

St James Exeter

Draft Neighbourhood Plan



SUSTAINABILITY

PEOPLE

CONSERVATION
RETAIL

COMMUNITY

HISTORY

20

STOP
 pedestrian icon

TRANSPORT

John Lewis

CITY CENTRE

UNIVERSITY

HOOPERN VALLEY

PROSPERITY

DIVERSITY

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with support from **LDÄ DESIGN**

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The Neighbourhood Plan

Welcome on behalf of Exeter St James Forum to the draft plan for the future of St James as a neighbourhood. From an opportunity offered in the government's Localism proposals in early 2011 to this full-scale consultation, it has been a considerable achievement.

Exeter St James Forum was started by residents with one aim - to prepare a plan that would deliver the long-term goal of a balanced and vibrant neighbourhood. Since May 2011 we have held public meetings to ask for your views, met groups and businesses with an interest in St James, and kept in contact with our members and associate members through the website and, more recently, on Facebook and Twitter, and at our first AGM in June 2012.

It's been achieved thanks to the expertise, experience and enthusiasm of the members of the Steering Group and the many volunteers in the task groups who collected the information on which to base our proposals.

We've had excellent support and advice from officers at Exeter City Council and the much-appreciated support of our City and County councillors.

We've been determined to do as much of the work as possible, to be able to

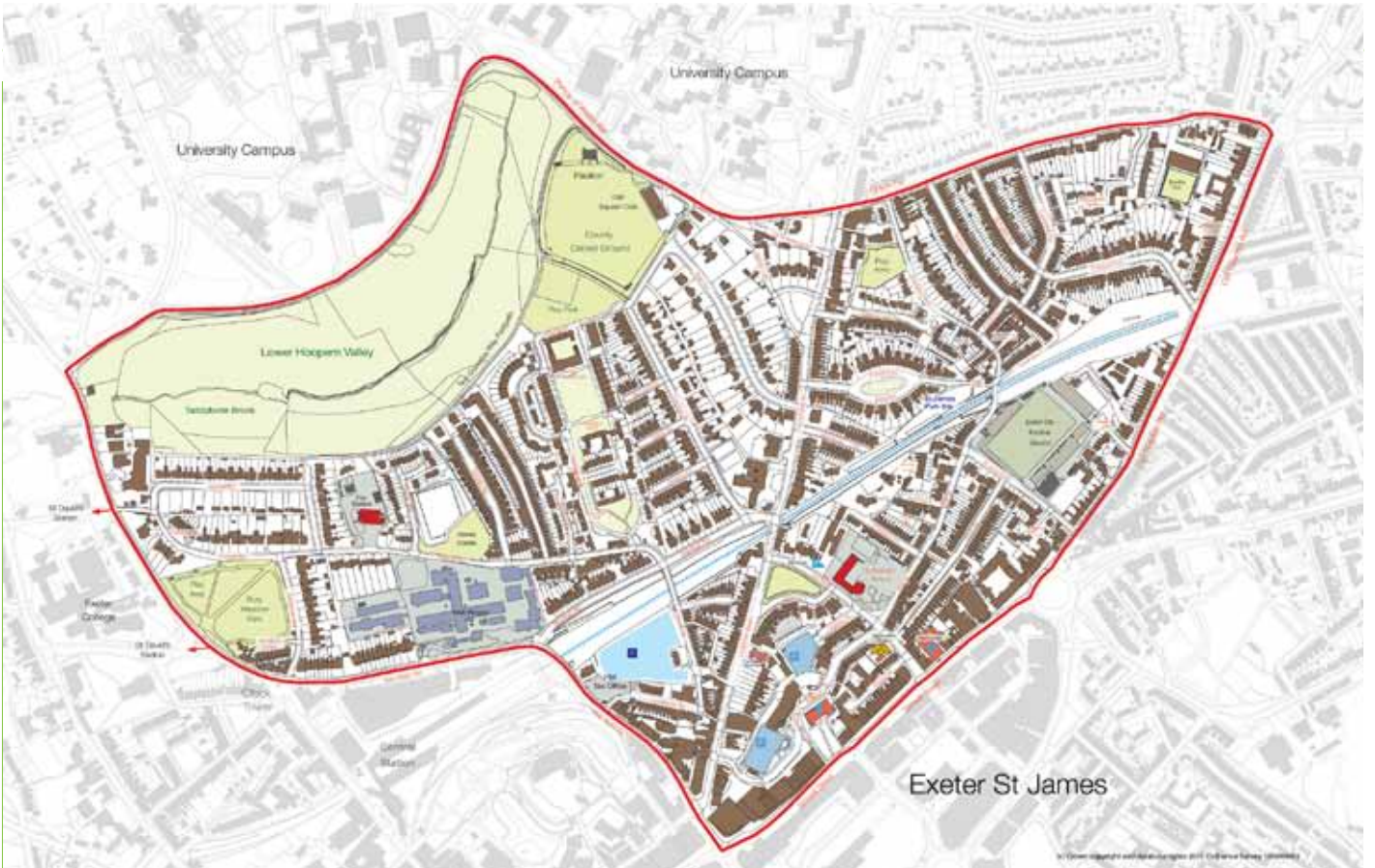
say that this Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by and for the people who live and work in St James. However, we did need one paid consultant and thank David Bell of LDA Design who was commissioned to assist our working group in writing the draft plan.

Now it's your turn again. Before the plan can be submitted formally to Exeter City Council, we must undertake this public consultation. We would like comments and queries from people who live in the ward and from those of you who work or have a stake in St James. Invite us to meet your group of neighbours or colleagues to discuss the proposals.

There's a response form at the end of this document and on the website. If you are unable to submit the form online we can deliver a form for you to post back to us. The deadline is 23 November.

Join the Forum too. It's open to everyone who lives or has an interest in St James. You'll be in touch with the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan and can have a say in the way in which the Forum is run.

Jo Hawkins
Chairman, Exeter St James Forum



Boundary of St James (not to scale)

1.0 Why St James Needs a Neighbourhood Plan

St James sits to the north of Exeter City Centre, covering the lower slopes of the Pennsylvania ridge that cradles the edge of the city. It has a diversity of residents. They work in local businesses, run community services, study in the city and contribute to its creative and intellectual life. It is an area that is simultaneously gritty and elegant, leafy and urban, with different character areas that overlap with neighbouring communities such as St Davids, Polsloe, Newtown, upper Pennsylvania, the University Campus and Exeter College. It has hidden lanes and alleys that make it a joy to explore and a rich history that can be traced in its buildings, streets and green spaces. It is quite simply a great place to live within a stone's throw from the centre of the city and one of the leading Universities in the UK.



Brook Green Terrace

Many residents have lived most of their lives in the Ward, send children to the local school, play an active part in the community and University and worship in its religious buildings. St James is also a safe place to experience living away from home for the first time and experience what it feels like to be a part of a community.

The advantages of St James also make the Ward vulnerable to change. The solid housing stock has proved ideal for conversion into student accommodation and flats, skewing the age profile of the Ward. A full 40% of residents are between the ages of 18-24. Some parts of the Ward are at a tipping point; they could lose their permanent resident population entirely. The area adjacent to the City Centre has been colonised by larger characterless buildings and car parks and changes to roads and public spaces on the edge of the city centre have resulted in more traffic being directed through the heart of the community. Some green spaces lie neglected, whilst poor property maintenance has detracted from a strong and distinctive urban character. Rises in property prices mean that the area is increasingly unaffordable for young families whilst those seeking to retire or down size find they have to move out of St James to find suitable accommodation.

Now is the time to reverse the decline and take advantage of the continuing success of Exeter, which is bringing prosperity and jobs to the City. Changes in planning rules which remove the right to convert local houses to a house in multiple occupation (HMO) in parts of St. James are but the first step towards the regeneration of the area. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by members of the community to guide future changes to create a balanced and vibrant community.



