

## 2.0 LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY

2.1 Exeter is an historic Cathedral and University City and is a business, legal, retail, administrative, tourist and commercial centre for the region. It is relatively prosperous with a high quality of life and is located in an environmentally attractive area. The City has potential to capitalise on its education and locational advantages and to exploit its well established economic base, physical infrastructure and telecommunication links. However, like many small cities, Exeter is susceptible to globalisation and technological change. Alongside the growth of personal and collective wealth, areas of social and economic exclusion, poor health and educational under-attainment have developed. 2.2 To address the issues a partnership of people representing the social, voluntary and economic sectors have been brought together by the City Council and have set out a 'Vision' for the future of the City. Exeter Vision identifies the need to focus on ten key themes:-

- a prosperous City;
- an accessible City;
- an electronic City;
- a cultural and fun place to be;
- a learning City;
- a City of strong communities;
- a City where everyone has a home;
- a City where people are healthy and active;
- a City where the environment is cared for;
- a safe City.

2.3 These themes reflect the four main aims of the Government's 'strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom':

- (i) maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- (ii) social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- (iii) effective protection of the environment; and
- (iv) prudent use of natural resources.

2.4 The Local Plan First Review aims to assist Exeter Vision and the Council's Economic Development Strategy in meeting these challenges by providing a wide range of development opportunities particularly for employment, housing, shopping and commercial leisure, but without damaging those environmental assets that, to a large extent, generate the opportunities and pressures for growth. The policies and proposals of the First Review will also complement and support the Council's existing and emerging corporate strategies for the City Centre; Transport; Environment; Housing; Tourism; Culture; Community Safety; Air Quality; Allotments; Leisure; and Social Inclusion.

2.5 The Local Plan First Review recognises that in Exeter a high quality of the built and natural environment is the foundation on which a healthy economy is built. The overriding aim of the Local Plan First Review is, through sustainable development, to secure the prosperity of the City and to enhance the quality of life of its citizens.

2.6 This means that, wherever possible, development should take place on previously-developed land within the urban area and particularly within existing centres, where there are local facilities and a choice of transport, and that the opportunities to use means of transport other than the car are enhanced. A reduction in the use of the car is important because of the potential environmental benefits, particularly through

improvement in air quality and the conservation of finite fuel resources, and it is important for business through reduced traffic congestion.

2.7 The reality is, however, that brownfield opportunities in Exeter are limited. The release of some land beyond the built up area is inevitable, both for housing and employment. The plan provides for over 70% of housing on previously-developed land but the City is too densely developed to achieve more, particularly if a range of sites and a variety of housing is to be achieved. Similarly, a range of suitable sites for economic development is essential to deal with structural change and to develop and exploit new technologies. Land must be set aside for knowledge based industries to generate sustainable jobs and ensure the long term prosperity of the City. The Plan seeks to enable such developments by identifying sites which meet the essential and particular locational requirements of these businesses and ensuring that they are supported by measures to provide a genuine choice of access by public transport, walking and cycling.

2.8 Taking all of these matters into account, a sequential approach has been applied, in the First Review, to the selection of sites for office, retail and commercial leisure development. First preference is the City Centre, then edge-of-centre, district and local centres, and finally out-of-centre sites, limiting the expansion onto greenfield as much as possible. For retail and commercial leisure, a location close to other similar uses is important. For office development the approach takes into account the availability of a choice of transport. Industrial and storage uses are treated as an exception to this approach because, normally, they cannot be satisfactorily accommodated in the existing centres. The sequential approach will not be applied again to individual sites already allocated within the Plan when planning permission is sought.

2.9 Housing sites have been identified based on achieving the maximum use of previously-developed land but to meet housing needs some greenfield land has also been allocated. This greenfield land is released on the basis that development will take the form of sustainable urban extensions and is to be made available for infrastructure provision and development as early as possible so that they can contribute to meeting housing requirements throughout the plan period.

2.10 The sequential approach will be applied to all proposals for major trip generating developments on unallocated land.

## **Key Objectives**

2.11 Accordingly, the key objectives of the Local Plan First Review are:

- (i) to balance the need to stimulate growth and regeneration of the City and enhance Exeter's regional and sub- regional role with the need to protect the quality of the environment and to minimise car travel;
- (ii) to provide all the citizens of Exeter with a decent home, including those in need of affordable or special housing and those who require executive housing;
- (iii) to make full and effective use of land within the urban area, whilst avoiding town cramming;
- (iv) to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing City centre, district centres and local centres;
- (v) to locate key town centre uses in existing centres which are highly accessible by means other than the private car and where there may be advantages in enabling one journey to serve several purposes;

(vi) to improve the choice of travel mode so that people can walk, cycle or catch public transport, rather than drive, between home and those facilities which they need to visit regularly;

(vii) to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness through high quality design;

(viii) to conserve land and energy resources, reduce pollution and noise, protect the natural and built heritage and contribute to the conservation of the abundance and diversity of wildlife and its habitats.

2.12 Policies AP1 and AP2 provide the basis on which the allocations in the Plan have been made and set out the key tests against which new proposals will be judged.

**AP1: DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE DESIGNED AND LOCATED TO RAISE THE QUALITY OF THE URBAN AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND REDUCE THE NEED FOR CAR TRAVEL. PROPOSALS SHOULD BE LOCATED WHERE SAFE AND CONVENIENT ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING AND CYCLING IS AVAILABLE OR CAN BE PROVIDED.**

**AP2: PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO MEETING DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ON PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED LAND AND WITHIN EXISTING CENTRES. A SEQUENTIAL APPROACH WILL BE APPLIED TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF NEW SITES FOR OFFICE, HOUSING (SEE POLICY H1), RETAIL (SEE POLICY S1) AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE USE.**

## **4.0 HOUSING**

### **Objectives**

- to provide all the members of the community with the opportunity of a decent home;
- to anticipate and provide for housing needs arising from the City's economic growth and its increasing importance as a regional capital;
- to widen housing opportunity and choice, secure a better mix of house types and tenures than is currently available and seek to create mixed and inclusive communities, including providing for those in need of affordable or special housing and those requiring executive housing;
- to maximise the re-use of previously-developed land in the urban area, bring back empty homes into use and promote the conversion of existing buildings;
- to improve accessibility of public transport between homes, jobs, shops, education, health and social care and leisure facilities, local services and local amenities, and to facilitate walking and cycling;
- to promote good design in order to create attractive, high quality living environments in which people will choose to live.

4.1 Over the plan period to 2011 there is likely to be limited population growth in Exeter compared with steady growth in the region around the City. The slow growth in Exeter's population reflects balanced rates of births, deaths, in-migration and emigration. However, this masks the fact that death rates are falling, (resulting in longevity) as are birth rates. Strong in-migration in the 16-24 age group (students and young people leaving rural homes for work and rented accommodation) is more than matched by emigration in the 25-39 age group (qualified people leaving the area for improved work opportunities and young couples leaving the city to bring up families in the country). The biggest growth area is in the middle aged group moving into the City to access the service base and fill skill shortages in the local labour market. The population will, therefore, become dominated by the 16-24 and 45-60 age groups. Overall the population is ageing.

4.2 Changes in the structure of the population are likely to have an impact on housing choice in the years to come. In recognition of this, the Council's Housing Strategy aims to ensure that there are enough well designed and maintained homes for the people of Exeter. The Strategy aims to ensure that the existing housing stock is adapted and improved and an increase in the size of the housing stock is encouraged to provide a range of housing (and support services) of all sizes, types and tenure to meet identified needs.

### **Strategic Guidance**

4.3 The aim of Government policy (Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing) is, that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, there should be greater choice of housing and housing should not reinforce social distinctions. The housing needs of all in the community should be recognised and the focus for additional housing should be existing towns and cities.

4.4 Regional Planning Guidance for the period up to 2016 advises that Exeter should make provision for additional housing to support its enhanced role as a focal point for strategic economic investment. The Structure Plan First Review allocates 6,000 houses to be provided in the City between 1995 and 2011 and advises that maximum advantage should be taken of previously-developed land. Recognising that there is limited capacity within the City to accommodate further growth, a new

community is proposed to the east of the City. The East Devon Local Plan allocates 2,900 dwellings to be provided at the new community by 2011.

### **Location Priorities**

4.5 In accordance with Government guidance the Council has identified sites for development by following a search sequence: starting with the re-use of previously-developed land, conversions and infill within the urban area; followed by previously-developed land on the urban fringe within public transport corridors; and only then, greenfield land through urban extensions within public transport corridors.

4.6 Potential sites have been assessed against the criteria set out in PPG3, Para 31:

- the availability of previously-developed sites and empty or under used buildings;
- the location and accessibility of sites to jobs, shops and services by means other than the car;
- the capacity of existing and potential infrastructure;
- the ability to build communities; and
- the physical and environmental constraints on development of land.

4.7 To reduce the need to travel, the development of housing in areas which are well served by public transport is particularly important. These include the City Centre and areas which are within 400 metres of district centres; or within 400 metres of bus routes connecting to the City Centre which have a minimum of 4 buses per hour running between 8.00 am and 5.45 p.m. on weekdays; or within 800 metres of a rail station/halt with a service at least every half hour.

4.8 Within the core area of the City Centre (see Plan 1), where shopping, employment, and other facilities are within easy walking distance, developers may consider the option of providing housing without off street parking. The experience of recent car free schemes in the City Centre, which have involved the conversion and extension of existing buildings, suggests that few parking difficulties will arise provided that opportunities to park elsewhere are limited by on-street parking restrictions. Occupiers will be excluded from residents parking schemes and should be made aware of the parking limitations before purchase. Provision will still be made for people with disabilities and for deliveries. Opportunities to achieve car free developments will be considered on their merits. A contribution will, however, be sought towards the enhancement of facilities for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.



