' Report for the Examination accepting this broad approach⁶.

Q7. How would the review mechanism under Policy IF2 work in practice? What is the justification for its inclusion in the Plan? Would it apply to all development?

- 3.25. The review mechanism will be implemented as part of the development management process by including a requirement within the Section 106 agreement for development costs and values to be reassessed post-decision, according to a trigger set out in the Section 106 agreement. The Plan adopts a flexible approach to what form the viability review mechanism will take to allow this to be agreed between the City Council and the developer as part of drawing up the Section 106 agreement.
- 3.26. A review mechanism will not apply to all development; it will only apply when proposals are subject to a Section 106 agreement and 'where appropriate' (see suggested main modification below).
- 3.27. The justification for including a policy requirement for a viability review mechanism includes:
- The Viability PPG (paragraph 010) which supports the use of a viability review mechanism as a tool 'to strengthen local planning authorities' ability to seek compliance with relevant policies over the lifetime of the project'.
 - The evidenced need for affordable housing as established through the 2024 Local Housing Needs Assessment (EVB-H-01a).
 - The evidenced need for infrastructure provision as set out in the IDP, updated through an Examination version (EXM-02ab) which has been informed by joint working with infrastructure providers throughout plan-making.
- 3.28. The City Council has suggested main modification SMM84 (CSD:03: pages 34-35) to allow for a more flexible approach to be taken to requiring a viability review mechanism in instances where policy requirements are reduced on viability grounds.

⁶ Available at: [planning-inspectors-report-on-the-teignbridge-local-plan-examination-24-march-2026.pdf](#) . Paragraph 129. Page 33.

Q8. In terms of this issue, are any of the suggested modifications in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications necessary for soundness?

- 3.29. Main modification SMM82 is discussed under question 6 above and so is not repeated here. It is considered necessary for soundness in terms of consistency with paragraph 58 of the NPPF.
- 3.30. Main modification SMM83 (CSD-03: page 35) is suggested to remove reference to abnormal costs from the list of examples of circumstances in which the need for a viability assessment at the application stage could be justified. This is necessary for soundness in terms of consistency with paragraph 013 of the Viability PPG, which indicates that abnormal costs should be accounted for in the price paid for land. This also relates to paragraph 58 of the NPPF which cross references national planning guidance.
- 3.31. Main modification SMM84 (CSD-03: page 35) is discussed under question 7 above and so is not repeated here. It is necessary for soundness in terms of Paragraph 010 of the Viability PPG.
- 3.32. Additional/minor modifications SAMM93 and SAMM94 (CSD-03, pages 99-100) are also suggested. Whilst it is not considered that these modifications are required for soundness, they address concerns made by other parties and provide greater clarity.

4. Issue 3: Community Facilities – Policy IF3

Q1. Is Policy IF3 consistent with paragraph 97 of the Framework which, amongst other things, requires planning policies to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs?

- 4.1. Subject to the revised criteria set out in suggested modification SMM85 of the Schedule of Suggested Modifications (CSD-03), the City Council considers that Policy IF3 will provide appropriate protection against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, consistent with paragraph 97 of the NPPF.
- 4.2. The revised policy protects 'existing facilities, including buildings and land that meet community, social, health, welfare, policing⁷, education, spiritual, cultural, leisure and recreational needs' from redevelopment unless at least one of three possible criteria are met.
- 4.3. The revised Policy IF3 criterion (a) allows for a community facility to be redeveloped if there is "no reasonable prospect of the community facility continuing, nor of securing an appropriate alternative community use of the site". This revised criterion would align with the reference to guarding against "unnecessary loss" in paragraph 97 criterion (c) of the NPPF; if a community facility cannot reasonably continue, then the loss of that facility cannot be considered 'unnecessary'.
- 4.4. The revised Policy IF3 criterion (b) allows for a community facility to be redeveloped if there is "a proven excess of the facility in the area it serves". This revised criterion would align with the reference in paragraph 97 criterion (c) of the NPPF to protecting "valued" facilities and services that ensure "the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs"; if there is an excess of the facility in the area, it is unlikely to be necessary for 'meeting day-to-day needs'.
- 4.5. The revised Policy IF3 criterion (c) allows for a community facility to be redeveloped if "sufficient alternative or improved provision will be made in a suitable location to serve the local community, which clearly outweighs the loss...". In this instance, the facility would not be 'lost' as it would be replaced by alternative or improved provision that would still enable the local communities day-to-day needs to be met.