Bury Meadow



Prospect Park



Vellwell Road

2.0 How the Plan was Prepared

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by residents of St James and in particular members of the Exeter St James Forum, a group of local people brought together initially by residents' associations throughout the Ward. The process involved a number of key steps:

A group of representatives of residents' associations and other residents of the Ward came together in early 2011 to discuss the creation of a neighbourhood plan;

A wider community meeting was called on 25 May 2011, attended by 90 people, at which the idea of a neighbourhood plan was discussed and supported;

Interim members of the Exeter St James Forum were appointed and the Exeter St James Forum website was created;

With the support of Exeter City Council, ESJF was given Front Runner (pilot project) status and funding by the government in August 2011.

Members of the community worked together in task groups in late 2011 to compile information on the Ward and set out a number of recommendations to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan;

The 'Big Neighbourhood Drop-in' public consultation event was held on 12 November 2011; followed by another public drop-in session on 17 April 2012 to gather ideas and information from the wider community;

Draft policies were prepared and consulted on at the first AGM of the Exeter St James Forum on 9 June 2012, and the executive of the group was elected;

Formal applications were submitted to Exeter City Council to, firstly, designate the Ward of St James as a neighbourhood plan area and then to give Exeter St James Forum formal status as a 'qualifying body' entitled to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents were prepared and a sustainability appraisal of policies and proposals was carried out.



The remaining chapters in the Neighbourhood Plan set out the following;

What the plan aims to achieve: This sets out the main challenges facing St James and how the Neighbourhood Plan addresses them.

The Role of St James as a Part of Exeter: This sets out how St James relates to the rest of the City, and describes what this means for the future of the Ward.

The St James Plan: This sets out the community's vision for the Ward.

Delivering the plan: This provides a description of the projects that the community wishes to take forward within the Ward and the planning policies that it is intended will apply to different parts of the Ward.



The Big Neighbourhood drop in



Kids corner



The creative table

3.0 What the Plan Aims to Achieve

St James faces a number of challenges and it is the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan to address these by defining projects to improve the area and by setting out policies to influence planning decisions. The most important aims are set out below:

Establish a clear vision for the Ward that most people in the community support:

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a clear vision for the Ward that has been developed and agreed by people and businesses in the Ward.

Define a heart for St James:

To strengthen the image and identity of the Ward, the Neighbourhood Plan defines an area around York Road, Longbrook Street and Well Street as the heart of the community.

Build on new planning rules to restrict HMO development and rebalance the community:

The Neighbourhood Plan adds weight to the Article 4 direction and planning rules which restrict HMO development in some parts of the Ward. The Plan sets out policies and projects that aim to make St James a neighbourhood where people of all ages are confident to invest in for the long term, rebalancing the community.

Encourage those types of development that meet the needs of the community:

The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to encourage planning applications for those types of development that are important to meet the needs of the community, including housing, business space and appropriate shops.

Manage the impacts of traffic and encourage sustainable transport:

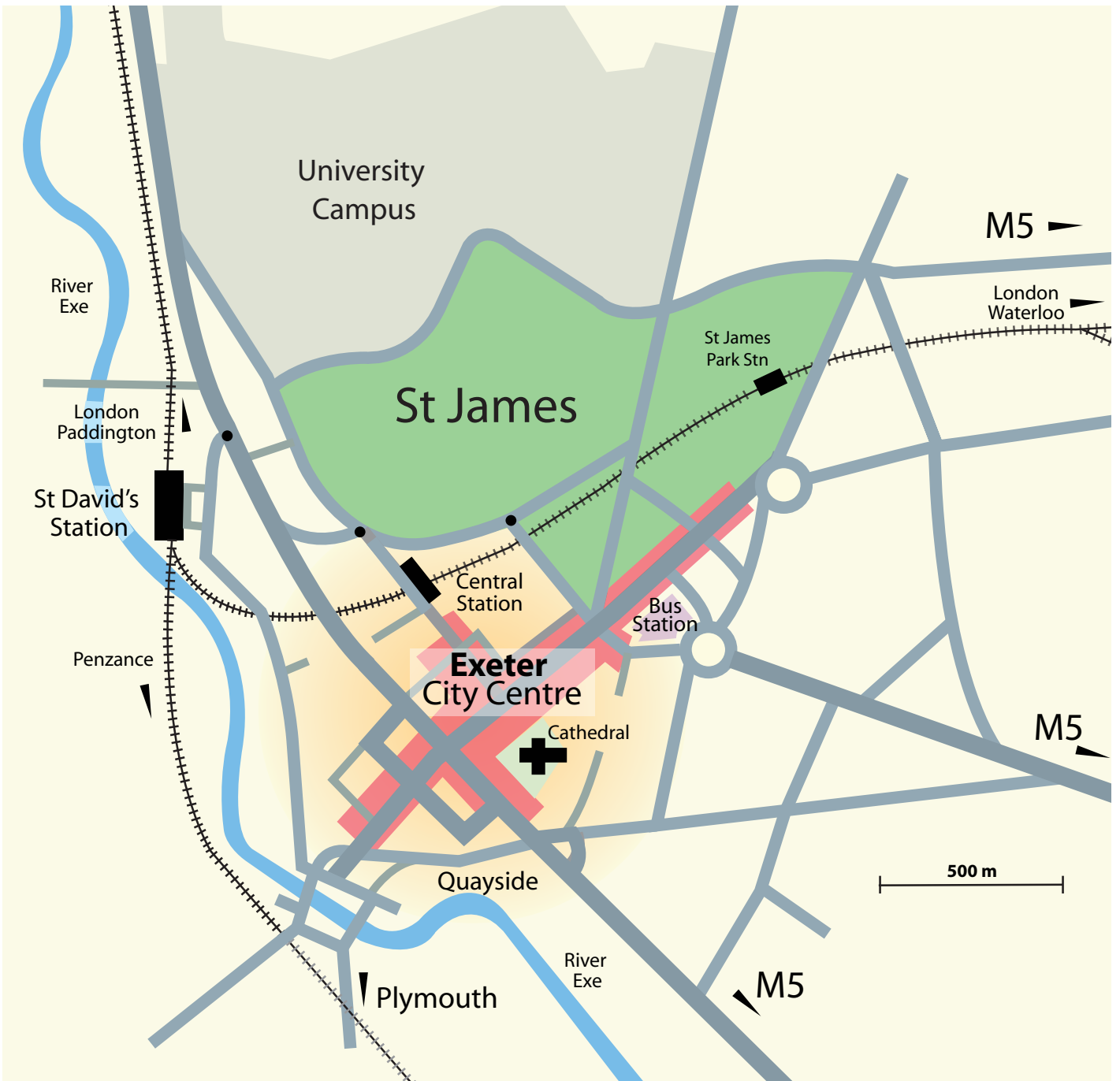
The neighbourhood plan includes policies and projects to encourage sustainable (non-car) movement in the ward and highlights the need to protect residential areas from the effects of traffic.

Improve the natural and built environment of the ward:

The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies and projects aimed at securing good design in new development and protecting, enhancing and investing in the natural and built environment of the Ward.

Support and maintain community facilities and services within the Ward:

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the strong grouping of community and charitable bodies which serve the needs of the Ward and the wider population of Exeter and seeks to support the activities they provide.



4.0 The Role of St James as a Part of Exeter

Exeter is thriving as a regional centre. The new settlement at Cranbrook to the east of the city is under construction and major developments such as Exeter Science Park are in the pipeline. The University goes from strength to strength and the Princesshay development continues to be successful. Major development proposals are coming forward for the Bus and Coach Station site.

The future of the City Centre is underpinned by the Exeter City Centre Vision which sets out an ambitious vision that seeks to retain the City's character and allow for growth to meet the needs of the future. One of the key aims of the Exeter City Centre Vision is to ensure different parts of the City retain their distinct character, roles and identity rather than blurring together. As a neighbourhood of Exeter, St James itself should also develop a clear role and identity.