Plan 1:

Housing Core Area: H2

[Click to see larger image in a pop-up window]

### **Plan 1: Housing Core Area: H2**

4.9 These car free developments offer more space, greater safety, more attractive surroundings, a stronger community focus, less noise and less pollution than conventional housing. They are an option for people who wish to live in an area without the intrusion of private motor vehicles and who are willing to accept the conditions of occupation.

4.10 If an acceptable residential environment can be provided, housing is also possible through the conversion of vacant buildings. This could include historic buildings, office floorspace which is unsuitable for market requirements and space above offices and shops. There is also potential to include housing in new office and retail schemes on upper floors. To ensure maximum flexibility new office buildings should be designed, where practical, to allow subsequent conversion to residential.

4.11 These initiatives will enable increased housing densities to be achieved. In recent years residential development in Exeter has achieved approximately 35 dwellings per hectare gross. Higher densities will be sought through careful and innovative design and proposals which do not maximise the use of limited land resources will not be permitted. Careful design is the key. A proposal which would harm the character of a neighbourhood through excessive density or poor design will be refused. The aim is not to increase densities at any cost but to secure a more sustainable pattern of development, which may include a mix of land uses, whilst retaining the character and quality of the local environment. To achieve this, proposals must accord with the general guidance on development set out in the policies on design, landscape, conservation and the environment.

4.12 The Government (PPG 3: Housing) advises that densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net should be achieved (for definition of net density see glossary). Although a relatively low gross density is achieved on the two major housing sites at Digby and Newcourt, (due to the provision of infrastructure, community facilities and schools), the overall net density of the proposals set out in Policy H3 is between 32 and 37 dwellings per hectare. Site densities will be monitored to ensure that the Plan remains in accordance with PPG3 guidance.

**H1: PROPOSALS FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING SEARCH SEQUENCE:**

- (i) PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED LAND, CONVERSIONS AND INFILL WITHIN THE URBAN AREAS;**
- (ii) PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED LAND ON THE URBAN FRINGE WITHIN PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORRIDORS;**
- (iii) GREENFIELD LAND THROUGH SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSIONS WITHIN PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORRIDORS.**

**H2: PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO MEETING HOUSING NEEDS ON PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED LAND BY APPLYING THE SEARCH SEQUENCE SET OUT IN POLICY H1 AND BY PERMITTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE HIGHEST DENSITY THAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO LOCAL AMENITY, THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE SAFETY OF LOCAL ROADS, WHILST HAVING REGARD TO THE NEED TO PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING PROVISION WHICH IS ACCESSIBLE TO A RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT, SHOPPING, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE, LEISURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES. DEVELOPERS SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- (i) THE PROVISION OF SEMI-DETACHED AND TERRACED HOUSING AND FLATS;**
- (ii) THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFILL AND CORNER SITES;**
- (iii) DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY CENTRE AND IN AREAS WHICH ARE WELL SERVED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT;**
- (iv) DEVELOPMENT OF SITES IN THE CORE AREA OF THE CITY CENTRE WITHOUT PROVISION FOR MOTOR VEHICLE PARKING BUT WITH SECURE CYCLE PARKING FACILITIES, CAR PARKING PROVISION FOR DISABLED PEOPLE AND SPACE FOR DELIVERIES;**
- (v) THE CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS TO FLATS OR BEDSITS;**
- (vi) THE CONVERSION TO RESIDENTIAL USE OF BUILDINGS, WHICH ARE VACANT, UNDER-USED OR IN POOR CONDITION, INCLUDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS, OFFICES AND VACANT FLOORSPEACE ABOVE OFFICES AND SHOPS;**
- (vii) THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW OFFICE BUILDINGS WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO ENABLE SUBSEQUENT CONVERSION TO RESIDENTIAL USE;**
- (viii) THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN UPPER FLOORS OF RETAIL AND OFFICE SCHEMES.**

## **Housing for Disabled People**

4.51 The City Council wishes to ensure that new housing will, as far as is reasonable, contribute to the needs of disabled people and enable them to live as independently as possible in the community. If an increasing proportion of the general housing stock is designed to a standard which makes this possible, it will allow people with disabilities more choice of housing and will make it increasingly unnecessary for people to move if they become less mobile.

4.52 The Housing Needs Survey, carried out for the City Council by Fordham Research (see 4.41 and 4.42), suggests that approximately 5,500 households in the City have at least one person with special needs. The main category of special needs are people with a physical disability and frail elderly households. A joint assessment system set up by the City Council Housing Services and Social Services indicates that there is a pressing need to resolve the housing difficulties of around 150 households, many of whom require wheelchair standard accommodation.

4.53 Changes to Part M of the Building Regulations, which deals with access and facilities for people with disabilities, mean that all new housing should now be built to a certain basic standard. Under the altered regulations new homes must be accessible by people who are disabled and by others, such as parents with children in pushchairs. The amendments now cover safe and convenient access across the threshold as well as the approach to the front door, to ensure that there is a space of a double buggy, wheelchair, stick or crutch user to get past a parked car and into the home.

4.54 The Building Regulations do not, however, require housing to be designed with the potential to be occupied by the 5% of people with severe disabilities and permanently confined to wheelchairs. Such housing generally needs to be on one level and, in addition to easy access, have above average space standards in order to allow for full wheelchair manoeuvre throughout. This means it will be desirable for any occupier, not solely people confined to wheelchairs. The principal features required at the construction stage in order to implement adaptation to full wheelchair standards at a later date are:

- (i) a level or slightly ramped approach and flush threshold at the main entrance;
- (ii) internal planning for wheelchair manoeuvre in all principal rooms;
- (iii) a downstairs bedroom and bathroom or, in a two storey house, a downstairs WC and a straight flight staircase suitable for the installation of a stair or chair lift;
- (iv) bathrooms and toilets large enough to permit lateral transfers from wheelchair to WC/bath and forward transfer from wheelchair to WC.

4.55 As there is an additional cost in providing the more generous than average standards required, it is appropriate that efforts to provide housing for people with disabilities should concentrate on larger schemes. To accord with Policy H6 on affordable housing, this is set at 15 dwellings or more or which have a site area of 0.5 ha or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings. Since 1995 an average of 15 wheelchair homes have either been provided through new development or through adaptations to existing housing stock. To maintain this the Council will aim for 5% of the total dwelling provision on suitably qualifying sites, depending on the site conditions and other planning objectives.

**H7: HOUSING PROPOSALS ON SITES CAPABLE OF YIELDING 15 OR MORE DWELLINGS OR ON SITES OF 0.5 HA OR MORE (IRRESPECTIVE OF THE NUMBER OF DWELLINGS PROPOSED), AND DEVELOPMENTS OF 20 OR MORE HOUSING UNITS WHICH ARE CONVENIENTLY LOCATED FOR SHOPS**



AND SERVICES, SHOULD PROVIDE AN ELEMENT OF HOUSING THAT CAN EASILY BE ADAPTED FOR OCCUPATION BY PEOPLE PERMANENTLY CONFINED TO WHEELCHAIRS. THE SCALE AND TYPE OF PROVISION SOUGHT WILL BE NEGOTIATED TAKING INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL NEED FOR SUCH HOUSING AND SITE CONDITIONS.

### **Protection of Open Space**

7.26 Due to the limited amount of developable land left within the built-up area, open space becomes even more important as spaces between buildings are developed. This includes those green areas not normally available as public open space such as school playing fields (see 7.29 to 7.36), allotments (see 7.44 to 7.46), cemeteries and church grounds. Through this local plan the Council is promoting the development of previously-developed land within the City where it can be satisfactorily accommodated but development which would result in town cramming, especially in areas of open space deficiency, will not be permitted (see 'Provision of Open Space and Children's Play Areas': 13.41 – 13.46 and Policy DG5).

### **L3: DEVELOPMENT ON OPEN SPACE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF:**

- (a) THE LOSS OF OPEN SPACE WOULD NOT HARM THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA; AND**
- (b) THE OPEN SPACE DOES NOT FULFIL A VALUABLE RECREATIONAL, COMMUNITY, ECOLOGICAL OR AMENITY ROLE; AND**
- (c) THERE IS ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE IN THE AREA; OR**
- (d) THE LOSS OF OPEN SPACE IS OUTWEIGHED BY ITS REPLACEMENT IN THE AREA BY OPEN SPACE OF AT LEAST EQUIVALENT RECREATIONAL, COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL OR AMENITY VALUE (INCLUDING, IN PARTICULAR, THE PROVISION AND ENHANCEMENT OF EQUIPPED PLAY SPACE).**

## **Sport and Active Recreation**

7.27 Over recent years considerable improvements have been achieved in facilities for athletics, football, bowls, rugby, tennis and swimming.

7.28 A substantial investment in sports facilities has been made by Exeter University with the intention of becoming a focus for sport locally, regionally and nationally. In particular, the University have provided high quality facilities for cricket, football and rugby at Exeter Road, near Topsham and has established an indoor tennis centre on the Stretham campus, adjacent to the University's sports hall. The City Council recognises the clear economic and social benefits that the University provision will bring to the City and to the region.

## **Playing Fields**

7.29 Playing fields are a significant resource for sport but they are under constant pressure for development. Once developed they are likely to be lost for ever. The Government places particular emphasis on the protection of playing fields and stresses that local authorities should carry out local assessments of demand.

7.30 Accordingly, the existing supply (the current number of pitches) has been compared with the existing expressed demand (number of teams) using as a framework the Playing Pitch Methodology advocated by Sport England and the National Playing Fields Association. Playing fields included in the assessment are not separately identified on the Proposals Map. They fall within the 'Open Space', 'Valley Park' and 'Landscape Setting' designations and are part of school sites.

7.31 The Playing Pitch Methodology makes a distinction between a playing field which is defined as 'the whole of the site which encompasses at least one playing pitch' and a playing pitch which is defined as 'areas reserved and maintained as outdoor playing space principally for formal organised pitch sports (football, cricket, rugby and hockey)'. A playing pitch therefore excludes areas of land which may have an important function as kick about areas and excludes pitches which are too small to be used for formal (league) games. A qualitative assessment is also made, to include factors such as pitch quality, patterns of play, availability and accessibility and the strength of each sport.

