

8.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES

Objectives

- to protect and enhance existing community facilities;
- to promote the provision of new community facilities

8.1 Community services comprise the wide array of activities that support the well-being of local people. Such services include education, libraries, health and social care but also the activities of charities and clubs which serve community needs and provide a focus for community life. The aim of the City Council is to support the provision of such services, especially where deficiencies in provision are identified.

8.2 Community needs directly related to housing, including sheltered housing and hostels and needs related to shopping are considered within those respective chapters. Where community needs arise as a result of a particular proposal elsewhere in the local plan they are considered within the proposal itself.

Health Services

8.3 Exeter is a centre for health services within Devon, housing the headquarters of the local health authority and three primary care groups including the Exeter Primary Care Group which is responsible for overseeing general practitioner, dentist, optician and pharmacist services in Exeter.

8.4 Two healthcare service trusts are also based in the City. The Exeter & District Community NHS Trust delivers non-acute care including health visitors, mental health services, learning disability services, physiotherapy etc. It also runs the community hospitals which deliver limited medical and surgical services. The Royal Devon & Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust is responsible for acute services including most accident & emergency and surgical care.

8.5 Health service benefits are achieved by increased integration on key sites but development should take into account the impact on local landscape and townscape quality and the effective management of traffic as well as the efficient use of these important sites. A development brief that addresses these issues has been produced in consultation with the Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Trust for the Wonford Hospital site.

CS1: THE SITE OF THE RD&E WONFORD HOSPITAL IS RESERVED FOR FURTHER HEALTH RELATED DEVELOPMENT.

8.6 An increasing proportion of healthcare services are now delivered locally by a network of GPs, dentists, pharmacies etc. and also by a range of 'alternative' medical practitioners including homeopath and acupuncturists. These services are located in individual or group practice surgeries and purpose built health centres but there is a trend for the formation and enlargement of group practices. It is important that these services are provided in or near district and local centres, or in the City Centre, so as to maximise public access to health care and reduce the need for car journeys.

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However, there may be circumstances where the needs of a neighbourhood can only be met within the neighbourhood itself.

CS2: COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES WILL BE PERMITTED:

- (a) IN THE CITY, DISTRICT OR LOCAL CENTRES; OR**
- (b) WITHIN A NEIGHBOURHOOD, SUBJECT TO POLICY H4, THE NEED IN THAT NEIGHBOURHOOD CANNOT BE MET WITHIN THE CITY, DISTRICT OR LOCAL CENTRES.**

Pre-Schools & Education

8.7 Education is essential to Exeter's quality of life. A good education generates increased opportunity throughout life and a well educated population will be required to develop and sustain the businesses of the future. Exeter has 19 day nurseries, 37 state and independent schools educating pupils from 5 to 16 years of age and 6 special schools including the regional specialisms of the West of England School for Children of Little or No Sight, the Royal School for the Deaf, the Ellen Tinkham School and Vranck House School. Exeter College provides GCSE and A level education for those over 16 years and Further Adult Education over the surrounding area. Exeter University and the University of Plymouth Art College attract students from both the UK and abroad. The City also has 7 language schools which attract mostly international students.

8.8 The County Council, as local education authority, have reviewed the school system in Exeter and intend to introduce transfer from primary to secondary education at 11 instead of 12. The proposals include the redevelopment of St. James High School, Summer Lane; Priory High School, Earl Richards North; West Exe Technology College, Hatherleigh Road; and St. Peter's High School, Quarry Lane. The proposals also involve the development of a new school on land between Hollow Lane and Harts Lane to replace St. Luke's High School, Ringswell Avenue.

CS3: LAND BETWEEN HOLLOW LANE AND HARTS LANE IS PROPOSED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL PROVIDED THAT SAFE AND CONVENIENT ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING AND CYCLING IS AVAILABLE OR CAN BE PROVIDED.

8.9 Adequate provision of children's nurseries is important for child development and for the smooth running of the Exeter economy. It is anticipated that the demand for places will grow as employment opportunities in the City increase. Nurseries can, however, be un-neighbourly due to the generation of noise and general disturbance. Detached accommodation is preferable but if not feasible, provision should be made for soundproofing. They should be located where they will be well served by public transport and there is safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. Properties on busy roads will not normally be acceptable.

CS4: THE DEVELOPMENT OF, OR CHANGE OF USE TO, A CHILDREN'S NURSERY WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- (a) SAFE AND CONVENIENT ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING AND CYCLING IS AVAILABLE OR CAN BE PROVIDED;**
- (b) IT WILL NOT HARM LOCAL AMENITY.**

8.10 Facilities for adults produce less disturbance but raise problems of car parking and traffic safety. In particular, where adult students are resident either at the educational establishment or elsewhere in Exeter the Council will use the planning process to encourage them not to bring cars with them when they move to the City. This will require innovative approaches on behalf of the developer, including:

- the restricted availability of car parking for students at both educational facilities and dedicated accommodation;
- contributions to off-site traffic management to restrict parking by students on streets near to educational facilities;
- the provision of alternatives to the private motor car, including pedestrian and cycle links, dedicated bus links and other public transport initiatives, between educational facilities, student accommodation and the City Centre;
- the provision of cycle parking facilities;
- the siting of educational facilities and related student accommodation within easy walking distance of each other.