The Exeter City Centre Vision and the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Document envisage major new commercial and residential development will take place to the east of Sidwell Street, creating a new quarter on the edge of St James which will become the Grecian Quarter. The regeneration of the Grecian Quarter by the City Council provides an opportunity to

properly plan for larger scale development and is a place to locate some of the types of development that have proved difficult to accommodate within the residential streets of St James, for example large scale purpose built student accommodation. Such uses could help to underpin the vitality of this new part of the City.

Within this context wider context, St James should have a distinct character as a predominantly residential area – a place for the people who help support the success of the City to live in a sustainable location adjacent to jobs, services and education.

Recent changes to traffic circulation continue to cause significant traffic issues in the Ward which are a major concern to local people. However, the City and County Councils are working together to encourage more sustainable transport and reduce city centre traffic in the long term, particularly through an increased use of rail and park and ride facilities. St James Park rail station will play an important role in the future plans for sustainable transport and could become a gateway into the northern part of the city centre for passengers arriving by train.



Panorama over St James from the football club to the University



The Heart of St James

5.0 The St James Plan

5.1 Vision

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that St. James is a vibrant and balanced neighbourhood and a great place to live and work close to the City Centre and University. It will be a neighbourhood that supports Exeter's character, identity and cultural life and become known as one of the best parts of the City to live.

St James will be known for its strong and diverse community, rich urban character, attractive green streets and spaces and thriving natural environment. It will be safe and enjoyable to move around on foot and bike and will be well connected to the rest of Exeter by public transport.

5.2 The Plan

The Plan shows what St James might be like in the future if the ideas and proposals developed by the community are implemented. The main proposals include those set out below:

1. A heart for St James centred on Queens Crescent, York Road, Well Street and Longbrook Street. This area is the part of the Ward where community services, shops and the school, religious buildings and green space is located. Through careful new development to meet community needs, enhancements of green space and traffic calming, this area has the potential to become the heart of St James.
2. Appropriate new development in a small number of locations such as at the Football Club /Yeo and Davey site to meet the aspirations for high quality development that improves community balance.
3. Improvements to the entrances into the Ward and connections to the surrounding parts of Exeter. This might mean, for example, improving the frontage of St Sidwell's Community Centre on Sidwell Street to make the building and garden a key entrance point into the Ward. It might mean enhancing other linkages, for example making the rear entrance from St James into Exeter Central station and Rougemont Gardens more attractive.
4. Protection and enhancement of all green spaces within the Ward, and in particular the improvement of the Hoopern Valley as a biodiversity and recreational resource, in support of Exeter University.
5. Management of traffic and encouragement of walking, cycling and public transport to ensure that the environmental quality of the Ward is protected.

6.0 Delivering the Plan

To deliver the Plan the community will seek funding for, and bring forward, projects which will make a real difference to St James. Already considerable progress has been made to make the improvement of Queens Crescent garden possible.

To ensure that the planning and development decisions take into account the views of the community, policies have been prepared which have been developed in the context of and help deliver Exeter City Councils Core Strategy. When changes are proposed within St James either by developers, private individuals or other organisations, these policies will be referred to by Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and the Government when planning decisions are made.

6.1 Projects

The community has real enthusiasm to bring forward projects to implement the St James Neighbourhood Plan. Through the process of preparing the Plan many great ideas have been proposed. These have been listed and members of the community have prioritised them. It is always better to focus on a small number of achievable goals. For this reason only five priority projects have been identified in this document which will be the focus of community action to implement

the Plan. The priority projects are also those which will achieve the 'biggest bang for the bucks', i.e. help to create positive momentum towards the development of St James as a vibrant and balanced community. This means that some 'nice to have' projects, which may not be essential to deliver the vision initially, have not been prioritised in the Plan. However this does not stop them happening in the future!

The regeneration of a community such as St James requires projects which change perceptions, and increase the confidence of people to invest in the area. The five projects which will help to achieve these outcomes are described on the following pages.

In addition to the priority projects, which may be driven forward entirely by the community, a major partnership project is also proposed. This involves working with Exeter City Council and Devon County Council to address transport issues within the Ward. This project will seek to address the fact that St. James is one of the wards most affected by strategic traffic and parking, particularly given the opening of John Lewis. There is a need to address transport issues in a positive and creative way to seek solutions which reduce community impacts and allow the councils to achieve their strategic aims.



Project 1: Improve Queens Crescent Garden



Queens Crescent Gardens

Project 1: Improve Queens Crescent garden as a community green space.

Queens Crescent garden is a visually prominent green space at the heart of the Ward adjacent to many of its most important community facilities such as St Sidwell's School and the Mosque. However, it is also adjacent to some of the most deprived parts of the Ward and areas of highest concentration of HMO. The garden is currently run down and neglected, though the local group 'Harvest' has worked with the community and University to improve it substantially. The improvement of the space will have a huge impact on the perceptions of the whole ward, and in particular those areas of highest HMO concentration. The project may include:

- Securing community ownership / management of the space
- A community design exercise to agree the future layout and uses of the space including:
 - New entrances
 - Opening up the space to make it more welcoming
 - Improvements to the walls, provision of new railings
 - Management of trees and new planting
 - Community growing plots
 - New seating and community art
 - A small toddlers/infants play area
 - A 'pop up' café kiosk
- Funding bids
- Implementation
- Creation of a community management company

Project 2: Work with the Council and University to improve management and storage of waste

In many parts of the Ward the management and storage of waste is the key factor that detracts from the experience of living in St James. Whilst actions have been taken to improve the situation, eg gull-proof bin bags, it is possible more could be done, perhaps drawing on experience from elsewhere in Europe. The project may include:

- The creation of a joint ECC/Community/University steering group
- Research into how the problem has been addressed elsewhere
- Implementation of waste management and storage issues



Powderham Crescent



Pennsylvania Road

Project 3: Identification of key streets for home zone type treatment to reduce and slow traffic, improve safety and enhance the environment.

One of the key messages that the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan should project is that St James is a good place for people to live at all stages of their lives. This message might be projected by choosing a key street where there is a real opportunity to reverse the loss of balance in community and investing in the environment to encourage conversion back to residential use and/or improvements to buildings and frontages. Two to three key streets improved in this way might send a message to the wider community of Exeter that St James is on the up and is therefore a good place to invest. Often small improvements in an area can tip the balance and make it a sought after place to live.

It would be up to Residents' Associations to identify streets that could be enhanced in this way. Streets where some relatively minor investment might help to tip the balance back towards increased residential use include Powderham Crescent, Pennsylvania Road, Devonshire Place, Howell Road, Well Street. Some parts of the streets in the heart of the student area around the end of Springfield Road and Victoria Street could also have a major impact on overall perceptions of the Ward.

The project may include:

- Residents' Association identification of potential to enhance and traffic-calm street
- Discussion with ESJF to discuss how to proceed
- Residents' Association community design exercise to consider measures to improve street
- The research of and bidding for funding
- Implementation

It may be possible to improve streets or part of streets through the involvement of volunteers or skills training bodies, for example the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) could be involved in the renewal and refurbishment of historic features and elements.

Project 4: Street tree planting – identify streets to focus on and establish a tree planting campaign

There is currently Government funding and support for community led tree planting. Funding for this programme called the 'Big Tree Plant' is explained on the DEFRA website www.defra.gov.uk/bigtreeplant/. Strategically placed tree planting can make a huge impact on the character and quality of an area. There are a number of areas where established tree planting needs to be refreshed, eg Prospect Park, and other streets where two to three well placed trees could make a big impact. There may be opportunities to place a small number of trees in the heart of the student housing areas centred on Culverland Road, Springfield Street and Victoria Street. Some of the more established areas such as West Avenue could also benefit from a fresh approach to tree planting to underpin the residential leafy character of the area.