Q2. Is it clear to decision-makers, developers and local communities what types of use constitute 'community facilities', particularly in relation to commercial operations?

- 4.6. Neither the NPPF nor the Exeter Plan glossary includes a definition of community facilities.
- 4.7. The Plan's definition of community facilities is instead established through the policy text itself, and through paragraph 15.18 of the supporting text (both as per suggested modifications – see paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9 below):

⁷ See the new suggested modification for the insertion of "policing" as set out in the response to question 4 below.

- Policy IF3 protects ‘Existing facilities, including buildings and land, that meet community, social, health, welfare, education spiritual, cultural, leisure and recreational needs (including Assets of Community value)’.
 - Paragraph 15.18 states that ‘Exeter has a wealth of services and facilities that are essential for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. These facilities include schools, healthcare, community halls, places of worship, pubs, libraries, space for children’s services/community use and youth clubs. The protection of these facilities is of critical importance to our residents.’
- 4.8. The City Council has suggested additional minor modification SAMM 95 to paragraph 15.18 ((CSD-03: page 101) as a result of the representation from Devon and Cornwall Police (B-01-various). This would include policing infrastructure within the list of types of community facilities.
- 4.9. Following submission of the Exeter Plan, further discussions have taken place with Devon and Cornwall Police resulting in a Statement of Common Ground (EXM-02ag). Through these discussions the City Council would like to suggest further small-scale revisions to the introduction to policy IF3 (see EXM-02ag: page 5) and to paragraph 15.18 (see EXM-02ag: page 4).
- 4.10. As explained in the Exeter Plan at paragraph 15.20, community facilities can be provided by the private sector as commercial operations. Examples of such facilities include public houses and cultural venues. This is acknowledged in the draft definition of community facilities included in the December 2025 consultation version of the NPPF. The commercial status of a community facility would not preclude the implementation of Policy IF3.

Q3. Is it clear to decision-makers, developers and local communities how the policy will be implemented effectively?

- 4.11. Policy IF3 is subject to two suggested main modifications: SMM85 and SMM86 (CSD-03: pages 36 and 37). Subject to these modifications, it is clear how the policy will be implemented effectively. The criteria in the policy clarify what will be considered if an application involving the loss of a community facility is proposed.
- 4.12. SMM85 in particular aims to significantly simplify the implementation of the policy by reducing the number of criteria which a proposal would need to fulfil if the protection of a community facility would not apply. These criteria relate to the prospect of continued community use, the amount of existing provision of the use in the area and the potential for alternative or improved community provision.

Q4. In terms of this issue, are any of the suggested modifications in the Schedule of Suggested Modifications necessary for soundness?

- 4.13. Suggested modification SMM85 is necessary for soundness in terms of ensuring that the policy provides a strong enough level of protection of community facilities such that the policy is consistent with paragraph 97 of the

NPPF. The suggested modification will also make the policy more effective by ensuring that the criteria are clear and implementable within the development management process.

