

Exeter St James

Neighbourhood Plan

March 2013



SUSTAINABILITY

PEOPLE

CONSERVATION
RETAIL

COMMUNITY

HISTORY

TRANSPORT

PROSPERITY

DIVERSITY

CITY CENTRE

UNIVERSITY

HOOPERN VALLEY

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with support from **LDÄ DESIGN**

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The Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2028

Welcome on behalf of Exeter St James Forum (ESJF) to the 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 the views of residents and other stakeholders, 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 paid consultants and thank LDA Design who were commissioned to assist ESJF in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Jo Hawkins
Chairman, Exeter St James Forum

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 with different character areas that abut 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 live 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 'houses in multiple occupation' (HMO) and flats, skewing the age profile

of the Ward. According to the 2011 census 52.8% of St James residents are aged between 19-25, having risen 11.4% over the last decade, whilst in other parts of Exeter such as St Thomas or St Leonards the corresponding figure is closer to 10%. 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 corporate buildings and car parks and changes to roads and public spaces on the edge of the city centre have resulted in more traffic moving 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. A community survey of 600 permanent and student residents by the University in 2011 found that both groups had similar concerns about the experience of living in the Ward, in particular refuse storage, transient noise and domestic noise.

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 HMO in parts of St. James need to be accompanied by a joined up plan to regenerate 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. Consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan ran for a six week period from 10 October to 23 November. All comments were then analysed by members of the community working on the plan a final draft was produced.

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 final draft was formally reviewed by an Examiner appointed by Exeter City Council. The Examiner made a number of recommendations to improve the plan which are reflected in this document.



The Big Neighbourhood drop in



Kids corner



The creative table

3.0 What the Plan Aims to Achieve

The right for communities to prepare neighbourhood plans was established through the Localism Act 2011. The rules governing the preparation of neighbourhood plans are set out in Neighbourhood Planning Regulations which were published in 2012. These rules give communities a say in how their local areas are planned and how planning rules should be addressed. In particular neighbourhood plans must:

- meet the requirements of certain EU directives relating to human rights and habitat protection;
- be in keeping with policies that determine how UK planning decisions should be made which are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework;
- be in compliance with the most important strategic policies prepared by the local planning authority, in the case of St James, Exeter City Council;
- explain how the plan seeks to achieve sustainable development;
- explain how the community and organisations have helped to prepare the neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood plans are mainly intended to be used in making planning decisions. When a development or change is proposed in St James Ward Exeter City Council will be required to refer to the Neighbourhood Plan and check whether proposals are in keeping with policies the community has developed. In planning terms the policies set out in Section 6.0 of this document are therefore the most important part of the Plan. The policies in the plan will apply for the next 15 years, 2013-2028.

Many local people also want to improve St James and would like to bring forward projects to make the area a more attractive place to live, work and visit. Many projects to improve the ward were proposed during the period that the Plan was being prepared. The Neighbourhood Plan describes priority projects that the community will seek to bring forward over the coming years.

These priority projects do not have planning weight but are included in the Plan as a focus for community action.

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 local hub 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 hub 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.