7.32 The Playing Pitch Strategy sets out a target for playing pitch provision of 1.21 hectares for every 1,000 people. This is set within the National Playing Fields Association standard for outdoor sport provision (including pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and other sports, but excluding golf and water sports) of 1.6 to 1.8 hectares per 1,000 persons. Included in the standard are facilities owned by local authorities and within the educational sector which, as a matter of policy and practice, are made available for public use, as well as facilities within the voluntary, private, industrial or commercial sectors serving the outdoor recreation needs of their members or the public. In Exeter there are around 133 hectares (329 acres) of outdoor sports provision and approximately 72 hectares (178 acres) of playing pitch provision. The provision in hectares per 1,000 population for both outdoor sports and playing pitches is as follows:

|                          | N.P.F.A<br>standard | Exeter provision |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Outdoor sports provision | 1.6 – 1.8           | 1.18             |
| Playing pitch provision  | 1.21                | 0.64             |

7.33 Overall there appears to be a marginal deficiency with a particular shortfall in Pennsylvania, Duryard, St James, St David's, Newtown, St Leonard's and Polsloe.

Facilities are concentrated in Alphington, Countess Wear and Pinhoe which provides benefits of access and shared facilities. Generally it is not necessary to ensure city wide provision as access and facilities can be shared but facilities for youth games should be as near as possible to the local area of demand.

7.34 The City Council, therefore, aims to:

- protect existing playing fields;
- encourage greater community access to playing fields currently under private or educational ownership;
- encourage improvements to the overall quality of playing fields;
- secure new playing fields and ancillary facilities or enhancements to playing fields, including provision for maintenance, as part of new development so that existing deficiencies are not exacerbated.

7.35 New residential development of 10 or more dwellings, should make new provision based on the Sport England target of 1.2 hectares of playing pitches for every 1,000 people (equivalent to approximately 450 dwellings). This will frequently need to be provided off site, possibly through a commuted payment. In appropriate cases the contribution will be used to enhance the capacity of existing pitches through, for example, provision of ancillary facilities or enhanced drainage. A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared as part of the forthcoming Local Development Framework to advise on how the policies will be applied to improve and protect the City's open space facilities (see also open space requirements: paras 13.41 – 13.46, Policy DG5).

7.36 Proposals for development that would result in the loss of a playing field will be assessed to determine whether the loss would cause harm to recreation opportunities. Examples of where harm would not occur include where:

- (a) the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility which would provide sufficient benefit to outweigh the loss of the playing field; or
- (b) there is an excess of playing field provision in the City and the site has no special significance to the interest of sport; or
- (c) the proposal affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch and does not result in the loss, or prevent the use, of a playing pitch; or
- (d) replacement provision is made of at least equivalent community benefit where it will be reasonably conveniently located to serve the target catchment population.

**L4: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 10 OR MORE DWELLINGS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROVISION OF YOUTH AND ADULT PLAY SPACE (DIRECTLY RELATED TO, AND NECESSARY FOR, THE DEVELOPMENT) HAVING REGARD TO THE TYPE OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED AND CONSIDERED AGAINST A STANDARD LEVEL OF PROVISION OF PLAYING PITCHES OF 1.2 HECTARES FOR EVERY 450 DWELLINGS.**

## **Exeter Sub Regional Transportation Strategy**

9.6 Devon County Council is preparing a transportation strategy for the sub-region centring on Exeter. The strategy will, in particular, consider the importance of growth arising from proposed major developments close to Exeter, in East Devon, i.e. a new community, Exeter Airport expansion and Skypark employment development. This work is taking place in partnership with neighbouring District Councils.

### **Exeter's Transport Strategy**

9.7 In parallel with this work the City Council has reviewed its transport strategy. It is recognised that the radial routes in the City are already at capacity in the peak hours and the resultant congestion affects all vehicles, including buses and commercial traffic. If no action is taken to reduce growth, peak hour traffic congestion will worsen, the peak hours will lengthen and the environmental nuisance and safety issues along rat runs will worsen. The strategy therefore aims to minimise the need for travel and encourage the use of sustainable alternatives, especially public transport.

### **Accessibility to New Development**

9.8 In line with Government policies on sustainable transport, permission for development and transport measures should have regard to the hierarchy of modes which has been expanded from that set out in the Structure Plan. The expanded list recognises the special needs of people with mobility problems, acknowledges that taxis and coaches are a relatively sustainable form of transport and divides car users into different categories, with shoppers and business users having priority over car borne visitors and commuters. In assessing proposals, the nature and location of the development will be taken into account.

9.9 Key to the overall approach is the need to locate development in places that are, or are capable of being, well served by public transport and other sustainable modes. The aim is to ensure that a significant proportion of all journeys attracted to major new non-residential development will be on foot, by cycle or public transport and that residents of housing schemes will be within walking distance of local facilities and, in respect of major schemes, will have access by sustainable transport to a range of other facilities. Schedule 1 provides guidance.

9.10 Transport Assessments should be submitted for all developments with significant transport implications. The coverage and detail of such assessments will depend on the scale of development and the extent of transport implications. Implementation of the proposals arising from the assessments, which may include the provision of new infrastructure, support for bus services, etc. will be secured through planning conditions and planning agreements. For larger developments a travel plan may be required. The DTLR are preparing best practice guidance. The City Council intends to publish further advice on the site threshold for the requirement to submit a transport assessment.

9.11 In some instances it will not be possible to provide facilities from one development alone. In these cases, commuted payments will be sought and pooled to provide facilities. Commuted payments will also be used to enhance existing waiting and information facilities for public transport.

9.12 In general it is expected that developers of peripheral sites will find that they must provide more infrastructure and support for public transport than has previously been required. In contrast, developers of sites in the City Centre will find that their sites are already accessible and little extra will be required to meet the targets.

9.13 The County Council, through its Local Transport Plan, will seek to ensure that the complementary provision of public transport, cycle routes and other measures,

designed to encourage a switch in mode away from the private car, will be implemented in association with new development.

**T1: DEVELOPMENT SHOULD FACILITATE THE MOST SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MODES OF TRANSPORT, HAVING REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING HIERARCHY:**

- 1. PEDESTRIANS**
- 2. PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY PROBLEMS**
- 3. CYCLISTS**
- 4. PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS**
- 5. SERVICING TRAFFIC**
- 6. TAXI USERS**
- 7. COACH BORNE VISITORS**
- 8. POWERED TWO WHEELERS**
- 9. CAR BORNE SHOPPERS**
- 10. CAR BORNE COMMERCIAL/ BUSINESS USERS**
- 11. CAR BORNE VISITORS**
- 12. CAR BORNE COMMUTERS.**

**T2: IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESSIBILITY CRITERIA SET OUT IN SCHEDULE 1: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF A FOOD SHOP AND A PRIMARY SCHOOL AND SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE BY BUS OR RAIL TO EMPLOYMENT, CONVENIENCE AND COMPARISON SHOPPING, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY HEALTH CARE, SOCIAL CARE AND OTHER ESSENTIAL FACILITIES.**

**NON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE AND/OR BY BUS OR RAIL TO A MAJORITY OF ITS POTENTIAL USERS.**

#### **SCHEDULE 1 : ACCESSIBILITY CRITERIA**

##### **WALKING DISTANCES**

| <b>FACILITY</b>         | <b>TARGET DISTANCE</b> | <b>MAXIMUM DISTANCE</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>FOOD SHOP</b>        | <b>500M</b>            | <b>1000M</b>            |
| <b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>   | <b>500M</b>            | <b>1000M</b>            |
| <b>OTHER FACILITIES</b> | <b>750M</b>            | <b>1000M</b>            |
| <b>BUS STOP</b>         | <b>400M</b>            | <b>500M</b>             |
| <b>RAIL STATION</b>     | <b>-</b>               | <b>800M</b>             |

##### **TRAVEL TIMES**

| <b>FACILITY</b>  | <b>PUBLIC TRANSPORT<br/>TRAVEL TIME IN<br/>MINUTES</b> | <b>CAR TRAVEL TIME IN<br/>MINUTES</b> |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>SHOPPING</b>  | <b>30</b>  | <b>20</b>                             |
| <b>EDUCATION</b> | <b>30</b>  | <b>20</b>                             |

FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THE DISTANCES DEFINE THE MAXIMUM WITHIN WHICH FACILITIES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE TRAVEL TIMES DEFINE THE MAXIMUM WITHIN WHICH FACILITIES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ADEQUATELY ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

FOR NON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THE WALKING DISTANCES DEFINE THE PEDESTRIAN CATCHMENT AREA AND THE TRAVEL TIMES DEFINE THE RELATIVE CATCHMENT AREAS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND BY CAR. PUBLIC TRANSPORT TRAVEL TIMES INCLUDE WALKING TIME TO AND FROM STOPS/STATIONS. CAR TRAVEL TIMES INCLUDE WALKING TIME AND PARKING TIME.

FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO BE ADEQUATE IT SHOULD:

- BE ACCESSIBLE WITHIN A REASONABLE WALKING DISTANCE AT BOTH ORIGIN AND DESTINATION ENDS OF JOURNEY;
- OPERATE AT HOURS SUITABLE FOR JOURNEY PURPOSE (I.E. DURING ALL HOURS THAT NON-RESIDENTIAL FACILITY IS OPEN TO USERS, INCLUDING STAFF WORKING HOURS;
- PROVIDE A FREQUENCY OF SERVICE SUITABLE FOR THE JOURNEY PURPOSE, I.E. FREQUENCIES SHOULD CORRESPOND TO EXISTING BEST PRACTICE IN THE AREA WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT IS LOCATED.
- 

SUGGESTED IDEAL FREQUENCIES FOR THE URBAN AREA OF EXETER WOULD BE:

MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS 0700-1900 - 15 MINUTES MINIMUM FREQUENCY

EVENINGS AND SUNDAYS - 30 MINUTES MINIMUM FREQUENCY  
IDEAL FREQUENCIES OF SERVICES OPERATING TO AND FROM OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREA

MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS 0700-1900 - 30 MINUTES MINIMUM FREQUENCY

EVENINGS AND SUNDAYS - 60 MINUTES MINIMUM FREQUENCY

## **Encouraging Use of Sustainable Modes**

9.14 Developers will be expected to safeguard the existing or proposed cycle and pedestrian networks. Opportunities should be taken to provide new and enhanced routes to local shops, schools, places of work and other key destinations so that users are encouraged to walk and cycle rather than drive. Routes should be of good quality, direct and comfortable. Appropriate cycle parking must be provided within developments. Schedule 2 provides guidance. These standards distinguish between the need for secure long stay parking for employees and short stay cycle parking for visitors. Where more than 20 people are employed facilities for washing and changing should be provided. Development which does not adequately provide for the pedestrian or cyclist will not be acceptable.

9.15 The layout of new development is crucial if car dependency is to be reduced and the use of public transport encouraged. Provision in large developments must be made for buses to run through or alongside the site with good pedestrian connections. Developers will be expected to provide facilities for bus travel such as carriageways of sufficient width, bus lay-bys, turning circles and bus shelters. Where appropriate, access to rail stations should be maximised and, in some cases, new rail stations should be provided in consultation with the train operating companies and the Strategic Rail Authority or successor authority.

9.16 The particular needs of people with disabilities also needs to be catered for. Convenient parking spaces should be identified so that employees and visitors are able to park close to their destinations. Dropped kerbs and ramps may also be needed to link parking/drop off points with the entrance to the development.

### **T3: DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LAID OUT AND LINKED TO EXISTING OR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS AND FACILITIES IN WAYS THAT WILL MAXIMISE THE USE OF SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRANSPORT. PROPOSALS SHOULD ENSURE THAT:**

- (a) ALL EXISTING AND PROPOSED WALKING AND CYCLE ROUTES ARE SAFEGUARDED OR THAT ALTERNATIVE REASONABLY CONVENIENT ROUTES ARE PROVIDED;**
- (b) SUITABLE CYCLE PARKING PROVISION IS PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STANDARDS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE 2;**
- (c) WHERE MORE THAN 20 PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED FACILITIES FOR SHOWERING AND CHANGING ARE PROVIDED;**
- (d) FULL ACCOUNT IS TAKEN OF THE NEEDS OF BUS OPERATION THROUGH AND ALONGSIDE NEW DEVELOPMENT BY THE PROVISION OF LAY-BYS, ROADS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED FACILITIES;**
- (e) WHERE APPROPRIATE, PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING LINKS ARE PROVIDED TO EXISTING OR PROPOSED RAIL STATIONS;**
- (f) THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.**



## **Archaeology**

10.24 Archaeological remains are a finite, non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. They occur in the form of below ground remains and upstanding structures and range from the earliest evidence of exploitation of the land by prehistoric man through to the fortification and civil defence sites of the last World War. In character they vary enormously, and are often only initially visible to the specialist eye.

10.25 Before and since the last war, important discoveries have been made in Exeter, not just of well known sites, such as the Roman Legionary Bathhouse and the Medieval Danes Castle, but also on smaller sites which all help to piece together the jig-saw of the City's long history. As well as archaeological remains below the surface, these discoveries have included new information about well known monuments, such as the City Wall and Cathedral, and details of important remains in both listed and unlisted buildings.

10.26 Although the individual discoveries may not always be spectacular in themselves, the overall result has been significantly to increase knowledge of Exeter's heritage and to provide a permanent public record of remains which have been destroyed by development and other works. This has contributed to the display and interpretation of Exeter's heritage to the public, and this process is expected to continue by incorporating archaeology into several of the Council's future tourism, environmental enhancement and regeneration programmes. Where substantial features of particular archaeological or historic importance are exposed by redevelopment, the Council will, therefore, seek to ensure that these are retained in situ and, where possible, can be viewed by the public.

10.27 Exeter's historic core has been designated as an Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) under Part II of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, one of only 5 such areas in England and Wales. The AAI comprises an area (covering much of the City Centre - see Plan 4) which is known to have been intensively settled in Roman and Medieval times. Designation confers upon those undertaking operations which involve the flooding, tipping on, or disturbance of the ground, the legal duty of giving six weeks prior notice of the commencement of these operations to the City Council. It is an offence to carry out such operations without first giving notice, although there are some exemptions. Under the terms of the Act, the appointed Investigating Authority (Exeter Archaeology) has the statutory right to enter, survey and excavate sites for a period of up to four months and two weeks after the expiry of the six week notice period. Where such operations occur on Council owned land, the Council would expect those undertaking them to meet the cost of the archaeological works.



Plan 4:

Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) C5

[Click to see larger image in a pop-up window]

#### **Plan 4: Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) C5**

10.28 Although the AAI highlights an area of particular intensive remains, many important remains also survive outside the AAI. Policy C5 and the approach set out in 10.31 – 10.33 will be applied in accordance with the relative importance of the known or potential remains on a development site, whether or not it lies within the AAI.

10.29 In Exeter, as elsewhere, certain archaeological sites and structures of national importance are scheduled as Ancient Monuments under Part 1 of the 1979 Act. At present, there are 20 such monuments in the City Council area (see Appendix 3). Scheduled Monument Consent is required to carry out any works which may affect them (including repairs, disturbance to the ground, flooding and tipping. Works which would adversely affect their character and setting are not permitted. Other structures are listed and are subject to listed building controls.

10.30 In addition, there are many other important remains within the City Centre which are not currently scheduled and outside the City Centre there are other known remains and areas of archaeological and historic interest such as the historic cores of Alphington, Pinhoe, Heavitree and Topsham. Information on these is available on maps and databases held by Devon County Council for the outer areas (Sites and Monuments Register) and by Exeter City Council for the City Centre. (Urban Archaeological Database.) There will also be many further important remains which are presently undiscovered, some of which will lie outside the known sites and areas of interest.

10.31 In accordance with government guidance, developers will be required to submit an archaeological assessment and/ or field evaluation report with applications for planning permission where known or potential archaeological remains are likely to be affected by the proposed development. These help to define the character, extent, depth and quality of such remains and thus indicate the weight which ought to be attached to their preservation. The Council will require developers to incorporate the results of these studies into their proposals, so that important remains are preserved in situ, through, for example, the careful siting of buildings and sensitive design of

foundations. This approach will also apply to currently undiscovered sites and areas of interest which will emerge after the publication and adoption of this Plan.

10.32 Where the disturbance or destruction of some archaeological remains, normally those of lesser importance, is considered acceptable or unavoidable, appropriate recording works will be ensured through agreements and through attaching conditions to planning permissions and listed building consents. As well as site work, this will include the compilation of an indexed archive record and the submission of a report, that may, where the quality of the remains merit it, involve the full popular and academic publication of the results and public display and interpretation.

10.33 In common with England's other historic cities, it is intended that the Sites and Monuments Register and the Urban Archaeological Database (see 10.30) will form the basis of an Historic Environment Strategy. This will be published, and will contain guidance on how the historic environment of the City can and should be utilised and managed – in the context of new development and as a visitor and cultural resource.

**C5: DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH WOULD CAUSE HARM TO A SITE, MONUMENT OR STRUCTURE OF NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE, WHETHER SCHEDULED OR UNSCHEDULED, OR WHICH WOULD CAUSE HARM TO ITS SETTING. PROPOSALS SHOULD PRESERVE NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SITU AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR ENHANCEMENT AND DISPLAY.**

**WHERE THE PROPOSAL WILL AFFECT REMAINS OF REGIONAL OR LOCAL IMPORTANCE, THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING THE REMAINS IN SITU WILL BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT.**

**IF PRESERVATION IN SITU IS NOT FEASIBLE OR APPROPRIATE THE DEVELOPER MUST UNDERTAKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING WORKS IN ACCORDANCE WITH A SCHEME TO BE AGREED IN ADVANCE.**

## **11.0 LANDSCAPE SETTING AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

### **Objectives**

- to protect the features and characteristics of the countryside which form the setting of the City and which establish its distinctive identity;
- to protect sites and features of nature conservation importance.

11.1 Exeter is a relatively small City with strong rural connections and a long established character. Out of a total area of 4,718 hectares, approximately half is outside the built-up area. As the City has grown the establishment of the Valley Parks and protection of the countryside on the urban fringe, through the Local Plan, has effectively integrated the rural setting with the urban area. The hills to the north and west of the City, particularly the ridgelines, give Exeter a distinctive character. The green wedges which separate Topsham and Pinhoe from the main urban area, which separate the east and west of the City along the riverside and which separate areas within the City, help to define the uniqueness of each part of the City.

11.2 The importance of ecological considerations in the environment is widely recognised. Ecology is concerned with the relationship between the activities of plant and animal life and the interests of man. As the City expands, the natural habitats of the City must be protected.

### **Strategic Guidance**

11.3 The Government's objectives in rural areas (Planning Policy Statement 7 : Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) are to raise the quality of life; and the environment; promote more sustainable patterns of development; develop competitive, diverse and thriving rural enterprise; and promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agricultural sectors. Building in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or from areas allocated for development in the Local Plan, should be strictly controlled. Regional Planning Guidance also points to the relationship between the region's environment and its economic health. The Guidance emphasises the need to safeguard and enhance the quality and diversity of the natural environment. The Structure Plan advises that the quality of Devon's landscape and its distinctive local characteristics, together with the biodiversity and earth science resource of the County's natural environment, should be maintained and enhanced.

### **Landscape Setting**

11.4 The Council has carried out a landscape appraisal of all open countryside in and around the City. Based on this appraisal, open land is identified which is to be protected from development because of its intrinsic merit and its contribution to the distinctive landscape setting of the City.

