

New Exeter Local Plan



Issues consultation document

Regulation 18

September 2021



New Exeter Local Plan

We are starting work on a new Local Plan. This plan will shape the future of Exeter for the next twenty years and will be the basis for how the city continues to evolve and meet the needs of the community. It will be the main planning policy document for Exeter, setting out where development should take place and it will be vital in making decisions on planning applications.



Public Exhibitions

We will be holding the following public exhibitions:

Thursday 30 September 2021 - 1pm to 7pm

Exeter Central Library, Rougemont Room, Castle St, Exeter, EX4 3PQ

Wednesday 13 October 2021 - 1pm to 7pm

Exeter Guildhall, 203 High Street, Exeter, EX4 3EB

The aim of this 'issues' document and how to comment

The new Local Plan can only be effective if it covers the key issues facing the city. This document explains what we think the main issues are and seeks views on them.

We will use your comments to shape the first draft of the plan which will be consulted on in 2022.

How to get involved and give your comments

You can make comments on this document between 20 September and 15 November 2021.

For more information and to provide your comments online, please visit: exeter.gov.uk/localplan

If you have any questions or would like to respond in a different way please email: planning.policy@exeter.gov.uk or phone: 01392 265080

To be kept informed of progress on the new Local Plan without responding, please contact us providing your name and email address at: planning.policy@exeter.gov.uk



Why we need a new Local Plan and what it will include

Each Council is required to have an up to date Local Plan to guide development so that it meets the needs of the community and the local area. Exeter's current plans (the Core Strategy and Local Plan First Review) are becoming older and we and our neighbouring partners are no longer progressing the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. As a result, the city needs a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will eventually replace the existing plans and will cover the years between 2020 and 2040.

The new Local Plan will sit alongside Neighbourhood Plans and the Devon Minerals and Waste Plans in providing the planning policy for Exeter.

We are proposing that the new Local Plan will include:

- A vision and objectives
- A strategy setting out how the city will evolve and how development will take place
- A series of policies to guide decisions on planning applications
- Sites for housing, jobs and other types of development
- Proposals for environmental protection and enhancement
- Proposals for infrastructure projects
- A system for monitoring the effectiveness of the Local Plan

These elements will allow us, the community and other organisations to make the most of the opportunities in Exeter, tackle our key issues and help ensure a thriving city going forward.

Question 1:

Do you have any
comments on
the content of
the new Local Plan
and its relationship
with other plans?



The issues

The existing evidence and knowledge we have gained from working on previous local plans and the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan has helped us to identify an initial set of issues that we think Exeter and its communities are facing. The issues that we have identified so far are below and on the next pages. We would like to hear your thoughts on them.



Climate emergency

We have declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to work towards creating a carbon neutral city by 2030. We have adopted the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan which sets out what Exeter will need to put in place in order to be net zero carbon by 2030.

The new Local Plan will include policies and proposals that contribute to meeting this challenging ambition and to make the most of the opportunities of a net zero carbon city.



Health and wellbeing

Generally, Exeter is a healthy city with high levels of walking and cycling, large areas of green space and access to a range of health facilities. However, people living in its more disadvantaged areas can have comparatively poor health, lower literacy and may experience frailty earlier. Traffic has led to increases in air pollution and noise in some areas. Crime and anti-social behaviour can be a concern. Housing quality can also significantly affect health.

The new Local Plan will play a part in improving health and wellbeing by supporting ambitions to achieve increases in physical activity to get 50 per cent of people walking or cycling to work, improving air quality and providing quality housing.



Homes

We know that housing is a big issue. The Government requires around 630 new homes in Exeter each year and Covid-19 has underlined just how much we need good quality housing. The new Local Plan will need to help address the shortage of affordable homes in the city and consider how best to provide the good quality accommodation we all need. Young adults, families, older people, those with disabilities, students and gypsies and travellers all have specific housing needs which we need to meet.