It will be for Residents' Associations to consider whether they would like to carry out tree planting in their areas. The project may include:

- ESJF calling for Residents' Associations to identify where they would like to see more tree planting in their area;
- ESJF coordination of RA ideas and preparation of funding bid to 'The Big Tree Plant' or other funding body.
- Successful funding bid leading to implementation

Any tree planting bid would need to be carried out with the assistance of ECC and in particular DCC as the highways authority and/or other land owners. Trees would need to be carefully chosen to fit with the surroundings and enhance the character of St James without impacting upon walkways. Trees which enrich the biodiversity of St James would be encouraged.

Project 5: Find a site to develop some affordable sustainable homes for local people

Many of the more affordable family homes in St James are now converted to HMO and there is a lack of affordable homes for those wishing to move into the area or down size. Very little new housing has been created for local people and the majority of new development has catered for students rather than other sectors of the community. This project seeks to find a site where affordable homes can be created for local people. By providing well-designed sustainable housing a local need will be met, the rebalancing of the community will be encouraged and St James will convey to the outside world that it is being renewed through new development.

The project may involve:

- The identification of a suitable site
- Discussions with local residents and surrounding property owners regarding the principle of development
- Consideration of how to encourage development of the site to provide affordable sustainable homes for local people
- Support through the planning process.

A number of possible sites for small scale development exist in St James. If development is seen as a priority the community could consider removing the need for planning permission through a Neighbourhood Development Order or could even get involved in bringing forward homes through the Community Right to Build, a new power granted to local communities by Government.

Partnership Project: Transport

Transport, and more particularly the impact of traffic on St James is a major issue for the community. The Neighbourhood Plan complements and supports the Core Strategy and the Exeter City Centre Vision and highlights that the continuing vibrancy of St James as a residential area is important to the future of the City. The Ward has the highest cycling and walking activity of any other similar ward in the city. However, transport issues arising from the growth of the City will need to be addressed. Solutions will be required that support the continuing success of the City but which also ensure that St James is a pleasant and attractive place to live. It is proposed that the community, together with Devon County Council and Exeter City Council and other transport bodies, work together to resolve transport issues and monitor impacts of changes.

In particular:

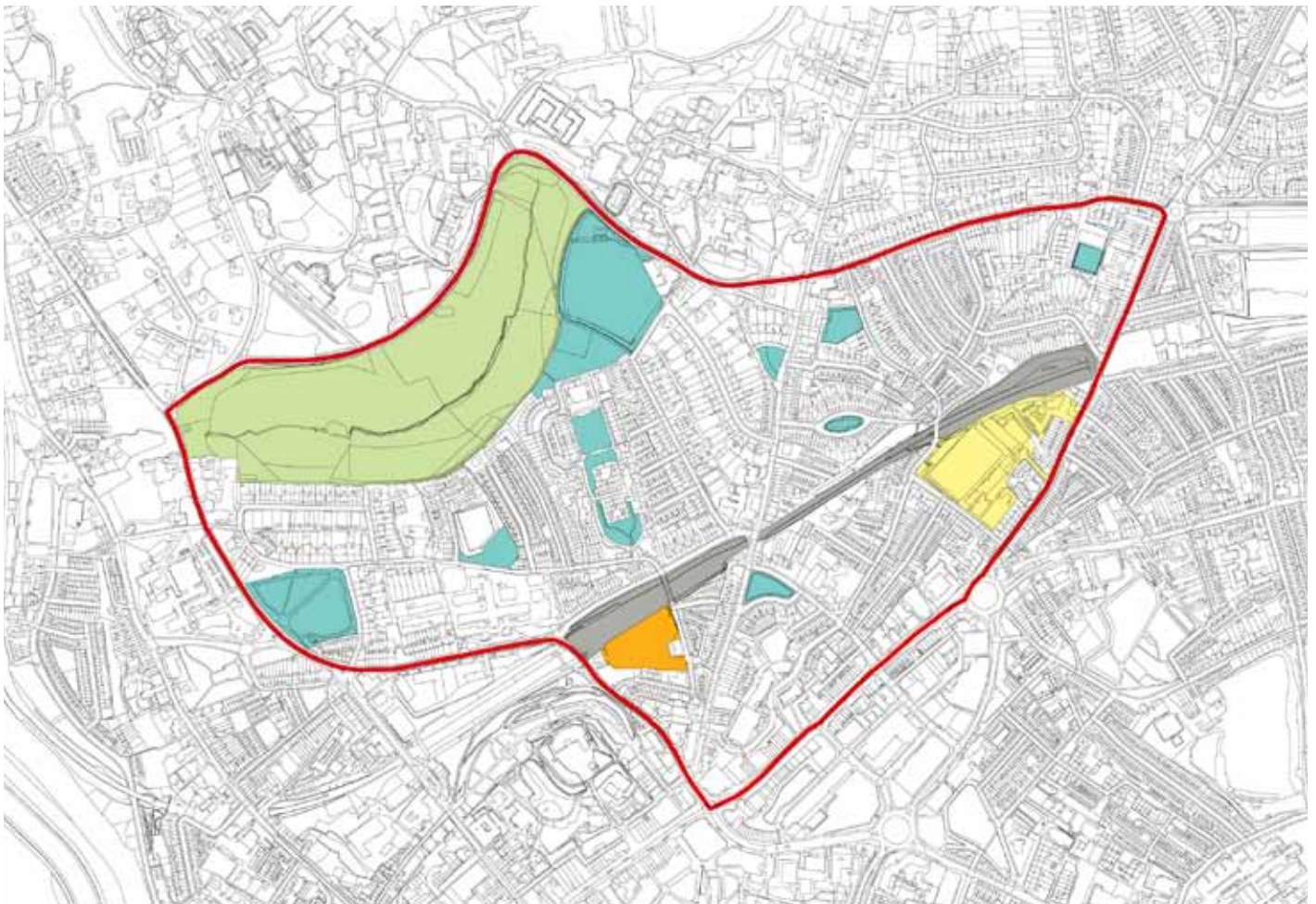
- a solution for the direct and safe flow of pedestrians and cyclists across the Blackall and York Road traffic route which separates the main residential areas of St James from the City Centre.
- effective cycle routes through and around St James between the University campus and the City.
- meeting the needs of carer-assist and electric wheel chair users in moving about the Ward and especially their access to Sidwell Street and the City Centre.
- strategic measures to dissuade traffic from approaching or bypassing the City Centre via the Blackall Road and York Road route by signage and traffic calming measures whilst allowing for local transport needs.
- measures to discourage the use of residential streets as alternative through routes.
- the restriction of HGV traffic through St James and monitoring the movement of HGVs to local shops should be monitored and managed.
- the provision of appropriate cycle and short term parking adjacent to shops and businesses






6.2 Policies for St James

Planning decisions are guided by policies which are referred to when planning applications are made to Exeter City Council. The Localism Act allows communities to develop their own policies, provided that they are based on sound evidence, community input and proper principles of planning. Policies have been developed for St James which seek to influence planning and development outcomes in order that they meet the requirements of the community. The policies have also been developed in the context of the Exeter City Council Core Strategy and will help to delivery its objectives.

The main policy issues are specified under each of the following seven headings:

1. Environment
2. Design
3. Community
4. Economy
5. Sustainable Development
6. Heritage
7. Transport



-  Policy EN1
-  Policy EN2
-  Railway Corridor
-  Policy SD1
-  Policy SD3

Environment

The Neighbourhood Plan will work to protect and enhance the natural environment of St James and ensure that natural resources are used prudently. The aim will be to ensure that St James is an attractive, environmentally healthy and sustainable place.

Green Spaces

All St James' green spaces including parks, allotments, front gardens and private and publicly accessible spaces contribute towards the character of the ward providing resources of nature conservation, recreation and community value. The community appreciate these spaces and feel that they should be protected and enhanced.

EN1: Protection of green spaces

Development immediately adjacent to or affecting green spaces that result in any harm to their character, setting, accessibility, appearance, general quality or amenity value will not be permitted unless the community will gain equivalent benefit from the provision of suitable replacement green space.