11.5 The continuous nature and sheer size of hills to the north are of major landscape significance, providing the largest and most important part of the landscape setting and containment of the City, which is so essential to its character. The hills extend for 5 kilometres east to west and represent about one eighth of the City Council area outside the urban limit. Although physically separated, this area continues west of the River Exe Valley to include the hills to the north and west of Exwick. Together with the lower lying land of the adjoining valleys of the River Exe, Culm and Clyst, the landscape also forms an integral part of the wider rural scene. By containing the urban area, the hills, which are themselves intrinsically attractive, preserve the pastoral landscape of a large part of East Devon. The links with the Valley Parks (see 7.7-7.22) enhance their value by bringing the countryside well into the built- up area of the City.

11.6 Between the motorway and Hill Barton Road is attractive open farm land, rolling north and south of a central ridgeline, which provides visual links to the hills and open countryside beyond the City to the north and east and serves to maintain the separate identity and setting of Monkerton, Pinhoe and Hill Barton.

11.7 On the opposite side of the City the land between Cleve House and Whitestone Cross is similarly dominated by a ridgeline that is an integral part of the hilly countryside to the west of Exeter and which forms an attractive rural boundary to the densely developed residential areas.

11.8 The open flattish, agricultural and horticultural land comprising large fields and low hedges between Countess Wear and Topsham, might be considered of less obvious interest but it is of significant local importance in clearly separating the settlements of Exeter and Topsham and maintaining their distinct identities. The attractive rural landscape of small fields, hedgerows and copses to the north and east of Topsham provides the essential green setting to the historic settlement of Topsham. Both these areas contribute to, and are an integral part of, the wider rural landscape of East Devon and ensure the south eastern containment of the City.

11.9 Open land to the south and south-east of Alphington and the southern part of Matford Marshes comprise three inter-related areas of distinct character. The flat, open, low-lying, arable and pasture land of Matford Marshes provides a visual link between the wider flood plain to the south-east and the Matford Brook Valley. By contrast, the adjoining Knowle Hill, with its steeply wooded and arable slopes, is a major landscape feature marking the southern approach to the City. Just beyond Knowle Hill, the land that defines the southern boundary of Alphington is modern arable farmland which rises up to the Markham Lane ridge, enhancing the setting of Alphington and of the City.

11.10 Complementing these areas, and forming an important part of Exeter's landscape setting, are the seven Valley Parks and Stoke Woods (see 7.7 – 7.23).

11.11 The appraisal above demonstrates that the open land around Exeter performs a variety of roles including the separation of settlements, maintaining distinct identities and enabling informal recreation. It contains high quality agricultural land and land of nature conservation importance. Overall, it contains land of intrinsic landscape merit which provides the setting for the City as a whole and for local areas. It is the combination of these roles and qualities and their relationship with, and importance to, the population of the adjoining urban area which establishes the unique nature of this land compared to the wider countryside and merits its protection from inappropriate development.

11.12 Development in these areas will not be permitted unless it maintains local distinctiveness and character. Local distinctiveness is that which sets a locality apart from anywhere else. Acceptable uses will be concerned with agriculture or forestry, the change of use, conversion or appropriate extension of buildings or the provision of infrastructure. The Council wishes to encourage rural enterprise and will allow for the re-use or adaptation of agricultural, horticultural and other rural buildings for new uses, providing their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings and the landscape quality of the area is protected. Active outdoor recreation will also be permitted, subject to certain safeguards (see 11.14).

11.13 Park and ride plays a very important part in the Council's transportation strategy and can have a significant impact on reducing the environmental effects of road traffic. Whilst park and ride sites should not normally be sited on greenfield and should, ideally, be provided as part of other development proposals, they need to be located on or close to the major radial routes. The need to complete a ring of park and ride

sites around the City may, therefore, require greenfield to be considered. The loss of such land must be balanced against the environmental advantages of the park and ride strategy. Its release would be treated as an exception which would not represent a precedent for the development of other land nearby.

11.14 Proposals for active outdoor recreation will be dependant on establishing that harm would not be caused to the character or amenity of the area, particularly by the nature, scale, extent, frequency or timing of the recreational activity, including the impact of noise. For example, keeping horses as stock is a normal rural land use but developing an area for outdoor recreation where the horses may be used, such as a dressage ring, riding school or facilities for regular events, may impact on the landscape through the provision of car parks, public toilets or information centres. The extent and visual impact of landforming works, including the formation of playing surfaces, terraces or mounding and the planting of trees, needs to be planned with care. Built development should only be included if it is necessary to facilitate the proposal such as a changing room associated with a playing field, and is designed to maintain local distinctiveness and character although the benefit of the recreational activity will be weighed against the harm to the character and amenity of the area. If the principle of the proposal is acceptable the impact of traffic in the landscape should be reduced by ensuring that the development is accessible by a choice of means of transport.

11.15 Policy LS1 complements Structure Plan policy C014, which states that the use of the best and most versatile agricultural land for any form of development not associated with agriculture or forestry should only be permitted where there is an over-riding need for development in that location which outweighs the need to protect such land.

11.16 The safeguarding of mineral deposits is achieved through the identification of Mineral Consultation Areas in the Minerals Local Plan prepared by the County Council. This provides for the City Council to consult simultaneously with the County Council and the minerals industry when planning applications are received for non-mineral development in the area. The Consultation Areas at Pinhoe and Bishops Court are identified on the Proposals Map to indicate that the Council will apply Structure Plan policy MN1 which aims to safeguard mineral deposits from unnecessary sterilisation by surface development.

11.17 At Pinhoe the County Council have made it clear that the area identified beyond the land with planning permission for mineral working is regarded as a buffer zone and it is unlikely that further planning permission for mineral working would be granted. Since the City Council would oppose all forms of development in the buffer zone it is identified within the Green Area. The land with planning permission at Pinhoe and the rock face adjacent to the Quarry entrance at Bishops Court are both designated as Regionally Important Geological Sites (see 11.30).

**LS1: DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD HARM THE LANDSCAPE SETTING OF THE CITY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. PROPOSALS SHOULD MAINTAIN LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS AND CHARACTER AND:**

- (a) BE REASONABLY NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, THE RURAL ECONOMY, OUTDOOR RECREATION OR THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE; OR**

**(b) BE CONCERNED WITH CHANGE OF USE, CONVERSION OR  
EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS:**

**ANY BUILT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH OUTDOOR RECREATION  
MUST BE ESSENTIAL TO THE VIABILITY OF THE PROPOSAL UNLESS THE  
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY PROVIDES SUFFICIENT BENEFIT TO OUTWEIGH  
ANY HARM TO THE CHARACTER AND AMENITY OF THE AREA.**

## **Biodiversity**

11.18 Exeter contains a rich variety of wildlife habitats. This appears to be due to a fortunate combination of geology/topography and geography combined with enlightened protection and enhancement. Exeter is built around a series of valleys. This has meant that the valley sides and ridgelines have often, due to their steepness, remained undeveloped, while the valley flood plains have remained clear of development for flood defence reasons. In addition, some areas of farmland have become isolated, within the City, from neighbouring farmland and have been 'overlooked' in the trend to intensification that has affected the vast majority of farmland in England in the past 40 years. In more recent years the City Council has recognised the recreational and wildlife value of these areas and has designated them for protection and conservation in the local plan.

11.19 There is often a close relationship to be found between the landscape quality of a locality and its wildlife value. This is because wildlife value is intimately linked to habitat type which, in turn, has a major influence upon landscape type.

11.20 Nature conservation and the protection and creation of a healthy natural environment is beneficial in many ways. A diverse and healthy natural environment is good for people, local communities, social stability and the economy. Benefits include:

- scientific study;
- community access;
- educational use;
- improving the character of the area;
- enjoyment by the general public of nature conservation sites (except where access would be detrimental to key wildlife interests);
- non-participatory benefit - i.e. the benefit/pleasure to be gained from just knowing that a site, feature or species is present in an area and that it can be visited/experienced;
- economic investment - e. g. the relocation of employers to a city with an attractive environment, or the benefits of 'green' tourism.

11.21 The Government and the International Community recognises local authorities as key players in the delivery of the United Kingdom's bio-diversity objectives. These objectives and targets are set out in the series of 'nested' national, regional and local reports and biodiversity action plans that have been produced by the Government and non-government agencies. The objectives and targets set out in these documents will inform the actions of Exeter City Council in determining its priorities and provision of resources for nature conservation.

## **Protected Sites**

11.22 Government guidance (Planning Policy Guidance Note 9: Nature Conservation) stresses the importance of both statutory (international and national) and non-statutory (local interest) sites - where the local sites have substantive nature conservation value. Both these types of site are found in Exeter.

11.23 The Exe Estuary is designated as an internationally important wetland area under the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands and also as a Special Protection Area under the EC Birds Directive. The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 apply to such sites. There are 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Exeter, designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – the Exe Estuary, Stoke Woods and Bonhay Road. The Countryside Rights of Way Act of 2000 also applies to SSSIs.

11.24 The designation of sites of local interest has been based on the results of



wildlife surveys of Exeter undertaken by English Nature (formerly the Nature Conservancy Council) and Exeter City Council. Some of these sites have, in liaison with English Nature, been designated as Local Nature Reserves. Others will be designated.

(i) Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) - these sites have nature conservation value at a Regional/County or City level. In addition to the sites shown on the Proposals Map, they include the City Wall and the Local Rail Network. Topsham Quay is included in the list of SNCIs identified because a nationally rare plant, the Smaller Tree-Mallow, is found there. Land on the eastern side of Ludwell Valley Park, north of the Southbrook estate and the West of England School, is also included in the list of SNCIs because of the presence of Cirl Buntings. The Cirl Bunting is protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is also in the UK Biodiversity Steering Group Middle List of globally threatened/declining species.

(ii) Sites of Local Interest for Nature Conservation (SLINCs) - these sites have nature conservation value at a local level within the City. Their importance is influenced by the proximity of residential or community facilities and their accessibility (actual or potential) to people. In other words their value is derived from a combination of, usually moderate, wildlife interest and the community value of the site. The City Council intend to publish further guidance containing details of the location, extent and nature conservation interest of the SLINCs. The SLINCs are shown on the Proposals Map but, for clarity, are also identified on Plan 5.

