

# **Exeter City Council**

## Local Development Scheme -

The timetable for preparing  
planning policy documents for Exeter

June 2021

## Contact details

Local plan team  
Exeter City Council  
Civic Centre  
Paris Street  
Exeter  
EX1 1JN

Phone: 01392 277888

Email: [planning@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:planning@exeter.gov.uk)

Web: <https://exeter.gov.uk/planning-services/>

To request this information in an alternative format or language please phone 01392 277888 or email [planning@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:planning@exeter.gov.uk)

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Local Development Scheme (LDS) is required to set out a programme of planning policy documents which the Council proposes to prepare for the city. It focuses on the new Local Plan and sets out the timetable for its preparation.
- 1.2 The LDS will come into effect from its approval by the Council's Executive in June 2021 and will replace the previous LDS of December 2019 and its update in May 2020. It will be updated as necessary to reflect the progress being made on the planning policy documents being prepared.

## **2. Planning policy for Exeter: The ‘development plan’**

- 2.1 Planning legislation<sup>1</sup> requires all local planning authorities to produce what is called a ‘Development Plan’.
- 2.2 The current Development Plan for Exeter consists of a series of plans called Development Plan Documents. Taken together, these provide a vision and a framework for the future development of the city. More specifically, the documents set out the priorities for the city, identify areas for development and provide a comprehensive set of policies which are used to make decisions on planning applications.
- 2.3 In Exeter, the Development Plan currently includes the following documents:
- The adopted Exeter Core Strategy and saved policies from the adopted Exeter Local Plan First Review.
  - Neighbourhood Development Plans: Produced for specific areas in the city by local groups. The St James Neighbourhood Plan is currently the only ‘made’ plan in Exeter.
  - The adopted Devon Minerals Plan and adopted Devon Waste Plan. These are produced by Devon County Council
- 2.4 The policies in all these documents together must be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)

### 3. Exeter Local Plan

3.1 Going forward, the new Exeter Local Plan will be the only Development Plan Document produced by the City Council. It will replace the Strategy and the Local Plan First Review and will include a vision and objectives for Exeter, a development strategy, sites for development (allocations) and a series of planning policies. Some of these policies will be broad, covering themes and topics whilst others will specifically set out detailed requirements for development.

3.2 The scope of the Local Plan will be subject to consultation, however it is envisaged that the plan will cover a full range of topics including:

- The climate emergency
- Housing
- Economy and employment
- Retail and the city centre
- The natural environment
- The built and historic environment
- Green infrastructure
- Design
- Infrastructure
- Transport
- Digital connectivity; and
- Health and wellbeing

3.3 The timetable for preparing the new Exeter Local Plan is set out below:

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| • Issues consultation:                 | September 2021 |
| • Draft plan consultation:             | September 2022 |
| • Publication:                         | February 2023  |
| • Submission to Planning Inspectorate: | June 2023      |
| • Examination hearings:                | October 2023   |
| • Adoption:                            | June 2024      |

A summary of the steps required in preparing a local plan is set out in planning regulations<sup>2</sup>. Preparation of the Local Plan will include the following stages:

- **Issues consultation:** This is the first stage of public consultation where the Council seeks views on what the plan should cover and the key issues facing the city.
- **Draft plan consultation:** After the issues consultation, responses are analysed, further evidence is prepared and options considered. From

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<sup>2</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

this work, a draft plan including draft policies and potential sites for development is produced. A consultation exercise will take place where the Council seeks views on the draft plan document.

- **Publication:** After the draft plan consultation, responses are considered, amendments made and further work is completed to produce a second version of the plan. This 'publication' version is the plan which the Council intends to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. A publication consultation is held on this version of the plan to seek formal comments ('representations').
- **Submission to the Planning Inspectorate:** The publication version of the plan, the supporting evidence and the formal comments on the plan are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who appoint an independent inspector to test the plan through an examination.
- **Examination hearings:** During the examination, the planning inspector holds a set of public hearings to discuss the plan. These hearings can be attended by those making comments on the publication version of the plan. The discussions at the hearings help the inspector to reach conclusions regarding the soundness of the plan. The inspector will often identify modifications to the plan which may require further consultation. At the end of this process the Council will receive a report from the Planning Inspectorate which concludes whether the plan is 'sound'.
- **Adoption:** After the Council receives the report from the inspector, the local plan can be formally adopted by the Council. This means that the content of the plan, including the policies and development sites, become official planning policy for the city.

## 4. Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.1 In addition to formal Development Plan Documents such as the Local Plan, the Council sometimes produces other policy such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs provide further explanation of Local Plan policies, how they should be interpreted and expectations for their implementation. SPDs can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or on a particular issue and must be taken into account when making planning decisions.
- 4.2 The Council already has a series of SPDs covering topics such as affordable housing, planning obligations, public open space and various areas in the city. The list of SPDs will gradually need to be reviewed in the context of the new policies which emerge in the new Local Plan and to reflect changes in national planning policy which may result from the 2020 planning white paper ('Planning for the future'). Given these current uncertainties, this document does not include a specific series of SPDs which will be produced; further information will be provided on this in future.
- 4.3 SPDs do not provide formal planning policy in the same way as a local plan and so the procedure for preparing them is simpler and shorter as explained by the planning regulations<sup>3</sup>. They do however have to be prepared with supporting evidence, require public consultation and need to be formally adopted by the Council.

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<sup>3</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)