- 4.14. Policy IF3 provides support for new or improved community facilities and promotes engagement with local communities during the development process. SMM86 (CSD-03, p37) amends the policy text to also promote ongoing engagement with 'relevant infrastructure organisations'. This modification will improve the effectiveness of the policy by ensuring that the development of new or improved community facilities occurs in a way that is informed by relevant information from infrastructure organisations, to ensure that new community facilities meet local needs and are operationally fit for purpose.
- 4.15. SAMM96 suggests the removal of the reference to viability from the high level explanation provided in paragraph 15.19 of the supporting text regarding the Policy IF3 criteria. The more detailed explanation in Paragraph 15.20, regarding how viability can be taken into account where a community facility is run as a commercial operation, is proposed to remain. SAMM96 will ensure consistency between the criteria in Policy IF3 (as revised by SMM85) and the supporting text and is therefore necessary for soundness in terms of effectiveness.
- 4.16. SAMM97 inserts a sentence into paragraph 15.19 of the supporting text explaining how Policy IF3 seeks to ensure that opportunities to deliver an alternative community use on the site are explored before an existing community facility is redeveloped. SAMM97 will ensure consistency between the criteria in Policy IF3 (as revised by SMM85) and the supporting text and is therefore necessary for soundness in terms of effectiveness.
- 4.17. SAMM98 is a minor/additional modification which makes a grammatical correction to paragraph 15.20 of the supporting text. This is not necessary for soundness but makes the plan clearer.
- 4.18. SAMM99 suggests amending paragraph 15.24 of the supporting text to read:
- 'Education is a ~~particularly important~~ an essential form of community facility...'*
- 4.19. This modification is not necessary for soundness although it is justified by Devon County Council's evidence base and representations to the Exeter Plan, and effective as it reflects the joint working between the City Council and DCC and was agreed through the signed Statement of Common Ground (DTC-03b).
- 4.20. SAMM100 inserts into paragraph 15.25 of the supporting text additional emphasis on the policy requirement for a new primary at Water Lane and an explanation that the "the school shall comply with the Department for Education's area guidelines for mainstream schools: Building Bulletin 103, or any successor document, in the context of site constraints and proposed higher density development in the area". SAMM100 then goes on to insert an additional paragraph to address the potential need for a second new primary school, as explained in the response to Issue 1 Question 2 of this Hearing Statement. This modification will help ensure that new education provision meets the needs of the infrastructure provider and is based on effective joint working as evidenced by the statement of common ground and being justified by the County Council's evidence base. The suggested modification also

ensures that the supporting text is consistent with suggested modification SMM93 to Policy SBA1.

Suggested modifications relating to policing infrastructure

- 4.21. In accordance with the Statement of Common Ground (EXM-02ag) between the City Council, Devon and Cornwall Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the City Council also suggests the following new/amended modifications to Policy IF3 and paragraph 15.18 of the supporting text.

- 4.22. Policy IF3:

“Existing facilities, including buildings and land, that meet community, social, health, welfare, policing, education, spiritual, cultural, leisure and recreational needs (including Assets Of Community value) will be protected, unless it can be demonstrated that...”

- 4.23. This is necessary for soundness because it will ensure that policing infrastructure is considered as a community facility. It also reflects the joint working carried out between the City Council and Devon and Cornwall Police, as documented in the Statement of Common Ground (EXM-02ag).

- 4.24. The City Council requests that SAMM95 be superseded by an amended suggested modification to paragraph 15.18 of the supporting text as follows:

“Exeter has a wealth of services and facilities that are essential for the health, welfare, safety, security, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. These facilities include schools, healthcare, policing infrastructure, community halls, places of worship, pubs, libraries, space for children’s services/community use and youth clubs. The protection of these facilities is of critical importance to our residents.”

- 4.25. This is not considered necessary for soundness as it simply describes the factual presence of policing infrastructure in Exeter.

5. Issue 4: Open Space, Play Areas, Allotments and Sport – Policy IF4

Q1. How is open space defined for the purposes of Policy IF4?

- 5.1. Open space is not defined in the glossary for the Exeter Plan (SUP-02). For the purpose of Policy IF4, open space is defined as per the NPPF definition:

‘All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity’.

- 5.2. This definition is consistent between the December 2023 NPPF, December 2024 NPPF and December 2025 draft NPPF for consultation.
- 5.3. This is a wide definition and includes land that is not publicly accessible.

Q2. Is Policy IF4 consistent with paragraph 103 of the Framework, which states that existing open space, sport and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless certain criteria are met?