The issues



Economy and jobs

The city is at the heart of the Greater Exeter area and has one of the fastest growing economies in the UK. Whilst Exeter has like all cities been significantly impacted by Covid-19, predictions are that it will be one of the quickest to bounce back. There is a strong ambition to grow the economy with a focus on innovative business sectors, making the most of a skilled workforce.

The new Local Plan needs to support the economy and green growth by identifying the employment sites and infrastructure we need. This will help to increase prosperity and wellbeing.



The future of high streets

A vibrant and prosperous city centre with complementary bustling neighbourhood shopping areas is central to the success of the city. However, traditional high streets are under pressure through the growth of online shopping, a trend accelerated by Covid-19, and so we need to re-think how they function. Leisure, cultural attractions and the night-time economy are likely to play an increasingly important role in attracting people to our high streets and will help support our offer for tourists.

The new Local Plan will support the high street as it evolves and continues to play a central part in our lives.



High quality places and design

The quality of the places in which we live and work is fundamental for so many reasons, including to support our health and well-being, attract investment and generate pride in our city. Development offers opportunities to create high quality places that respond to Exeter's distinct characteristics, reflect local culture and integrate with existing communities, promoting social cohesion and healthy lifestyles.

The Local Plan must ensure that development is located in the right place and provides well-designed buildings and spaces.



The issues



Historic environment and culture

Exeter's rich historic environment is part of what makes the city unique and special and helps to shape the city's culture today. It improves our communities' quality of life and pride in the city and helps to support our economic prosperity.

New development inevitably raises challenges for our historic environment, but the new Local Plan provides an opportunity for us to protect and enhance our historic assets whilst celebrating and exploring the culture of the city and our communities as they evolve.



Natural environment

The city enjoys a high quality natural environment, with valley and city parks, public rights of way and the Exe Estuary. The hills to the north and north-west of the city give Exeter a distinctive character while the city also contains a rich variety of wildlife habitats.

The new Local Plan will need to manage development pressures on our local environment to provide benefits for landscape character, wildlife, flood risk and air quality and to help us to combat climate change.



Sustainable transport and communication

The way we travel will be vital to the success of Exeter. It will be central to achieving net zero carbon, growing prosperity, healthy lifestyles and improvements to our environment. In future, travel won't just be about whether we walk or drive - digital communications will also be key.

The new Local Plan will need to ensure that Exeter is resilient to changes in travel, supporting innovative development in the right places show-casing real options and fresh approaches to transport.



The issues



Infrastructure and community facilities

Our communities rely on local infrastructure to function and prosper; transport infrastructure helps us to get around, doctors surgeries provide our health care, schools educate our young people, digital infrastructure helps us to communicate and greenspace and leisure facilities provide us with the opportunity to relax.

The new Local Plan will be vital to identify the infrastructure which we need, ensuring it is provided in the right way, at the right time and in the right place.

These are an initial set of issues which we think the city is facing. We would like to hear your thoughts on them.

Question 2:

Are these the main
issues facing Exeter?
Are there any issues
which we should
change, add
or remove?





Exeter's future

We want to make sure that the new Local Plan deals with the current issues we face, helps us make the most of the city's opportunities and supports a bright future for local people, the environment and the economy. A clear and ambitious vision for the city will help the plan to achieve these aims.

In Exeter, our 'Vision 2040' is central to steering the future of the city and is guiding the work of the Council and other key organisations including the organisations on the Liveable Exeter Place Board. The new Local Plan will be a key document in achieving this vision.




Our Vision:

Exeter has a vision for growth as a connected city region consisting of thriving linked communities set within an exceptional environmental setting. This clear vision represents a commitment to strengthen neighbourhoods; create new communities; invest in sustainable transport; and deliver the infrastructure needed to attract investment and improve quality of life.