11.25 The identification and evolution of locations, features and species that are significant to biodiversity in Exeter is an ongoing process. A new survey of wildlife sites in Exeter has been carried out by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre. This is likely to result in changes to SNCI and SLINC boundaries. These changes will be considered through the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

11.26 The site protection policies are subject to weighting. Since exceptions to the protection of sites of international or national importance for nature conservation are likely to be extremely rare in Exeter, there is no need to provide local plan guidance on such circumstances.

11.27 Locally important sites are normally accorded less weight but can be just as valuable, on the local scale, as a nationally important site is on the national scale. Within urban areas, local sites can take on an enhanced value due to the relative scarcity of wildlife sites and the fact that they are often close to large areas of population, community facilities and schools - thus there is the potential for the site to be well used and yield a larger 'sum-total' of amenity/recreational/educational value than a similar site that is located away from a populated area. Where development is proposed that would affect a local site, it will be assessed against the particular nature conservation value of the site. Developers may be required to provide ecological survey information. If permission is granted it will be subject to conditions or planning obligations which seek to minimise the impact and ensure that effective mitigation and compensatory measures are carried out. Features of nature conservation importance can also be protected through the establishment of buffer zones.

11.28 Permitted development rights can be removed by the imposition, by the Secretary of State, of a direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. This can be an important tool in the

control of development that is potentially damaging to sites, particularly non statutory, of nature conservation value.



Plan 5:  
Sites of Local Interest for Nature Conservation LS4

[Click to see larger image in a pop-up window]

### **Plan 5: Sites of Local Interest for Nature Conservation LS4**

#### **Protected Species**

11.29 Certain species are specifically protected through a hierarchy of legislation. European Priority Species and European Protected Species are listed in the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994. This would for example, include bats and otters. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) gives various degrees of protection to certain animals and plants. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 offers specific protection to badgers and their setts. All species that fall into the above categories are a material consideration. In addition, the City Council will treat materially the presence of any species that are listed on National/Regional/Local Biodiversity Action Plan lists. Applicants may be required to provide survey information. In view of the level of protection afforded through legislation there is no need for Local Plan policy guidance.

#### **Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)**

11.30 These are sites which are of scientific or educational value either because they contain finite or limited deposits or landforms that are irreplaceable if destroyed or, because they provide exposures of a deposit which are plentiful or extensive but underground. The designation of RIGS is one way of recognising and protecting important earth science and landscape features for future generations. The Proposals Map shows currently identified RIGS but it is likely that other RIGS will be identified.

#### **Features/Wildlife Corridors/Stepping Stones**

11.31 Regulation 37 of the Habitats Regulations 1994, provides guidance on the protection and management of features of importance for nature conservation. The aim is to protect and manage such features that are present in the area and to protect nature conservation (wildlife) corridors, links and 'stepping stones' between any features, and sites of nature conservation value, in order to prevent

fragmentation of nature conservation sites.

11.32 Guidance on the features that may be relevant in a locality can be obtained from English Nature's Area Nature Conservation Profile. This includes active corridors, flood-plain, rivers, streams, their banks and flood plains, ancient trees, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, wetlands, canals and ponds, ditches, copses, reedbeds, ancient woodland, species rich grasslands, grazing marsh, seasonally flooded fields and urban habitats.

11.33 Appropriate management of these features will be encouraged generally, and particularly by the imposition of conditions on planning permissions, the use of planning obligations and by entering into management agreements with landowners and developers where appropriate.

11.34 Particular regard will be given to the protection of wildlife corridors through and around the City and linking areas within the City to the countryside beyond. Wildlife corridors act as routes for animals (mammals, birds, insects) and plants and may provide a valuable role in conserving wildlife in the City. They provide valuable 'highways' to urban areas thus effectively ensuring that several small habitats become one large overall habitat. They may help prevent loss of specialisation and diversity associated with small isolated habitats. They form essential stepping-stones for the dispersal and mixing of genetic diversity.

11.35 Wildlife corridors are significant on different 'scales' within the City. On a City-wide scale the River Exe and adjoining land either side connects the countryside on the north of Exeter with the marshes and estuary to the south, while sub-links along rivers, streams, their banks and floodplains and green spaces (in a herringbone fashion) allow wildlife to disperse throughout the City. At the other end of the scale a length of hedgerow might be particularly important in allowing wildlife to move from a piece of woodland to an area of residential gardens. Exeter also has several streams which dissect the City. These have existing value and have considerable scope for enhancement.

11.36 The value of wildlife corridors encompasses more than just the movement of wildlife. They can, and usually are, significant landscape and amenity features in their own right and contribute towards the greening of the City and the quality of life of residents and visitors.

### **Mitigation and Compensation**

11.37 If development is likely to cause damage or degradation to a habitat or feature of nature conservation importance, mitigation and compensation measures will be considered. These measures will be based on an assessment of the effect that the development will have on the beneficial attributes associated with the habitat or feature. For example, damage to a particular habitat could result in the loss of species and assemblages of ecological communities, loss of amenity value that these assemblages provide to visitors and the local community, loss of an important landscape feature or loss of flood prevention capacity if a wetland area is damaged.

11.38 Mitigation is concerned with minimising the damage if development were to be carried out. This might include avoiding development on certain parts of the site or protecting habitats or features by suitable fencing, bunding or any other measures such as buffer zones around water courses and wetlands. Compensation is concerned with replacing habitats or features where development will cause their loss. The assessment of any mitigation or compensation should be based upon the likely success of any measures being able to suitably protect or recreate the habitat in question. Where mitigation or compensation is required, measures should include long term funding for the management and enhancement of any retained or

replacement habitat or features.

11.39 Existing valuable habitats and features, along with their attributes, will often have taken a very long time to develop. It may, in practice, be impossible to fully recreate habitats or features that are lost and/or it could take a considerable period of time for a replacement habitat to develop and attain the previous values that the habitat enjoyed. For example, if an area of ancient woodland were to be damaged or destroyed by development, then the mitigation for the loss of the ecological, amenity and landscape value could be attempted by creating a new woodland in another location but it would take many hundreds of years for the new woodland to attain the attributes that the old woodland enjoyed. In order to adequately compensate for the loss, the developer would be required to create a woodland which is considerably larger than the original woodland. This larger area would, more quickly, develop an equivalent amenity and landscape value and the larger size would assist in the development of biological diversity.

**LS2: DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HARM THE INTEGRITY OF A RAMSAR SITE, SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA OR SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION, OR WHICH CONFLICTS WITH THE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR SUCH A SITE, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.**

**LS3: DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HARM THE WILDLIFE OR GEOLOGICAL INTEREST OF A SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.**

**LS4: DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HARM A SITE OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE OR A SITE OF LOCAL INTEREST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION OR A REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL/GEOMORPHOLOGICAL SITE OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES WHICH ARE OF IMPORTANCE FOR WILD FAUNA OR FLORA, OR WILDLIFE CORRIDORS, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF:**

**(a) THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT IS SUFFICIENT TO OUTWEIGH NATURE CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS; AND**

**(b) THE EXTENT OF ANY DAMAGING IMPACT IS KEPT TO A MINIMUM AND APPROPRIATE MITIGATION AND COMPENSATORY MEASURES ARE IMPLEMENTED.**

## **Air and Water Quality**

12.7 Good air quality is important for sustaining human health. It is also an indicator of broader environmental quality. Poor air quality can directly damage flora, fauna and buildings and have significant adverse affects on soil and water. Emissions from industry and road transport, in particular, are major causes of pollution. Government guidance on the linkages between air quality considerations and the planning process are set out in the DETR report 'Air Quality and Land Use Planning'. This draws attention to guidance on air quality in PPG's 4, 6, 13 and 23.

12.8 The Council is required, under Section 82 of the Environment Act 1995, to undertake a review and assessment of air quality in the City, within the context of national air quality objectives, and to prepare a local air quality strategy. The Council will ensure that the proposals in this Local Plan are closely linked to, and complementary with, the air quality strategy.

12.9 In particular, the Plan aims to ensure that:

- (i) the siting of industrial development will not cause pollution or harm;
- (ii) there is no increase in the potential for harm by the location of residential or other sensitive developments in areas where they are likely to be affected by environmental pollution;
- (iii) all development takes air quality considerations fully into account;
- (iv) transport measures are introduced which reduce reliance on the private car.

12.10 Water is an essential resource, the pollution of which can have a serious affect on drinking water supply, and on industrial and agricultural practices. The general amenity, water based recreation and conservation value of areas is also reduced by water pollution. There are a number of potential sources of water pollution, including:

- inadequately treated effluent from sewage/waste treatment works, trade premises, industrial processes, mineral extraction;
- inadequate foul or surface water drainage provision;
- inappropriate and/or uncontrolled redevelopment of contaminated land;
- inappropriate storage of materials, particularly oils and chemicals;
- agricultural activities;
- uncontrolled contaminated surface water run-off from industrial, housing or road development.

12.11 Areas where contamination of surface water or groundwater is possible, should be bunded or otherwise isolated from general drainage. Provision for drainage from these areas should be subject to an appropriate control measure such as a well maintained oil-trap.

12.12 The Environment Agency and South West Water favour the use of separated systems for foul and surface water drainage as this prevents the overloading of sewerage works with surface water during storm events. The overloading of sewerage works caused by combined foul and surface water sewers is a source of river pollution and an important limit to improving river quality. New development should include separated systems as a matter of course, including consideration of additional works elsewhere in the sewerage catchment area to generate sufficient foul sewerage capacity at sewerage works where such capacity is a limiting factor on development.