- 5.4. The City Council has suggested main modification SMM87 which will ensure that Policy IF4 is consistent with paragraph 103 of the NPPF. The suggested modification provides clearer and more precise criteria for the assessment of proposals to redevelop existing open space, play areas, local green spaces, allotments, playing pitches or sports facilities, with proposals needing to meet at least one of the three criteria to be supported.
- 5.5. The revised Policy IF4 criterion (a) aligns with paragraph 103(a) of the NPPF; each allows for redevelopment in instances where a lack of an ongoing need for the facility has been clearly demonstrated through an assessment.
- 5.6. The revised Policy IF4 criterion (b) aligns with paragraph 103(b) of the NPPF; each allows for redevelopment in instances where an adequate level of alternative provision is being made. The criterion in the Framework refers to “equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality”, while the revised IF4(b) criterion refers to alternative or improved provision “which clearly outweighs the loss (considering both quantity and quality)”.⁸
- 5.7. The revised Policy IF4 criterion (c) aligns with paragraph 103(c) of the NPPF; each provides for the instance in which the proposed development itself is for alternative/replacement provision on the same site which would outweigh the loss.

⁸ Notwithstanding that the Exeter Plan is being examined in terms of the December 2023 NPPF, it may be relevant to note that in the current consultation draft NPPF, the respective criterion refers to “equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity *and/or* quality”.

Q3. The Exeter Playing Pitch Strategy is a draft document dated October 2022. Has this work been updated as part of the Plan's preparation? If not is this evidence now out of date?

- 5.8. Notwithstanding that the October 2022 Playing Pitch Strategy document (EVB-IF-03) has 'Draft Version for Submission to Exeter City Council' indicated on the front page, it is the final version which was recommended for approval by the City Council's Executive⁹ on 1 November 2022 and approved by Council¹⁰ on 13 December 2022.
- 5.9. The PPS is being reviewed and updated by consultants with input from City Council officers, Sport England, representatives from sport governing bodies and other relevant parties. The updated documents are currently being completed. This progress is noted in the Statement of Common Ground with Sport England (EXM-02I: page 21).

Q4. How have the requirements in Policy IF4 been established as part of the plan-making process? Are they based on robust, up to date evidence? Have the requirements been adequately tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable?

- 5.10. The requirements included in Policy IF4 refer to the provision of, or contributions to, a range of open space and sports facilities. These requirements have been established through a variety of processes. This started with a review of the NPPF, including paragraph 102, which identifies the importance of open spaces and sport facilities for the health and wellbeing of communities. The overarching approach in the Plan is therefore consistent with national planning policy.
- 5.11. Evidence for potential contributions to open space and sports provision is based upon various evidence documents and so the requirements are justified. The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPPS) (EVB-IF-03) sets out the overall need for such facilities in Exeter based on an assessment of current capacity and demand informed by Exeter Plan housing requirements. This covers needs related to football, cricket, rugby, hockey and tennis. A review of the PPS is underway and due to complete in 2026. This update will provide up to date evidence of needs.
- 5.12. Initial evidence of the need for built facilities is provided by assessments of swimming pools (EVB-IF-04) and sports halls (EVB-IF-05). These assessments both cover the period up to 2034. A more detailed consideration of the need for sports provision beyond 2034 has been identified by Sport England and agreed in a Statement of Common Ground (EXM-02I, page 22). Given that the current assessments demonstrate that the swimming pools and sports halls are at capacity in 2034 and in the context of the City Council commitment to undertake a built facilities strategy which would identify future needs longer term and in more detail, it is appropriate for policy IF4 to enable the provision of

⁹ See decision details: <https://committees.exeter.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=2294>

¹⁰ See Minute 114 on page 86 of the Council agenda reports pack:
<https://committees.exeter.gov.uk/documents/g7068/Public%20reports%20pack%2013th-Dec-2022%2018.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>

developer contributions for such facilities ‘...accordance with an appropriate City Council needs assessment’.

- 5.13. The requirements in Policy IF4 are viable. The Local Plan Viability Assessment (LPVA) explains that section 106 allowances have been made regarding contributions for open space and sports provision (EVB-IF-01a, Appendix B, page 62). Furthermore, the Exeter Plan starts from a current position whereby the Council regularly seeks Section 106 contributions for various forms of open space including playing areas and playing pitches demonstrating ongoing viability.