Hoopern Valley

This is by far the largest open space in the ward and is a valuable asset not just for St James but to the City as a whole. The site is designated as a County Wildlife Site and one of the City's Valley Parks. The Valley includes a good range of habitats and communities with many mature trees, extensive undergrowth, bramble thickets and a stream. The Hoopern Valley is a valuable asset for St James and the City as a whole in providing for nature conservation, walking and cycling links and recreational green space. The Exeter City Council (ECC) Core Strategy (CS) and emerging Site Allocations DPD recognise this value and afford protected status to the Hoopern Valley within its Valley Park designation, with the Exeter University Conservation Management Plan setting out a maintenance regime for the area.

Development is only acceptable in valley parks in exceptional circumstances. Where a proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with the Core Strategy and Local Development Plan it will also be expected to accord with the following policy.

EN2: Hoopern Valley

Development in the Hoopern Valley Park will not normally be permitted. Proposals that would enhance the accessibility, understanding or enjoyment of the biodiversity assets of the park may be considered provided;

- a) there would be no harm to its distinctive characteristics and special qualities, biodiversity or recreational and walking/cycling value*
- b) it would result in an improvement to the biodiversity value of the site, incorporating biodiversity features into buildings and landscape*
- c) it would restore, conserve and enhance wildlife habitats, corridors and any other features of ecological interest including those related to protected species.*

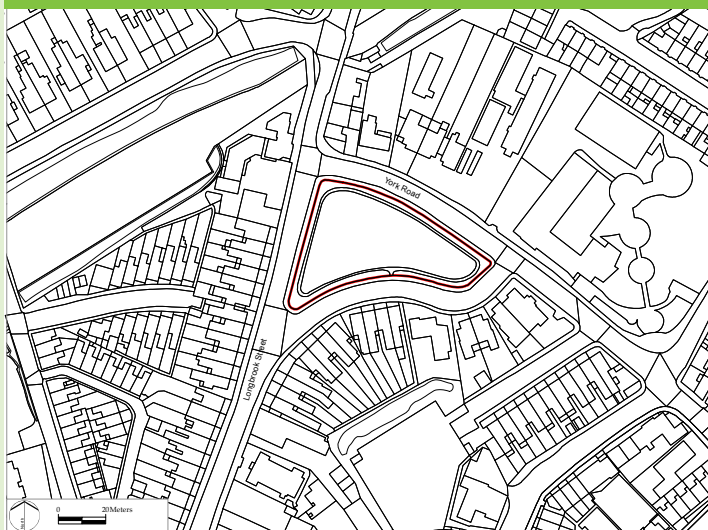
Queens Crescent

The community has identified Queens Crescent garden as an important asset and recognises an opportunity for the creation of a new community space. Located away from the busy city centre and close to several important local community facilities, this area has great potential to become a new urban park or play area. However, the plot and its adjoining walls suffer from neglect. Complex ownership issues mean that the site is poorly maintained with no management plan for upkeep or maintenance. In the past various voluntary groups have worked hard to try to improve this valuable asset and the space has been used for community events.

The triangle of land at Queens Crescent garden has been designated as a Local Green Space to ensure that the intrinsic community value of the space is recognised and protected.

EN3: Queens Crescent Garden Local Open Space

Development will only be permitted where it results in an improvement to character, accessibility, appearance, general quality or amenity value of Queens Crescent garden. New development should take opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site.



Queens Crescent Gardens Local Open Space

Gardens

Gardens are an important characteristic in some parts of St. James and add to the biodiversity, forming an extensive network of habitats and wild life corridors throughout St James, and their importance to the diversity and richness of urban landscapes is often overlooked. Gardens provide good sources of food for insects, and for birds. Moderate to large gardens may include nesting sites for birds, habitats for frogs, toads, slow-worms and hedgehogs etc, and also ponds, attracting dragonflies and other aquatic and semi-aquatic insects.

New development in St James that would result in the total loss or significant damage to residential gardens should be avoided. Wherever possible new development should incorporate front gardens in their frontage design where they would contribute to the streetscape, biodiversity and visual amenity of the Ward.

EN4: Gardens

Notwithstanding the application of normal general permitted development rights, development resulting in the total loss of private residential gardens will not be permitted

Trees

Trees and hedgerows perform a number of important roles in supporting biodiversity, providing attractive shade/shelter and generally improving health and amenity. Planting more street trees in strategic spaces is a key priority of the community. Sites specifically identified by the community include York Road, Well Street and Thornton Hill, West Avenue, Culverland Road and Union Road. New development should include the provision of suitable tree planting where appropriate.

EN5: Trees

Development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees or trees of good arboricultural and amenity value will not normally be permitted. Proposals affecting such trees would need to be accompanied by a tree survey.

Railway Corridor

The railway corridor is an important biodiversity asset within St James and the City in general. The steep embankments of the railway are covered with a jungle of brambles, shrubs, herbaceous plants and small trees. The area is rich in invertebrates, small mammals and nesting birds, and the embankments provide a broad wild life corridor across the ward, linking at the western end with Northernhay and Rougemont Gardens. There is a small system of allotments on the north side by St James Park station which again contribute to the biodiversity of the area and provide an important community facility. The important transport function performed by the station is recognised, improvements to the rail system are encouraged. However, rail companies who are responsibility for managing the embankments are urged to protect the biological assets of the rail corridor.

Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan supports ECC's Core Strategy objective to achieve excellence in design. For St James this will mean reflecting local character and historic interest while also encouraging innovative and cutting edge design to create sustainable buildings and spaces. A rich variety of architectural styles creates individuality to a number of different streets across the Ward. New development will be expected to contribute to this variety through innovative and creative design.

D1: Good quality design

All new development within St James must demonstrate good quality design. This means responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context as well as the existing built environment.

In St James good design means:

- respecting the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings;*
- respecting established building set back and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges;*
- ensuring proposals relate to established plot widths within streets where development is proposed, particularly where they establish a rhythm to the architecture in a street;*
- using good quality materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within St James;*
- innovation to achieve low carbon sustainable design.*

Good design will retain and protect existing trees of good environmental and amenity value and where applicable, provide sufficient external amenity space, refuse storage and car and bicycle parking to ensure a high quality and well managed interface with the public realm.

Planning permission will not be granted for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving local character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Retail, Commercial and Residential Frontages

Improving the quality of shop and commercial frontages, including signage, would have a positive impact upon the appearance and general character of several key parts of St James. The overwhelming majority of St James is made up of residential areas, thus the treatment of residential frontages has a significant impact on character across the ward. Ensuring a consistency of quality of residential boundary treatments which are easily maintained and include sufficient refuse storage is therefore very important. Regulation of 'To-Let' and 'Let-By' signs which can detract from the visual amenity of the ward should be enforced.

D2: Shop Frontages

New or renovated shop frontages should be of a high quality design and where possible improve the character of their local environment. Signs for shop fronts should be well-designed at a suitable scale and if illuminated should be lit appropriately and discreetly.

D3: Commercial frontages

New or renovated commercial frontages should positively address the public realm, should be of a high quality design and where possible improve the character of their local environment.

D4: Residential frontages

New or renovated residential frontages should relate well to the existing character and wherever possible improve the general street scene. New residential frontages should reflect the established building setback prevalent in the vicinity of the development providing suitable refuse storage and where possible include a front garden.

Community

Introduction

Development of appropriate housing to improve the social balance of the ward will be encouraged. This will be achieved through encouraging an appropriate range of services and housing types to address the imbalance in the community that has occurred as a result of growth in houses in multiple occupation, in particular, shared student houses in St. James.

