

# Greater Exeter Strategic Plan

## Consultation Response Form: Issues (Regulation 18)

You can access the Issues (Regulation 18) consultation document and an online consultation for at:

[www.gesp.org.uk/issues](http://www.gesp.org.uk/issues)

All responses must be received by the **10th April 2017**

If you complete this form, please return it to: [gesp@devon.gov.uk](mailto:gesp@devon.gov.uk)

**OR** Devon County Council  
Strategic Planning  
Lucombe House (AB2)  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter EX2 4QD

If you would like to discuss any matter relating to this consultation please contact your district council (number below) or email [gesp@devon.gov.uk](mailto:gesp@devon.gov.uk)

East Devon District Council - 01395 571533

Exeter City Council - 01392 265615

Mid Devon District Council - 01884 234221

Teignbridge District Council - 01626 215735

**Please note that responses received as part of this consultation cannot be treated as confidential. Responses submitted will be processed and shared between the partner Councils (East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, Teignbridge and Devon County Council). Your comments and your name will be publicly available on partner Council and the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan websites when the findings of the consultation event are reported.**

This form is also accompanied by an **Equality Monitoring Form**. Respondents are encouraged to complete this as the data will be used to tailor and improve future consultations to ensure we reach and enable responses from all parts of the community. **Individual data collected from this Monitoring Form will remain confidential** with only summary statistical analysis being published.



\*Please note we require your name and address in order to process your comments

### Your Contact Information

Title:	Mrs and Ms and Mr
First Name*:	Robyn and Christine and Rory
Last Name*:	Connett and Fraser and McNeile
Organisation (optional):	Exeter St James Forum, St David's Neighbourhood Partnership, and Newtown Community As
Email Address	info@exeterstjamesforum.org

### Your Address Details

Address*:	c/o St Sidwell's Community Centre, Sidwell Street, Exeter
Postcode*:	EX4 6NN

#### Question 1

Do you have any comments on the content of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan and its relationship with other plans?

The content appears generally appropriate. We feel the plan should be clear about what social and physical infrastructure is needed to support communities and ensure the creation of a sustainable city. Too often developers are able argue that they cannot afford to invest in such infrastructure on grounds of viability. Land value and developer profit is prioritised over investment into communities. This means that communities bear the brunt of the impacts of development but do not see any benefits. The GESP provides an opportunity for the Local Authorities of the strategic plan area to set out very clearly the expectations for community investment. Any such investment can be focused on key areas necessary to deliver the vision.

It should be noted that Neighbourhood Plans, when approved at referendum, become an approved part of the Local Plan. They are not, as implied by the diagram on Page 4, the lowest level of plan.

#### Question 2

Do these reflect the issues you see facing Greater Exeter?

Yes

No

If not, what should we add or change?

The issues are generally appropriate. However they are not sufficiently clear about the issues facing areas adjacent to the City Centre. The success of the GESP area depends in a large part on the success and attractiveness of Exeter City Centre and the vibrancy of the communities around it. The ability of the GESP to attract innovative and entrepreneurial high value businesses will require that areas around the City centre, such as Newtown, St Davids and St James, are attractive and viable places to live. Research (for example by Centre for Cities) shows that these inner city neighbourhoods are crucial to attracting young entrepreneurs and retaining graduates. Further, such neighbourhoods tend to have a high concentration of people working in the arts, education and culture which are in

many respect the lifeblood of the City.

It is crucial to the continued success of the GESP area that the City Centre and the communities adjacent to it continue to be sustainable and balanced. Unfortunately, over recent years the huge surge in student accommodation, the concentration of supported houses for vulnerable people and those living with issues such as substance and alcohol abuse, coupled with a lack of investment into these communities has meant that they are becoming increasingly less viable with a declining permanent resident population and serious issues with regard to environmental degradation and anti-social behaviour. We would like to stress that this is not a localised problem but a serious issue for the future character and sustainability of Exeter City Centre. If the communities abutting the City Centre are not supported and made more attractive environments to live, for all sectors of the population, the City will not achieve its full potential.

Housing is a major issue in and around the City Centre. Whilst the document recognises the challenges of providing the right housing, this is particularly acute around the City Centre where virtually no new private housing has been built in recent years whilst student accommodation has proliferated. This is resulting in a break down in communities as the permanent resident population declines and long-term residents are forced to move out due to lack of suitable accommodation when life circumstances change.