Q5. Is Policy IF4 consistent with paragraph 106 of the Framework, which sets out when Local Green Space designations should be used?

- 5.14. Policy IF4, and the Plan more widely, does not designate any new Local Green Space (LGS) designations. This approach is consistent with paragraph 105 of the NPPF which enables LGS to be designated through neighbourhood plans. The approach is also consistent with the Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space PPG which states that ‘whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion’ (paragraph 013).
- 5.15. Policy IF4 defines a series of criteria for when proposals for a range of open spaces and sports facilities will be supported. This includes local green space.
- 5.16. Having reviewed the NPPF, the City Council recognises that there are inconsistencies between the justification for designating local green space as set out in paragraph 106 and policy IF4. It may therefore be reasonable to remove reference to local green spaces in the list of open space types to be covered by the criteria at the end of Policy IF4.

Q6. Is Policy IF4 effective and justified by including a requirement for developments to accord with an SPD?

- 5.17. To ensure that policy IF4 is sound, the City Council would like to suggest the following main modification to the requirements section of the policy:

‘...to meet technical standards having regard to in accordance with an appropriate City Council needs assessment and the relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Documents or their successors’.

Q7. Is it clear to decision-makers, developers and local communities how the policy will be implemented effectively?

- 5.18. Policy IF4 is subject to two suggested main modifications: SMM87 and SMM88 (CSD-03, pages 38 and 39). Subject to these modifications, it is clear how the policy will be implemented effectively. The criteria in the policy clarify what will be considered if an application involving the loss of open space or sports facilities is proposed.
- 5.19. SMM87, which is itself subject to suggested revisions in accordance with the Statement of Common Ground with Sport England (EXM-02I, pages 17-20) in

particular aims to simplify the implementation of the policy by reducing the number of criteria which a proposal would need to fulfil if the protection of open space or a sports facility would not apply. The suggested amendments to the criteria relate to an assessment of need, the prospect of continued community use, the alternative or improved provision in the area and the potential for the development to be for open space/sports provision outweighing the loss.

Q8. What is the justification for the suggested modifications to Policy IF4? Why are they necessary for soundness?

- 5.20. Since the submission of the schedule of suggested modifications (CSD-03), further engagement with Sport England (as set out in the Statement of Common Ground - EXM-02I) has informed some new/amended suggested modifications to Policy IF4. For clarity, a 'tracked changes' version of Policy IF4 indicating all suggested modifications is included as Appendix 2a to this hearing statement, and a final 'clean' version of the suggested policy wording is included as Appendix 2b.
- 5.21. The suggested modification SMM87 responds to representations which suggested that the criteria in Policy IF4 may be difficult to apply to planning applications due to the potential range of interpretations of the terms used. The suggested modification therefore provides clearer, more focused criteria. Sport England raised concerns with the consistency of the criteria with those in paragraph 103, and the suggested modifications therefore seek to provide criteria that are more closely aligned with paragraph 103 of the Framework as explained in the response to Issue 4 Question 2 above. The suggested modification also seeks to provide a moderately stronger level of protection (while still allowing for redevelopment in specific circumstances as per the revised criteria) which is justified by the evidence of ongoing need demonstrated in the Playing Pitch Strategy (EVB-IF-03) and the Stage E update documents which are at final draft stage (PPS review).
- 5.22. For consistency with suggested modification SMM87 to the criteria in Policy IF4, SMM102 suggests an additional explanatory paragraph which reinforces the policy intent and approach. However, the City Council would like to modify the suggested modification by omitting the final sentence ("Generally, the City Council will seek to ensure...") because it has the potential to introduce some unnecessary ambiguity.
- 5.23. Policy IF4 also supports proposals for the provision of new open space, play areas, local green spaces, allotments, playing pitches and sports facilities. The suggested modification SMM87 extends this support to proposals for improvements to existing provision. This is also justified by the evidence of need demonstrated by the Playing Pitch Strategy, and helps ensure that the Plan is positively prepared in terms of meeting the ongoing need for playing pitches and sports facilities.
- 5.24. The suggested modification SMM88 provides clear policy supported for not only new but also improved open spaces or sports facilities. This is required for soundness and will ensure that the policy is positively prepared and consistent with the NPPF in terms of its general support for such provision included at paragraph 88.