**EN3: DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HARM AIR OR WATER QUALITY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS MITIGATION MEASURES ARE POSSIBLE AND ARE INCORPORATED AS PART OF THE PROPOSAL.**

## **Flood Risk**

12.13 Flood plains are areas of land alongside watercourses over which water flows in times of flood, or would flow but for the presence of defences. Flood plains perform the essential function of storing water during flood events. Extensive flood defence works have been carried out in Exeter. The '1999 Indicative Floodplain Maps' published by the Environment Agency, can be inspected at the City Council's Planning Services, Civic Centre.

12.14 The effectiveness of rivers and flood plains to convey and store flood water, and minimise flood risk, can be adversely affected by human activity especially by development which physically changes the flood plain. As well as increasing the risk of flooding and impeding works to reduce flood risk, this can destroy the ecological and archaeological value of the land and break-up linear habitats such as river corridors.

12.15 The Government (Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: Development and Flood Risk) advises that planning decisions should apply the precautionary principle to the issue of flood risk, avoiding such risk where possible and managing it elsewhere. In exercising control over development and providing guidance on the growth of the City, the Council, therefore, aims to ensure:

- (i) that the effectiveness of flood plains is not impaired by development;
- (ii) that development and its occupiers are not at risk from flooding;
- (iii) that additional surface water run-off from new developments does not exceed the capacity of water courses and flood plains downstream.

12.16 Where development is proposed on a site suspected of being at risk from flooding, or where development may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere but adequate flood risk information is unavailable, the developers should carry out an assessment of flood-risk and the run-off implications of their proposals that is appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks involved. Such assessments may require detailed hydrological investigation to determine the risk in order to inform the process of detailed design, the selection of mitigation measures and the overall assessment of the viability of the project in the light of the risk assessment. Where there is overriding justification for development in a flood plain, adequate flood protection and mitigation measures, which may include raising property floor levels above an appropriate flood level, must be funded and built by the developer.

12.17 Development of greenfield sites usually results in an increase in the amount of impermeable land. This can alter the natural water cycle as rates and volumes of surface water reaching a watercourse generally increase. Surface water from impermeable areas is generally conveyed by drains and sewers directly or via a sewerage system to a watercourse.

12.18 Such arrangements not only reduce the natural recharge of ground water, which wastes a valuable resource and increases pollution risk but can also increase river flows. Increased river flows can cause physical damage to the banks and bed of the watercourse and increase the risk of flooding. A reduction in groundwater recharge from such developments can also reduce local water tables that may be important for sustaining local landscape and wildlife resources such as ponds, streams, trees and wetland vegetation.

12.19 PPG25 recommends the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to control surface water run-off as close to its origin as possible, before it enters a watercourse. This involves moving away from traditional piped drainage systems to those which mimic natural drainage processes. The core of the SUDS approach

involves reducing the quantity of run-off from a site; slowing the velocity of run-off settlement; filtering and infiltration through the use of engineering structures such as swales, detention ponds, infiltration basins, soakaways and porous surfaces; and providing passive treatment such as reed beds to collected surface water before discharge into land or a watercourse. The benefits are reduced implementation costs, reduced overall flood risks and better control of pollution from urban run-off.

12.20 The integration of SUDS into the overall site concept and layout should be considered early in the planning and design stage, in consultation with the Environment Agency, the City Council and the Devon County Highways Authority. Where risks are identified, appropriate flow attenuation facilities or mitigation measures and their ongoing maintenance may be a prerequisite for development.

#### **EN4: DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IF:**

- (a) IT WOULD INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF FLOODING**
  - (i) BY REDUCING THE CAPACITY OF, OR INCREASING FLOWS WITHIN, A FLOOD PLAIN, OR**
  - (ii) THROUGH THE DISCHARGE OF ADDITIONAL SURFACE WATER, OR**
  - (iii) BY HARMING FLOOD DEFENCES;**
- (b) IT WOULD BE AT RISK ITSELF FROM FLOODING;**
- (c) IT WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC FINANCE FOR FLOOD DEFENCE WORKS;**
- (d) ADEQUATE PROVISION IS NOT MADE FOR ACCESS TO WATERCOURSES FOR MAINTENANCE;**
- (e) IT WOULD THREATEN FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE OR WILDLIFE IMPORTANCE BY REDUCING THE RECHARGE OF LOCAL WATER TABLES.**

## **13.0 DESIGN GUIDANCE**

### **Objectives**

- to promote good design in all development proposals

13.1 Exeter is the regional capital of the south west and is a city of great character and historic interest. It is important to the City's economy and culture that this character and interest is conserved. Equally important is the need to encourage confident innovation so that high quality places of contemporary character are created which will stand the test of time. Safe solutions, designed to 'fit in' have their place but can lead to missed opportunities for excellence, perpetuating the ordinary and making little contribution to the development of Exeter as a vital and viable centre. New development should therefore be informed by a clear understanding of the historic and archaeological importance of the City and the evolution of its townscape and architecture.

13.2 This policy guidance is based on the DETR document 'By Design – Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice'. The policies have an urban theme and it is expected that development should enhance and create urban character.

### **Objectives of Urban Design**

13.3 Government policy for urban areas has developed from the Rogers report "Towards an Urban Renaissance". This recognises that regeneration of our urban areas should be design led and that development should be considered within its wider economic and social context. Cities, rather than just individual sites, need to be well designed and compact with good connections between individual parts. Each proposal for development should contribute to creating a healthy and vibrant urban environment.

13.4 Development should create the following:

Character - a place with its own identity.

Proposals should be based on a clearly articulated design concept. Local variations in layout, form and materials should be reinforced. Land use and layout as well as materials contribute to distinctiveness. Where little character of note exists development may create new distinctiveness.

Enclosure – townscape where spaces are clearly defined.

Good enclosure by buildings or landscape elements is essential. Spaces with clear identity such as streets and squares should be created.

Quality public realm – well designed, well used outdoor areas.

Development should be understood as place making – promoting spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and which work for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.

Ease of movement – a place that is easy and safe to get to and move through.

Places that work well have a network of streets and pedestrian links which make it easy to move safely from one place to another, particularly by foot or by bicycle. New development should provide safe and attractive links, recognising desire lines and putting people before traffic.

Legibility – a place with a clear image that is easy to understand.

The "legible city" is one where development creates clearly recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks. Well designed corner buildings, landscape features and public art all help people find their way around without having to rely overly on signs.

Adaptability – a place that can change easily.



Cities need to be able to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions by allowing buildings and spaces which may have a variety of possible uses. Offices, for example, should be readily convertible to residential use and public spaces should be able to accommodate pedestrian movement, entertainment, markets, displays, etc.

Diversity – a place with variety and choice.

Developments should promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible uses that work together to create viable places, which limit reliance on vehicle transport and which promote local services.

## **Design Principles**

13.5 To achieve the objectives, nine design principles are set out below which should be followed to ensure that development proposals contribute to the urban design excellence of Exeter.

### **Layout: Urban Structure**

13.6 The layout of a development is the framework of routes and spaces that connect within the site and to areas beyond it and the way the built form and spaces relate to each other. Developers should analyse the urban context, including historical growth and street pattern, and ensure that their proposals promote appropriate urban character and allow safe and convenient movement through their sites and to sites adjoining, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

13.7 Achieving successful urban structure is dependent upon the integration of highway, landscape and built form design. As a matter of principle, designers should arrange buildings to create good, well enclosed places and then fit the roads into the spaces created. All external space should have a proper use which contributes to the character of the development. Left-over spaces should be avoided.

13.8 Design should not be focused on the movement and parking of vehicles at the expense of good townscape. Parking and vehicle servicing should be integrated unobtrusively so that pedestrians have priority and the urban structure is respected. Pedestrian routes should be clear and safe without being diverted at the convenience of vehicles. A permeable layout should be promoted with enclaves and culs-de-sac generally avoided. Routes should remain within public control. Spaces such as squares created within development should sit astride routes and have active frontages facing onto them.

### **Urban Grain**

13.9 The arrangement of building plots and plot sub-divisions should create good enclosure and urban form. Depending on the context of the site the way the site is divided up may need to be fine grained (frequent plot divisions) or coarse grained (few divisions). The correct approach should be arrived at by careful analysis of the site and its context. Where public spaces are provided they should be of sufficient size to accommodate necessary street furniture, allow easy pedestrian movement and avoid visual clutter.

### **Landscape**

13.10 Landscape design is a principal consideration of development, the starting point of which is the quality and character of the existing land forms (hills, valleys and slopes), vegetation and other natural features. Exeter's hilly terrain strongly influences

its townscape with views and glimpses almost at every turn. Green spaces penetrate built up areas, green hills are clearly visible from the centre and there is significant mature tree cover in the older residential areas. Roofscapes are important and it is rare that a building is not visible from one public place or another.

13.11 Development proposals should work with the existing contours rather than relying on extensive cut and fill. Monolithic slabs that ignore land form will not be acceptable. Landscape works should aim to enhance the setting of both the proposed development and the surrounding area. Carefully considered hard landscape works and new planting allied to the conservation of important existing natural features (examples of these would include trees, significant shrubs and hedgerows, rivers, streams and associated land) enhances the character and appearance of new development and promotes local distinctiveness.

13.12 The developer will be expected to show all ground features, including ground levels, on an accurate land survey. Where there are trees on or adjoining the site, a detailed tree survey, including crown spreads, will be required.

13.13 Development should be designed to ensure trees flourish and mature. All design elements (including buildings, roads, services, above and below ground security equipment, changes in levels and construction of hard landscape) should be arranged to ensure a good spatial relationship between development and trees to be retained and planted. In addition to avoiding damage to trees during construction, sufficient space must be provided beyond the crown spreads of trees to take account of any future growth and allow their safe, long term retention while avoiding undue future pressure for felling or excessive pruning.

13.14 The boundaries of development should have enclosure. The means of enclosure, whether by buildings, trees, hedges, walls or railings, should read as a permanent feature which complements the townscape and landscape. Timber fences on boundaries adjoining public places should be avoided. Ancillary structures and facilities such as retaining walls, bin stores and drying areas should be integrated into the design so that they do not spoil the setting of buildings or conflict with trees or other natural features.