Large scale purpose Built Student Accommodation

St James is a largely intact residential area with relatively few opportunities for large scale development. The Exeter City Vision and the ECC Site Allocations and Development Management document identifies areas of major regeneration to the east of Sidwell Street. A substantial amount of purpose built student accommodation is planned in this area and in some locations on the western side of Sidwell Street such as at the Stoneman and Bowker site within St James. In these locations it is possible to properly plan for large scale purpose built student accommodation. In other parts of St James this is less easy due to the residential character of the neighbourhood and the tight pattern of streets and spaces. The draft ECC Site Allocations and Development Management document includes a policy that enables purpose built student accommodation to be considered on its merits. The following policy adds to this policy to address the particular issues relevant to St James and adjacent areas

C1: Large Scale Purpose Built Student Accommodation

Large scale purpose built student accommodation will be permitted in areas where it can be properly integrated into the urban area. This means locations:

- a) that are not predominantly characterised by traditional residential development;*
- b) where the servicing and parking requirements can be achieved with no impact on the amenity of the adjacent area for residents;*

c) where the scale and massing of surrounding development is broadly similar to that of the any purpose built accommodation proposed.

Small Scale Purpose Built Accommodation

It is possible to integrate small scale student accommodation into the urban area successfully provided that it is well-designed. However the provision of small scale student accommodation, for example through the development of an infill site in a street, can have the same impact on community balance as the conversion of a property to HMO. If, overtime, all small scale development opportunities present as student accommodation, the balance of the community will be further skewed. For this reason it is proposed that the impact of small scale purpose built student accommodation on the balance of the neighbourhood should be considered when making planning decisions.

C2: Small Scale Purpose Built Student Accommodation

The development of small scale purpose built student accommodation will be permitted provided that:

- (a) the proposal will not prejudice the objective of creating a balanced community*
- (b) it responds well to the local context and reinforces local distinctiveness;*
- (c) appropriate provision is made for refuse storage, parking for disabled persons and cycle parking;*
- (d) sufficient internal and external amenity space is provided such that students feel at ease and comfortable;*
- (e) it does not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residents; and,*
- (f) a suitable management plan is submitted to demonstrate how the property will be managed in the long term to ensure acceptable amenity levels for occupiers and neighbouring residents.*



Well Street - potential for some small scale development and local market as part of community focus

C3: Community Balance:

Changes of use to houses in multiple occupation (HMO) will not be permitted unless;

- a) the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the building, adjacent buildings or local landscape context;
- b) the design, layout and intensity of use of the building would not have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenities;
- c) internal and external amenity space, refuse storage and car and bicycle parking is provided at an appropriate quantity, is of high standard and so as not to harm visual amenity
- d) the proposal would not cause unacceptable highway problems; and,
- e) the proposal would not result in an over concentration of HMOs in any one area of the Ward, to the extent that it would change the character of the area or undermine the maintenance of a balanced and mixed local community.

Community Focus

St James has no formally designated local centre. However, there is a concentration of community services, shops, organisations and businesses located in a cluster around Well Street, York Road, Queens Crescent and Longbrook Street. The significance of this area is recognised by the community who wish to support and promote appropriate new development to preserve the quality and character of this area. As such a new designation called a Local Community Centre has been defined in the Neighbourhood Plan.

C4: St James Local Community Centre

The St James Local Community Centre refers to the cluster of shops, services, organisations and businesses around Well Street, York Road, Queens Crescent and Longbrook Street. Development within the St. James Local Community Centre that enhances the character, viability or vitality of the Centre will be supported.

Allotments

St James has limited allotment provision. However, that which does exist on the railway embankment near St James Park station is highly valued by the community. A community garden / allotment can also be found at St Sidwell's Community Centre and this has potential to be a more valued community resource. It is the intention of the community to work with Network Rail and St Sidwell's Community Centre to secure and improve the use of community allotments in St James.

C5: Allotments

Proposals that result in harm to or loss of allotments in St. James not normally be permitted unless:

- a) replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent quality, where it will be located at reasonable convenience for the existing plot holders; or
- b) overriding community benefits are achieved.



St James Local Community Centre

Introduction

St James has a number of clusters of small businesses, in particular the Hems Centre and the Yeo and Davey site off Old Tiverton Road. Amongst the back streets of St James a number of smaller businesses and workshops can be found providing employment and meeting local needs. The Neighbourhood Plan will work to support local businesses, create links to and co-operate with larger businesses (such as the John Lewis Partnership), encourage new businesses, home working and social enterprises that benefit the community, and help in moving to a low carbon economy.

E1: Employment and Enterprise:

Proposals that support the development of small scale social enterprises and other businesses that meet the needs of the community, such as the creation of live work units, will be permitted provided that the proposals:

- a) do not involve the loss of dwellings;*
- b) contribute to the character and vitality of the local area;*
- c) are well integrated into, and complement, existing clusters of activity, such as the businesses at Hems Court.*
- d) Protect residential amenity*
- e) Do adversely impact upon road safety*

Retail

The majority of shops and services within St. James are concentrated in areas such as Sidwell Street and parts of Longbrook Street. However, smaller clusters of retail units and businesses provide important services and facilities to localised catchment areas. The neighbourhood plan supports the retention of individual and/or small clusters of existing retail and business premises where they provide an important service to the community. In addition the businesses along Well Street which form part of the Local Community Centre are also included in a new Neighbourhood Retail Area allocation.

Improvements to the public realm will also have a positive impact upon the shopping environment within St James. Proposals to improve areas of public realm should also consider the opportunities to increase footfall through improvements to the pedestrian environment.

E2: Neighbourhood Retail

Appropriate retail development which meets the needs of the community will be encouraged within the St James Local Centre. Within the St James Local Centre proposals for the development of a small market will be supported in the following locations:

Well Street

Longbrook Street

Sidwell Street

Appropriate and well located local retail /food and drink development will be permitted provided that:

- a) the impact of development does not detract from the character of the area;*
- b) the proposed use is not already oversupplied in the area, such as excessive concentration of takeaway restaurants.*
- c) Protect residential amenity*
- d) Do adversely impact upon road safety*

Sustainable Development

Promoting new sustainable development opportunities within St. James.

The Neighbourhood Plan will work to encourage regeneration and appropriately located new development opportunities that help to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives across the Ward.

Football Club/Yeo and Davey:

Land surrounding and to the north of Exeter St James FC represents the biggest development opportunity in the Ward. Exeter City Football Club is wholly owned by the supporters and makes an important educational and charitable contribution to the City. The community of St James is highly supportive of the Football Club and wishes it to remain as a positive part of the Ward. Currently it presents unattractive facades to Well Street and St James Road. The adjacent Yeo and Davey garage site fronts Old Tiverton Road and the railway embankment and visually detracts from the area, whilst also providing local services valued by the community. Appropriate development which sensitively relates to surrounding areas is supported.

SD1: Football Club / Yeo and Davey Site

Proposals that secure the continued vitality and viability of the Football Club and encourage comprehensive well-designed mixed use development are supported provided they:

- a) result in positive, attractive and well-designed frontages of an appropriate scale to Well Street, St James Road, Old Tiverton Road and the railway corridor;*
- b) are of a scale, form and character appropriate to the residential nature of St James;*
- c) adopt high standards of sustainable design;*
- d) take account of the need to improve the balance of the community;*
- e) adopt layout and arrangement of access and egress that minimises the impact of additional traffic on surrounding residential streets such as Oxford Road;*

f) encourage a flexible and 'joined up plan' for both the Football Club and the Yeo & Davey site.

Exeter Cricket Club:

The Cricket Club is a valued community asset and green space. However investment is required to ensure the long term viability of the Club and the preservation of the open space and character of the site. The community recognises that there may be some development potential in a small part of the Cricket Club site provided that it secures the longer term future of the green space. However the site is a sensitive location with heritage importance and requires the highest standards of layout and design.