Exeter aims to be recognised as a leading sustainable city and global leader in addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges of climate change and urbanisation. We are striving to make Exeter the most active and accessible city in England. Our Corporate Plan is focussed on tackling congestion and accessibility, promoting active and healthy lifestyles and building great neighbourhoods.

The vision has seven key elements:

- An innovative and analytical city
- A healthy and inclusive city
- The most active city in the UK
- Accessible world class education
- A liveable and connected city
- A leading sustainable city
- Culture



Question 3:
**Do you have any
comments to make
on this vision for
the new Local Plan?**



The pattern and quality of future development in Exeter

A key role for the new Local Plan will be to set out a sustainable pattern of development for Exeter which will help to deal with the issues we have identified and achieve the vision for the city. Planning for development proactively will mean we can steer it to appropriate locations where impacts can be managed and where it will have the most significant benefit.

Our current planning documents include a strategy for meeting our development needs in terms of housing, jobs, shopping, community facilities and infrastructure. We need to review this approach to make sure it will be appropriate for the future. The key strands of the current approach to meeting the city's development needs are included below.

- Focus on the city centre, existing centres and previously developed land, including the regeneration of the Grecian Quarter (around Sidwell Street and the bus station) and the Water Lane area (around the canal in the Haven Banks area)
- Provide for additional development in sustainable urban extensions on the edges of the city
- Steer development away from the hills to the north and north west - the important landscape areas for the city



Reviewing the pattern of development

Some of this development strategy will need to be looked at again to reflect that times have changed. For example, there are more limited opportunities for large scale urban extensions now given that the developments at Newcourt and Monkerton are nearly complete. We are also now looking at the key regeneration benefits which development on brownfield sites can provide.

This evolving situation has led the Council to start a housing delivery programme called Liveable Exeter¹. This will create new homes for the city through a series of eight, high quality development sites. On the back of this work, Exeter has been recognised as a 'Garden Community' which brings support from Government to make sure that the city grows in a sustainable way with a real focus on high quality development working well for local communities. This approach will play a key part in steering the pattern and quality of development for the city in future. Some potential ideas which could be used to shape a future development strategy for Exeter are included on the next page.

¹ Liveable Exeter: <https://www.liveableexeter.co.uk/about#vision>



Ideas which could shape the future pattern of development in the city

- Redevelopment of brownfield land in the city
- Higher density development in the city centre and close by
- Smaller developments on the edge of the city
- Steering development away from sensitive environmental areas such as the Exe Estuary and hills to the north and north west of the city
- Locating development to maximise walking and cycling and to make use of public transport

Question 4:

Do you have any comments on the ideas which could shape the future pattern of development in Exeter?

Ideas which could shape the future quality of development in the city

These are sometimes called 'Garden City principles'

- Build distinctive development with local identity
- Ensure well-designed, vibrant places with a mixture of uses
- Support healthy lifestyles
- Provide a variety of high quality and flexible homes
- Deliver appropriately designed infrastructure when it's needed
- Provide developments for local employment, education and skills
- Enhance the natural and historic environment
- Provide green infrastructure such parks and open space
- Ensure that development will produce 'net zero' carbon emissions
- Deliver high quality active travel and low carbon transport
- Make sure that development is resilient to future change

Question 5:

Do you have any comments on the ideas which could shape the future quality of development in Exeter?



What happens next?

This issues consultation is the first step in preparing the new Local Plan. We will use your responses to the consultation alongside evidence on a range of topics to shape a draft of the new Local Plan which will be consulted on in 2022. After that, a final draft document will be published for comment before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination. A Planning Inspector will use a series of Examination discussions to decide whether the plan needs any changes and then if it can be adopted by the Council.

Question 6:

Are there any further comments you would like to make on the new Exeter Local Plan?



New Exeter Local Plan



Thank you very much for taking the time to look at this document.

Your views are valued and responses to the questions will help shape the future of the new Exeter Local Plan.

Contact details

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Please contact us to request this information in an alternative format or language.

We consider requests on an individual basis.