### **Density**

13.15 New development should be at an urban density to ensure that local distinctiveness is retained and promoted and to ensure that suburban sprawl does not spoil the compactness and green setting of the City. The appropriate density will depend upon the site in question but development proposals will be assessed on the extent to which they promote Exeter's urban character and to what degree they are able to support local services including public transport. Developers should bear in mind that there are very close links between density, mix and urban grain.

### **Mix**

13.16 An urban area depends upon a compatible mix of uses to make it successful. For example, in the City Centre and other commercial centres, residential development above ground floor commercial use can generate activity, providing custom for shops and restaurants and a more secure and lively community. Ground floor mixed uses provide variety and choice at street level. In residential areas a mix of unit type and tenure can ensure a good variety of accommodation, meeting a range of needs.

13.17 Developers should promote density and choice through a mix of compatible uses that work together to create viable places, which limit reliance on vehicle transport and which promote local services.

### **Height**

13.18 The appropriate height of a development should be considered relative to the wider townscape, to adjoining buildings and space and to human scale.

13.19 Development should preserve or enhance Exeter's skylines, views and vistas. Local landmarks should not be obscured or their silhouettes spoiled by new buildings. Skylines help define the character of the city and it would be an exceptional proposal which broke through the skyline in an acceptable way. This should not, however, preclude innovation which may enhance the townscape and create new features.

13.20 The height of a building is crucial to the character of the spaces that are created. As a rule of thumb the larger the space the larger the building may be but it is most important that proposals are based on analysis of the site.

13.21 The height of the storeys or parts of a building defines the building's relationship with its users. Developers should consider how proposals relate to human eye level and assess the impact of development at the human scale. Details such as window cill and head height are important in defining character.

### **Massing**

13.22 The massing of a development is the combined effect of the footprint, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces. In a townscape where the hills, valleys and skylines are of such importance achieving the correct massing is essential. Other design aspects of development will tend to fall into place more easily if the massing is right.

13.23 New buildings should respect their setting and relate well to the background of existing building blocks and shapes of roofs. As a general rule a new building should only stand out from the background of buildings if there is a need for a new landmark. This is not to suggest that development should copy historic forms. New buildings should be contemporary architectural solutions rather than copies of the old although there should be clear sensitivity to existing townscape. Standard solutions are rarely acceptable as they are unlikely to create a distinctive identity.

### **Details**

13.24 Local building forms and details contribute to the distinctive qualities of Exeter. There is variety within the city but there are common characteristics in certain areas. St. Leonards, for example, is notable for its stucco townhouses and villas and this character can be successfully interpreted in new development without restricting the scope of the designer. There should, however, be a level of interest in new buildings which compares favourably with historic neighbours.

13.25 Shop fronts are especially important in creating an attractive public realm and reinforcing character but pressures for corporate images and shop security frequently erode local distinctiveness. Shop front designs will be sought which preserve or enhance the street scene and the character of the building of which the shop front forms a part. Security measures will need to harmonise with the shop front and allow a clear view into the shop at all times. Shutters should be avoided, particularly in listed buildings and in conservation areas.

### **Materials**

13.26 The use of local materials is a major factor in enhancing local distinctiveness. Built form should be innovative but familiar materials can be the glue that binds the townscape together. Traditional materials have the added advantage of being long lasting with a tendency to improve or mellow with age, rather than deteriorate.

13.27 The historic core of Exeter is notable for a rich mix of stone, stucco and brick. Earlier buildings will be in stone and stucco while later 18th and early 19th century suburbs may be brick (e.g. Southernhay) or stucco (e.g. St. Leonards). Familiar stone includes the deep red Heavitree stone and grey Torbay limestone, although on grand, landmark buildings dressed limestone and sandstone is prevalent. Roofing is traditionally in slate with some Edwardian and later suburbs distinct by their use of plain clay tiles. Sheet metals such as lead and copper are also commonplace. Developers should generally use this range of materials in conjunction with timber, steel and glass to create contemporary design solutions. Modern glazing is particularly useful for cladding which, when used in conjunction with traditional materials, can create contemporary solutions appropriate to an historic townscape.

#### **DG1: DEVELOPMENT SHOULD:**

- (a) BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE URBAN STRUCTURE OF THE CITY, CONNECTING EFFECTIVELY WITH EXISTING ROUTES AND SPACES AND PUTTING PEOPLE BEFORE TRAFFIC;**
- (b) ENSURE THAT THE PATTERN OF STREET BLOCKS, PLOTS AND THEIR BUILDINGS (THE GRAIN OF DEVELOPMENT) PROMOTES THE URBAN CHARACTER OF EXETER;**
- (c) FULLY INTEGRATE LANDSCAPE DESIGN INTO THE PROPOSAL AND ENSURE THAT SCHEMES ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE OF THE CITY INCLUDING ITS THREE-DIMENSIONAL SHAPE, NATURAL FEATURES AND ECOLOGY;**
- (d) BE AT A DENSITY WHICH PROMOTES EXETER'S URBAN CHARACTER AND WHICH SUPPORTS URBAN SERVICES;**
- (e) CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROVISION OF A COMPATIBLE MIX OF USES WHICH WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE VITAL AND VIABLE PLACES;**
- (f) BE OF A HEIGHT WHICH IS APPROPRIATE TO THE SURROUNDING TOWNSCAPE AND ENSURE THAT THE HEIGHT OF CONSTITUENT PART OF BUILDINGS RELATE WELL TO ADJOINING BUILDINGS, SPACES AND TO HUMAN SCALE;**
- (g) ENSURE THAT THE VOLUME AND SHAPE (THE MASSING) OF STRUCTURES RELATES WELL TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE ADJOINING BUILDINGS AND THE SURROUNDING TOWNSCAPE;**

- (h) ENSURE THAT ALL DESIGNS PROMOTE LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS AND CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE VISUAL RICHNESS AND AMENITY OF THE TOWNSCAPE;
- (i) USE MATERIALS WHICH RELATE WELL TO THE PALETTE OF MATERIALS IN THE LOCALITY AND WHICH REINFORCE LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS.

### **Provision of Open Space and Children's Play Areas**

13.41 The provision of adequate open space as part of development is essential to the well being of communities. It is needed to achieve the 'greening' of the residential environment and provide easy access to amenity space, unless there is sufficient open space nearby. On large developments of over 50 dwellings, provision should be made on site. Under 50 dwellings, provision may be made off site or through a commuted sum provided that the facilities are conveniently located to serve the development. Where very few dwellings are proposed a judgement on the application of the open space requirement will be made depending on the size and character of the open space that may be created.

13.42 The City Council have carried out an assessment of children's playing space, updating a previous survey conducted in 1994. In accordance with National Playing Fields Association guidance, equipped or designated play areas were recorded, along with casual or informal play space located within housing areas of a suitable size and nature. In the assessment of casual or informal playing space, land outside of housing areas, narrow verges, densely wooded or overgrown areas, narrow strips of land, private grounds and space considered to be too small for play were omitted. This survey identified over 75 hectares (185 acres) of casual or informal play space and approximately 12 hectares (30 acres) of equipped or designated play areas. This reveals that there is a deficiency in Exeter for equipped or designated play areas. The provision in hectares per 1,000 population, as compared with the standard is as follows:-

|                                  | N.P.F.A. standard | Exeter provision |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Casual/Informal Play Space       | 0.4 – 0.5         | 0.6438           |
| Equipped/Designated Play Areas   | 0.2 – 0.3         | 0.1087           |
| Total (Children's Playing Space) | 0.6 – 0.8         | 0.7792           |

13.43 The NPFA standard recommends that equipped or designated play areas should be provided in localities on the basis of the distance of the facilities from children's homes. Three types of play area are defined: Local Areas for Play (LAPs) which are small play areas catering mainly for younger children and have a catchment of 60 metres; Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) which also cater for younger children but have at least five types of equipment and have a catchment of 240 metres; and Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAPs) which consist of at least eight types of equipment, offer play opportunities for older children and have a catchment of 600 metres. On the basis of these definitions there are deficiencies in Polsloe, Heavitree, Whipton Barton, St Leonard's, Pennsylvania, Exwick and Alphington, along with a lack of play opportunities for older children.

13.44 The area(s) of open space, to be provided as part of development, should be level, useable, large enough to be effectively landscaped, readily accessible from the dwellings and form a focal point for the development. Open space should be made available for public access either through adoption or otherwise secured by legal agreement. The open space should be of a sufficient size that after landscape works have been carried out, the area remaining is large enough to accommodate a significant range of open space uses including equipped children's play space. Small, awkwardly shaped or fragmented areas of space will not normally count towards the 10% provision. Adjacent houses should face onto the space to create effective

surveillance and an attractive townscape. The layout should provide for safe pedestrian links to open spaces within the development and to other neighbouring open spaces and amenities. On sites where there is no level ground, landscape works should include the creation of a level area which consists of 10% of the site.

13.45 Natural features such as watercourses, protected trees and other wooded areas should not normally be considered as part of the open space provision. The 10% open space requirement will, however, be calculated on the basis of the entire site area including protected trees or other areas which may not be developable.

13.46 The ownership and responsibility for maintenance should be unambiguous. The developer should indicate the location and extent of all open spaces to be adopted by the authority. The Council will not normally adopt slopes greater than 1:3 or small areas which perform no significant recreational or amenity function but will require satisfactory arrangements for their maintenance to be provided for in a legal agreement.

**DG5: FAMILY HOUSING PROPOSALS SHOULD PROVIDE 10% OF THE GROSS DEVELOPMENT AREA AS LEVEL OPEN SPACE, INCLUDING EQUIPPED CHILDREN'S' PLAY SPACE, UNLESS THERE IS OPEN SPACE AND PLAY PROVISION IN THE AREA WHICH IS WELL LOCATED AND OF SUFFICIENT SIZE AND QUALITY TO SERVE THE DEVELOPMENT.**