CS5: EDUCATION AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR ADULTS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- (a) SAFE AND CONVENIENT ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING AND CYCLING IS AVAILABLE OR CAN BE PROVIDED**
- (b) GOOD PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE LINKS ARE PROVIDED TO RELATED EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND STUDENT ACCOMMODATION;**
- (c) IT WILL NOT HARM LOCAL AMENITY.**

Community Halls

8.11 Halls and rooms that are available for public hire at affordable rates provide the basis for a huge variety of community uses. These include meeting places for clubs and societies, voluntary services such as parent-toddler groups and public sector services such as adult education night classes. The availability of buildings for these uses is, therefore, an important factor in the potential strength and quality of community life.

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8.12 Proposals for development that would result in the loss of a community hall will be assessed to determine whether the loss would cause harm to community space provision in the area. Examples of where harm would not occur include where:

- (a) the continued use of the hall is no longer viable; or
- (b) there is no demand for the facility; or
- (c) there are adequate alternative facilities in the area; or
- (d) replacement provision is made of at least equivalent standard where it will be reasonably convenient for the community it serves.

CS6: DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD CAUSE HARM TO THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY SPACE IN AN AREA WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

8.13 A particular deficiency in community facilities has been identified in Exwick where the development of facilities has not kept pace with housing development. The council has reserved land at Kinnerton Way for a community Hall to meet this need.

CS7: LAND AT KINNERTON WAY IS PROPOSED FOR A COMMUNITY HALL.

Places of Worship

8.14 Changing trends in religious activity have seen the growth of religious groups that are not traditional to the area. Most of these groups are independent Christian organisations, though other world religions are also increasing representation in the City. Groups often meet in halls for public hire, including school halls, and could meet in existing religious premises without the need for planning permission. However, there is some demand for new permanent religious premises.

8.15 Unlike traditional churches which were built to serve local parishes, new religious groups draw congregations from a city-wide or even larger area. Consequently, the appropriate location for such an operation is in the City Centre, or failing that a district centre, where access by a choice of means of transport is available. Development opportunities for such uses are clearly constrained by the limited number of sites and their suitability for other uses, particularly housing. Nevertheless, there is potential in under-used space over shops and in disused buildings on the edges of the City Centre and district centres that is sufficient for the likely level of demand.

CS8: THE DEVELOPMENT OF, OR A CHANGE OF USE TO, A PLACE OF WORSHIP WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- (a) **SAFE AND CONVENIENT ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING OR CYCLING IS AVAILABLE OR CAN BE PROVIDED;**
- (b) **IT WILL NOT HARM LOCAL AMENITY.**

Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople

8.16 Gypsies and travelling showpeople follow an itinerant lifestyle for predominantly cultural and work related reasons respectively. They share a need for sites where mobile and sometimes temporary homes can be pitched and, in some cases, where work activities can be pursued. There is one gypsy site in Exeter, which is located on the Sowton Industrial Estate. Regular monitoring of gypsy activity in Exeter shows little demand for new permanent sites but there is a seasonal demand for people passing through the City. Policy CS9 has regard to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, 'Neighbours Views of Official Sites for Travelling People, which identified poor security, inadequate parking and insufficient children's play provision as being sources of neighbour complaints against gypsy sites.

CS9: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SITES FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- (a) THE NOISE AND DISTURBANCE FROM VEHICLES AND ANY BUSINESS RELATED ACTIVITY LIKELY TO BE CARRIED OUT WILL NOT HARM LOCAL AMENITY;
- (b) CONVENIENCE SHOPPING AND OTHER APPROPRIATE FACILITIES ARE REASONABLY ACCESSIBLE;
- (c) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT HARM THE CHARACTER OF A RESIDENTIAL AREA OR THE LANDSCAPE SETTING OF THE CITY;

AND PROVIDED THAT:

- (d) ANY PERMANENT STRUCTURES ARE FOR ANCILLARY USE ONLY AND NOT FOR USE AS DWELLINGS;
- (e) SITE BOUNDARIES PROVIDE SUITABLE PRIVACY AND SECURITY;
- (f) ADEQUATE PARKING IS AVAILABLE, INCLUDING PARKING FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLES RELATED TO ANY BUSINESS ACTIVITIES LIKELY TO BE CARRIED OUT AND FOR VISITORS;
- (g) WHERE CHILDREN ARE LIKELY TO BE PRESENT, SUITABLE PLAY AREAS ARE PROVIDED, OR ARE AVAILABLE NEARBY.

Developer Contributions

8.17 Government guidance establishes the principle that developments will be expected to provide for both the physical and social infrastructure needs required to service them where existing infrastructure is not sufficient to meet those needs. Physical infrastructure is defined as including roads, park and ride provision, water supply, drainage and sewers whilst social infrastructure includes education, recreation, sporting, health and social care services, community safety and other

community provision. The Council may also require the permanent storage and presentation of the City's communal heritage, i.e. important historic finds, archives and remains, where this is revealed or removed by development. Some of the policies in this local plan specify needs in respect to certain types of development, e.g. highway works, affordable housing, public open space and equipped children's play areas. However, the issues dealt with under specific policies are not intended to be exhaustive as other matters may arise in connection with a particular application that are peculiar to that circumstance.

8.18 In all cases failure to provide the facilities necessary for a development will be grounds for the refusal of a planning application. Where the requirements cannot be met through a condition on the development a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 will be sought. The key tests laid out in Section 7 of Circular 1/97 are that obligations must be:

- necessary
- relevant to planning
- directly related to the proposed development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- reasonable in all other respects.

8.19 In considering the level of developer contributions, the cumulative impact of the development will be taken into account.