SD2: Exeter Cricket Club

Development that retains a viable Cricket Club site as enabling development will be supported where:

- design proposals have been developed in consultation with the community;*
- proposals are supported by a thorough landscape and visual appraisal of the site to determine impact on local views and the Hoopern Valley;*
- high standards of design and*
- construction are achieved.*

Howell Road Car Park:

This is an important asset for businesses and retailers in St James, and ensuring adequate parking is provided for these facilities is a key objective. However it could also provide a good location for affordable housing which meets the needs of local people. As ECC and DCC implement proposals to encourage the use of the train and park and ride, the car park may become surplus to requirements and become subject to development pressure. In principle, some appropriate development may be supported provided that the site's value to local businesses is retained.

SD3: Howell Road Car Park

Any proposals for the development of the Howell Road Car Park should be subject to consultation and development with the local community, and in particular local businesses on Longbrook Street.

Climate change:

The community supports ECC's core strategy policy to ensure that St James makes the fullest contribution possible to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and the transition to a low carbon economy.

SD4: Adapting to climate change

All new development within St. James should seek to achieve high standards of sustainable development, and in particular demonstrate in proposals how design, construction and operation has sought to:

- a) reduce the use of fossil fuels;*
- b) promote the efficient use of natural resources, the re-use and recycling of resources, and the production and consumption of renewable energy;*
- c) adopt and facilitate the flexible development of low and zero carbon energy through a range of technologies;*
- d) link the provision of low and zero carbon energy infrastructure in new developments to existing buildings.*

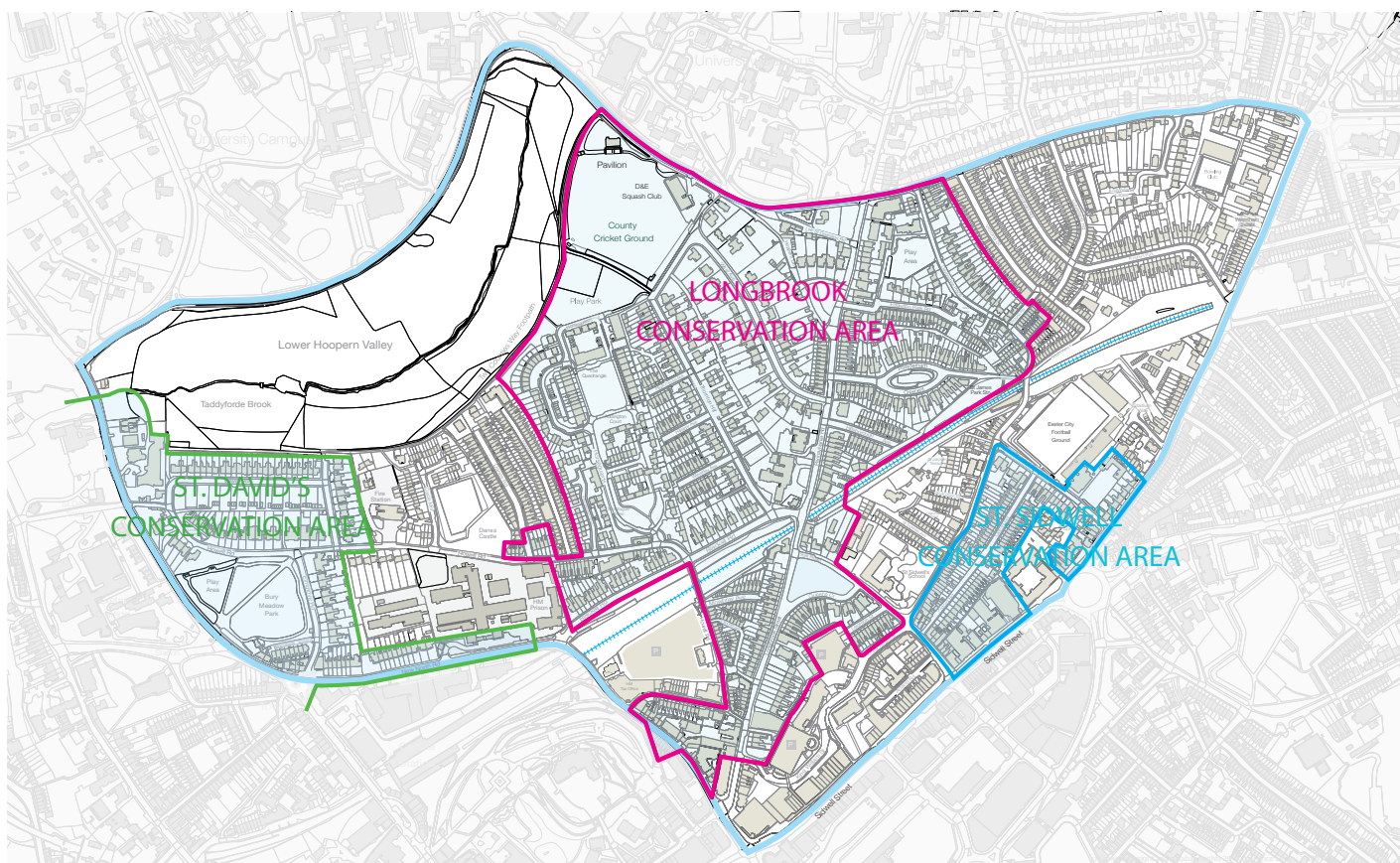
Heritage

Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan will work to protect and enhance the historic built environment of St James. St James is an area with a rich variety of architectural styles and periods including details which give character to individual buildings, streets and spaces. Three areas are recognised as conservation areas throughout the ward. But outside the main conservation areas there are attractive streets in which development proposals and refurbishments must also be carried out sensitively.

H1: Heritage

Development affecting heritage assets within St James must pay special regard to preserving or enhancing its setting and any special architectural or historic features of significance that it possesses.



Transport

Making St James a more accessible and attractive place for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Neighbourhood Plan will work to create a movement network that reflects the predominantly residential character of the area, serves local transport requirements and encourages more sustainable means of transport. Most people choose to live in St James because of its proximity to Exeter City Centre or the University Campus. During term time approximately 40% of the population are students. There is also a substantial number of retired people and people working from home. Consequently a great number of residents' journeys are made on foot or bicycle. The implementation of transport policies will require close working between the community of St James, ECC and DCC.

Sustainable transport

St James is a sustainable location at the heart of the City. The primary means of transport should be walking, cycling and public transport. Measures should be taken to increase the attractiveness of these modes of transport, and support will be given to ECC and DCC to implement sustainable transport proposals, in particular use of the bus and railway, and longer term plans for park and ride on the edge of the city.

T1: Sustainable Transport

Proposals which enhance the attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport will be supported.

Strategic traffic

With the works to London Inn Square, traffic movement has changed considerably with York Road and Longbrook Street suffering high levels of congestion. York Road is the location of many of the community buildings in the Ward, including St Sidwell's School. Longbrook Street is a main

walking and cycling artery into the town and the increased congestion on the Street has detracted substantially from the experience of approaching the city by foot. John Lewis which tends to attract car-based shoppers is likely to increase the traffic and parking issues in the Ward.

T2: Strategic traffic

ESJF will work with ECC and DCC to direct strategic traffic, and in particular HGV traffic, around and away from the Ward through good strategic signage and education of car users. Design and highways proposals which make the main streets through St James less attractive as strategic traffic routes will be supported. This may include measures to slow traffic or establish pedestrian priority through the use of 'shared space' principles.

Residential streets

The vision of the community is for St James to be recognised as a great place in which to live. To realise this vision it is necessary that more people feel confident enough to make the area their long-term home. The enhancement and protection of residential streets as great living environments requires that they are protected from the impact of increased traffic, rat-running and parking by shoppers and commuters.

T3: Residential Streets

Residential streets will be protected from the impact of traffic and rat-running, where necessary through traffic calming and gateway treatments to deter non-resident traffic. Proposals for the use of traffic calming and shared space treatments to create 'home zones' will be supported along with temporary use of streets as social space, for example play streets.