- 5.25. As set out in the response to Issue 4 Question 6, a new main modification is also suggested relating to the requirement for residential development proposals to provide/make contributions to a range of sports facilities, playing pitches, play areas, open space and allotments 'having regard to' City Council needs assessments and SPDs. This provides additional flexibility to ensure that the policy requirement is justified and effective.
- 5.26. As identified in the answer to Issue 4 Question 5, it would be appropriate to consider a further main modification to remove reference to local green spaces in the final part of the policy; this identifies the criteria for when proposals for open space and sports facilities may be supported. Removal may be appropriate for consistency with national policy because local greenspaces are subject to different provisions in the NPPF (paragraph 106).
- 5.27. The suggested minor/additional modification SAMM101 is an editorial change to the word order in the section heading which is not necessary for soundness.

6. Issue 5: New Cemetery Provision – Policy IF5

Q1. If there is an identified need for new cemeteries to be provided, should relevant allocations be included in the Plan?

- 6.1. Following analysis from the City Council parks and greenspaces team, new cemetery provision, or a new cemetery site would be needed during the plan period to enable the City Council to continue its discretionary services for burials as is the preferred approach.
- 6.2. However, this service goes beyond the statutory requirements set out in the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 to provide cremations or burials for people who have died alone, in poverty, or unclaimed by their relatives. The requirement for the associated public graves would be significantly lower than currently required to maintain the City Council's preferred discretionary offer. The remaining space in the City Council's cemeteries to address the need for public graves would therefore extend for longer into the plan period.
- 6.3. On this basis, the need for additional cemetery space is not so acute as to require an allocation. Instead, the Plan includes Policy IF5 as an enabling policy to support the delivery of additional cemetery provision as may come forward in future. It is therefore reasonable that the Plan does not include allocations for cemeteries.

Q2. Is Policy IF5 positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

- 6.4. Policy IF5 is positively prepared because it is an enabling policy to support the delivery of cemeteries during the plan period. It is justified by analysis undertaken by the City Council parks and greenspaces team. It is effective because it will support the provision of additional cemetery provision as may be required in future, noting that the requirement is not sufficiently acute as to undermine statutory responsibilities. Policy IF5 is also consistent with national policy because it enables the development of cemeteries as a community facility (NPPF paragraph 88).

7. Summary

- 7.1. This hearing statement has been prepared by the City Council in response to questions asked in relation to Matter 14 of the Exeter Plan Examination.
- 7.2. All questions asked in regarding all five issues for Matter 14 have been answered.

Appendix 1a: Policy IF3 (suggested modifications indicated)

Policy IF3: Community facilities (Strategic policy)

'Existing facilities, including buildings and land, that meet community, social, health, welfare, education, spiritual, cultural, leisure and recreational needs (including Assets Of Community value) will be protected, unless it can be **robustly** demonstrated that:

a. There is no reasonable prospect of the existing use continuing, nor of securing an appropriate alternative community use of the site; or

b. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that there is a proven excess of the existing facility in the area it serves, and there is no reasonable prospect of securing an appropriate alternative community use of the site; or

~~a. They are no longer fit for purpose; or~~

~~b. They are no longer viable and there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for a community use in the future; or~~

~~c. They are surplus to requirements; or~~

~~d. There are alternative, appropriate facilities in the area to meet community needs; and~~

~~e.~~

c. Sufficient alternative or improved provision will be made in a suitable location to serve the local community, **which clearly outweighs the loss, and will be provided to a timescale that avoids any significant break in use.**

Development proposals for new or improved community facilities will be supported. Ongoing engagement in the development process should take place with local communities to ensure that needs are understood, planned for and met.

Facilities that serve the city as a whole should be located in the city centre or, if this is not practical, at locations which are accessible by active travel and public transport.