Although there is likely to be pressure to improve traffic flow into the City, residents of the central areas consider that attempts must be made to restrict parking, improve traffic management, especially at several pinch-points such as the Old Tiverton Road/Union Road roundabouts, Cowley Bridge Road and Heavitree Road. Positive efforts need to be made to further restrict car travel with positive encouragement of alternative transport use, especially the rail network. Air quality throughout parts of the wards can be poor, especially at peak travel times. The consequences of the re-routing of traffic related to the John Lewis development have been profound, with traffic speed and volume along St David's Hill and over the Iron Bridge, at one end, and along Longbrook Street and York Road, at the other, creating hazards for local communities including primary schoolchildren, and the air quality near their schools, appalling. The proposed closure of the top of Paris Street as part of the Bus Station redevelopment, would only exacerbate and widen these problems with re-routing of more traffic along Summerland Street, York Road and King William Street. Residents have an expectation of a quality of life not blighted by further urban transport pollution.

The document does not mention culture or the arts. This is an important dimension of any successful city and should be flagged as a key issue. Exeter needs to develop its culture and arts offer.

### Question 3

Is the draft vision appropriate for guiding the future of the Greater Exeter area up to 2040?

- Yes
- No

If not, what changes would you like to see?

The draft vision says very little about the City Centre which is the key economic and cultural heart of the plan area. It flags the importance of being a historic university town but needs to go further to describe how a successful, vibrant, diverse and culturally rich city centre will be the key to the success of the plan area. This will be crucial to achieving some of the other aspects of the vision such as 'innovative, data driven and knowledge intensive businesses'. Such business and their employees will expect a high quality urban environment and opportunities to live near the City Centre. This highlights the importance, again, of ensuring that the balance, vibrancy and viability of the neighbourhoods adjacent to the City Centre is enhanced.

### Question 4

Have we missed anything?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what additions or changes should we make?

There is no mention of culture and the arts. Given the importance of major green infrastructure corridors in Exeter we feel there should be specific mention of the Exe Valley Park and the other Valley Parks as key avenues for sustainable movement and connections. These, in the future, could develop as a crucial part of the infrastructure of the GESP plan and could lead to reduced car use and health benefits.

The recognised importance of public parks and green spaces for health and wellbeing, particularly within the City Centre, needs emphasis and a strategy to ensure that parks and green spaces remain in public ownership, are cultural features within the city centre, and achieve high horticultural standards to attract visitors and residents alike.

### Question 5

If we are to meet the area's needs for housing and employment, what forms of development do you feel best deliver our draft vision?

*For example, More efficient use of land in Exeter, Major urban extensions in Exeter and main towns, Dispersed small scale development, Stand alone new communities, any others.*

Exeter has a strong natural setting and the views to the surrounding hills area highly valued. This setting should be protected.

We believe the needs for the communities for Exeter should be properly planned. This should involve considering their needs in terms of housing, services and jobs. This would mean making best use of available land within the established communities of Exeter where it might provide for the housing and other needs of that community whilst taking the opportunity to address key issues of 'imbalance' in the established urban communities.

Currently the only housing being delivered at scale around the City Centre is for students and this is not meeting the needs of permanent residents.

We have not commented on growth outside of Exeter.

### Question 6

Are there any further comments you would like to make on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan?

The GESP offers an opportunity to plan positively for the future of the Exeter area. We believe that this requires some fresh and visionary thinking. We believe that the City is at a crucial point. Whilst there are many positives, the neighbourhoods around the City Centre are under huge pressure and much of the development on the edge of the city is of a poor quality. We believe the way to address this is to start to plan positively for the needs of the existing and emerging communities of Exeter so that they have access to the housing, jobs, services and green space that they need.

**Do you want us to keep you informed about the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan? Please tick to agree and also identify your district council**

- East Devon
- Exeter
- Teignbridge
- Mid Devon
- Not applicable (but keep me informed)

By agreeing to the above you will be added to partner Council (East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, Teignbridge and Devon County Council) planning consultation databases used to keep individuals and organisations informed about the preparation and production of planning policy documents - including the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. The Councils will not publish the personal details of individuals on the database.