Parking for shops and businesses

The provision of appropriate well-located cycle and short term parking is a key issue for local businesses, particularly those dependent on passing trade.

T4: Short term parking for local businesses

Proposals for the provision of well-located cycle and short term parking spaces to meet the needs of local business will be supported. In key streets the community will work with ECC and DCC to investigate measures to enhance the viability of local business through parking provision which enables businesses to benefit from passing trade.

Accessibility for all

St James has an established residential population and includes people at all stages of their lives including the elderly and disabled. As a community in close proximity to services and facilities St James is a good location for elderly and disabled people. It is a key aspiration of the Neighbourhood Plan that St James becomes 'accessible for all' by ensuring that new developments, highways improvements and public realm works are carried out to make St James accessible to all.

T5: Accessibility for all

Proposals that improve the accessibility of St James for all sectors of society including the elderly and disabled will be supported.

T6: St James station:

Proposals for development at St James Park railway station should improve the accessibility and facilities of the station and take opportunities for contributing towards improving allotment provision and access.

Appendix 1 Projects

Through the plan preparation process ESJF has collected a list of all ideas for projects. These ideas have been consulted on and members of the community have been able to vote for their priority projects. The key priority projects are reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan

Projects in order of popularity	Score
3. Improve Queens Crescent (open space at junction of York Road and Longbrook Street) as a community 'Green'	79
17. Work with council and University to improve management and storage of waste	77
1. Identification of key streets for home zone type treatment to reduce and slow traffic, improve safety and make pedestrian friendly	74
13. Street tree planting – identify streets to focus on and establish a tree planting campaign	74
11. Find a site to develop some affordable sustainable homes for local people	73
8. Work with voluntary organisations (such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) to improve the environment of St James - from management of the natural environment to the re-pointing of walls	70
21. Improve pedestrian connections from York Road to Sidwell Street – improve pavement, levels and surfacing	70
16. Work with Network Rail to protect and enhance flora and fauna along the railway corridor	68
22. Improve appearance of Well Street as important link between St James and football ground	67
6. Work to help individual Resident Associations to improve their communal and local green spaces (eg Devonshire Place / Powderham Crescent)	65
31. Set up a community enterprise or community interest company to coordinate and bring forward non-profit making projects that benefit the community.	65
14. Develop a Community Renewable Energy project to promote the use of low carbon energy and heat and improve the efficiency of buildings	64
7. Project to find more allotments for community users	63
18. Work with Network Rail to secure the future of the allotments at St James Park Station	63
23. To set up a residents data base where evidence can be collected regarding traffic impact on the lives of the residents of St James	62
2. Street Frontages Improvement Project – to give some key front gardens and frontages a makeover	61
20. Work to restore disabled parking in the area (on Sidwell St)	61
24. Work with Network Rail and the Council to Upgrade St James Station	60
25. Make York Road into a more attractive street	59
26. Work to promote the creation of more pedestrian and cycle friendly routes eg extension of the Hoopern Valley path to join New North Rd	59
9. Start an initiative to encourage householders to improve the biodiversity of their gardens	58
10. Work with the University to support biodiversity and low key recreational improvements in the Hoopern Valley	56
4. Identification of priority streets for resurfacing	55
12. Create St James Historic Trail	53
30. Have a blitz on the unsightly graffiti – eg Trafalgar Place	53
5. Work with Council to 'declutter' the ward	52

27. Improve signage within St James (but after de-cluttering!)	51
28. Improve Gardens and Frontage of St Sidwell	51
19. Plants in Big Containers as in St Johns Walk	50
15. Develop a project to put plaques on interesting buildings and places (like Sidmouth)	49
29. A New History Board at Danes Castle	44

Suggestions for other projects

Combine green trail with heritage trail
More street bins esp for recycling
St James Community party
Set up a scheme like "Exeter Lets" a non sterling currency for St James Residents only ie share the use of a ladder/shredder/floor sander etc
St James Business Network
Recycling street bins
St James summer party, green space, raising awareness of area to both residents and students, establishing positive relations
Increase in location of recycling banks and on-street recycling
An emphasis on quality student housing- working with the students guild and university for ideas on where students want to live- ie not purpose built accomodation
Increase availability of small recycling centres near main shopping areas - eg bottle banks and litter bins on Sidwell St
Draw up register of landlords in Ward- keep them informed of policies (getting them more interested in the area in which they own properties)
Public transport- improve current bus service within the ward- more frequent buses, to run in the evenings maybe and Sundays
Create attractive practical walking routes through the ward, to the University and to the City Centre, not subservient to the traffic routes
Defend family style housing from appropriation for students- who are here only 9 months of the year and have little commitment to the ward
Accept the inevitable fact that some roads will always be student areas. Work to minimise their impacts on other areas, but also to optimise them for comfortable, functioning student use.
Work with housing association/design other strategies to return HMOs to long term residents
Identify university students/university staff to volunteer and bring certain community spaces up to scratch (some work already done in Queen's Crescent)
Use the upcoming Jubilee Tea Party in Queen's Crescent to invite forum members and discuss the future upkeep/conservation of the space in collaboration with the Uni/Student staff helpers...perhaps a good time to do a gardening skills audit
Approach members of the University Grounds Staff to ask if they can donate their expertise to carry out the "tree audit" mentioned
Could we organise an "en masse" skills swap- bringing people together to explore various expertise
Extend use of seagull deterrent bags with help from the student community wardens
Crime text messaging

Produce a listing of people in St James who teach a musical instrument and give private lessons, singing lessons etc.
Within other projects, highlight how well St James is situated within the city. Close to Cathedral, Museum, Bus station, railway, airport, - perhaps on a wider picture advertise just how good an area it is to live in for families, couples, elderly etc This could draw people to come to St James as permanent residents. Advertise the area further and further afield. try to bring St James back to a good residential area rather than streets and streets of let houses.
Make St James "better for riding a bike" and safer too. This is very important especially for young children riding their bikes to school in St James
Identify pieces of derelict land and approach owners concerning maintenance- if necessary offering help.
Minibus- continually circulating through St James where buses do not go eg Western Avenue, Thornton Hill, Blackwell, Howell Road, Velwell Road, Elm Grove New North Road, Blackall Road, Pennsylvania, Union Road, Victoria Street/Prospect Park, Old Tiv Road, St James Road, Well St, York Road
Sponsor for good architecture for development of Football Ground (John Lewis/Uni?) This would increase the likelihood of success as conference centre as well as improving St James
Short stay parking for elderly (not necessarily disabled) parkers shopping ?Badges for St James residents even if we pay for them?The elderly population is increasing and neither the city council nor Devon CC re giving thought to enabling them to continue to live easily in Exeter in fact all their schemes seem to make life more difficult.
Employ landscape architect for ideas for King William Street (or is there a willing resident)
Work with the football club and council to ensure some of the development be homes for local people rather than solely student flats.
Development of protocol between ECC, University and individual streets to prevent any portion of St James being degraded by presence of temporary populations, eg reduction of housing agent "TO LET" signage, daily clearance of glass, clearance of spillage of general rubbish etc.

Appendix 2 Response Form

Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan
Pre-Submission Consultation Response Form
TO BE RETURNED BY 23 NOVEMBER 2012 TO:

info@exeterstjamesforum.org or
Exeter St James Forum
c/o St Sidwell's Community Centre
Sidwell Street, Exeter , EX4 6NN

Contact Name , Address and Email:
Please state which part (s) of the plan your comment apply
Please state fully and clearly your comments or concerns: <p style="text-align: right;">Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary</p>
Please indicate what change, or alternative approach, would resolve your concerns <p style="text-align: right;">Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary</p>
Are there any omissions from the Plan (Please specify)
DATA PROTECTION NOTICE: Information given on this form will be used to help prepare the Final Neighbourhood Plan. Please be aware that your comments, including personal details, may be made publicly available.
Signature..... Date.....

St James Exeter

A Neighbourhood Plan for our
vibrant and diverse community