Facilities which serve neighbourhood needs should be located within or close to district or local centres, or at locations which are accessible to the local community by active travel.

Contributions towards additional or improved education provision and other community facilities will be sought from residential development proposals where necessary.

Appendix 1b: Policy IF3 (clean copy)

Policy IF3: Community facilities (Strategic policy)

'Existing facilities, including buildings and land, that meet community, social, health, welfare, education, spiritual, cultural, leisure and recreational needs (including Assets Of Community value) will be protected, unless it can be robustly demonstrated that:

- a. There is no reasonable prospect of the existing use continuing, nor of securing an appropriate alternative community use of the site; or
- b. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that there is a proven excess of the existing facility in the area it serves, and there is no reasonable prospect of securing an appropriate alternative community use of the site; or
- c. Sufficient alternative or improved provision will be made in a suitable location to serve the local community, which clearly outweighs the loss, and will be provided to a timescale that avoids any significant break in use.

Development proposals for new or improved community facilities will be supported. Ongoing engagement in the development process should take place with local communities to ensure that needs are understood, planned for and met.

Facilities that serve the city as a whole should be located in the city centre or, if this is not practical, at locations which are accessible by active travel and public transport.

Facilities which serve neighbourhood needs should be located within or close to district or local centres, or at locations which are accessible to the local community by active travel.

Contributions towards additional or improved education provision and other community facilities will be sought from residential development proposals where necessary.

Appendix 2a: Policy IF4 (suggested modifications indicated)

Policy IF4: Open space, play areas, allotments and sport

Existing open space, play areas, local green spaces, allotments, playing pitches and sports facilities will be protected unless it can be robustly demonstrated that:

a. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that there is a proven excess of the existing facility in the area it serves, and there is no reasonable prospect of securing an appropriate alternative community use of the site; or

~~a. They are no longer fit for purpose; or~~

~~b. They are no longer viable and there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for a community use in the future; or~~

~~c. They are surplus to requirements; or~~

~~d. There are alternative appropriate facilities in the area to meet community needs; and~~

~~e.~~

b. Sufficient alternative or improved provision will be made in a suitable location to serve the local community, which clearly outweighs the loss (considering both quantity and quality), and will be provided to a timescale that avoids any significant break in use; or

c. the development is for alternative open space, play areas, allotments and sport provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Residential development proposals will be required to provide, or make contributions to, a range of sports facilities, playing pitches, play areas, open space and allotments (including ongoing management and maintenance) to meet technical standards ~~in accordance with~~ having regard to an appropriate City Council needs assessment and the relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Documents or their successors.

Development proposals for new ~~or improved~~ open space, play areas, ~~local green spaces,~~ allotments, playing pitches and sports facilities will be supported where they are:

- a. Located and designed to be inclusive and accessible to all, regardless of age, ability, or background;
- b. Integrated into the local active travel network; and
- c. Designed to be safe and secure.

Appendix 2b: Policy IF4 (clean copy)

Policy IF4: Open space, play areas, allotments and sport

Existing open space, play areas, local green spaces, allotments, playing pitches and sports facilities will be protected unless it can be robustly demonstrated that:

- a. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that there is a proven excess of the existing facility in the area it serves, and there is no reasonable prospect of securing an appropriate alternative community use of the site; or
- b. Sufficient alternative or improved provision will be made in a suitable location to serve the local community, which clearly outweighs the loss (considering both quantity and quality), and will be provided to a timescale that avoids any significant break in use; or
- c. the development is for alternative open space, play areas, allotments and sport provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Residential development proposals will be required to provide, or make contributions to, a range of sports facilities, playing pitches, play areas, open space and allotments (including ongoing management and maintenance) to meet technical standards having regard to an appropriate City Council needs assessment and the relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Documents or their successors.

Development proposals for new or improved open space, play areas, allotments, playing pitches and sports facilities will be supported where they are:

- a. Located and designed to be inclusive and accessible to all, regardless of age, ability, or background;
- b. Integrated into the local active travel network; and
- c. Designed to be safe and secure.