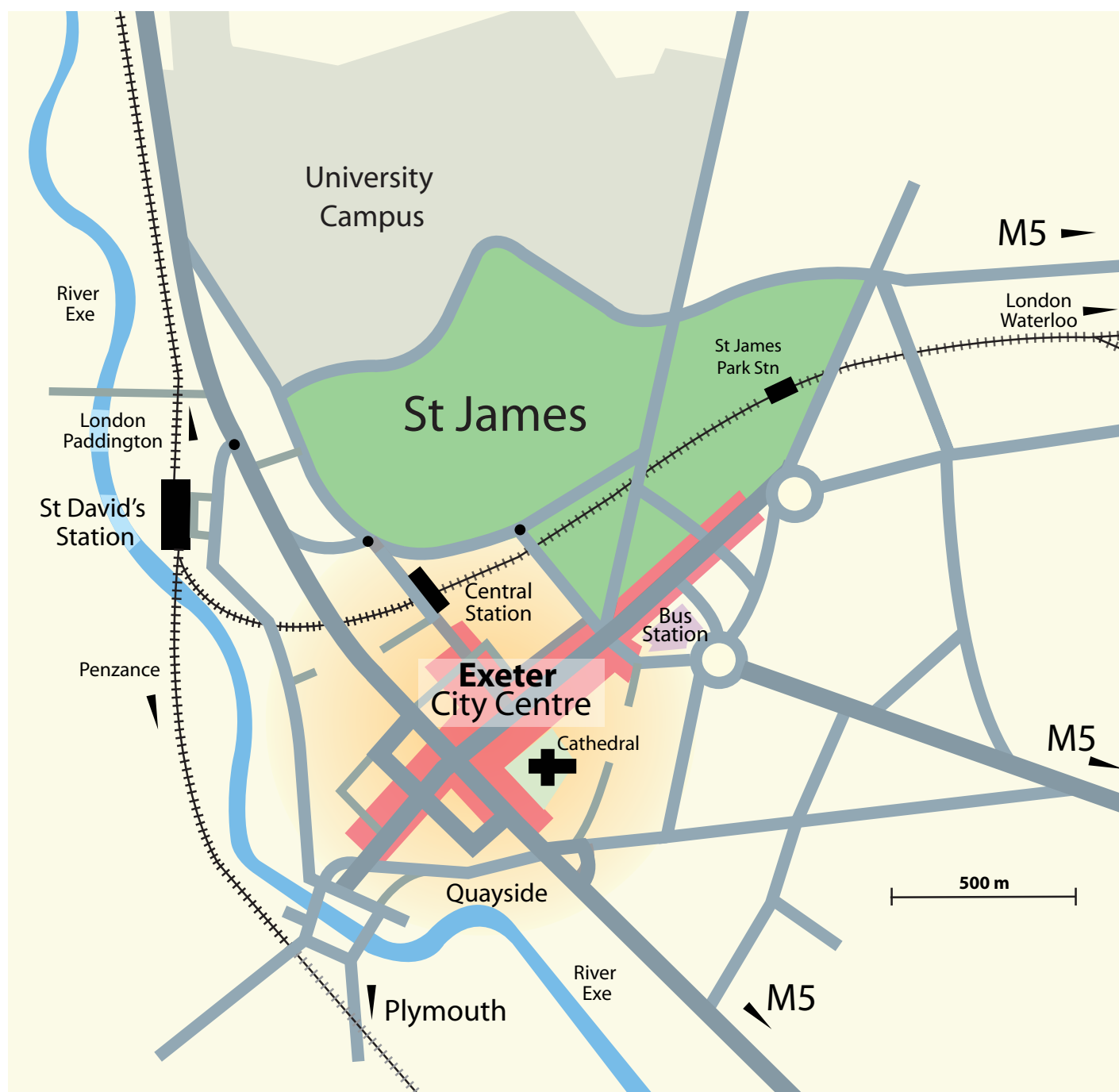


Figure 2: St James in the Exeter Context

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 underway. 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.

The Exeter City Centre Vision and planning policies prepared by Exeter City Council envisage major new commercial and residential development to the east of Sidwell Street, creating a new quarter on the edge of St James known as the Grecian Quarter. The regeneration of the Grecian Quarter by the City Council provides an opportunity to properly plan for the larger scale development needed to meet the modern needs of Exeter. It is a good place to locate some of the types of development that are difficult to accommodate within residential streets, for example larger leisure buildings and shops and purpose built student accommodation. Such uses could help to underpin the vitality of this new part of the city.

Within this wider context, St James should have a distinct character identity and role. The predominantly residential nature of the ward means that it best placed to develop as a great place to live in a sustainable location adjacent to jobs, services and education. As Exeter grows the importance of a variety of good quality homes close to the City Centre will become increasingly important to its cultural life and sustainability.

Due to its proximity to the University student residents will always be a key part of the community of St James and will help to give it its distinct character and vitality. The ward will continue to be an attractive place for students to live as a valued and integrated part of a balanced and sustainable community. A significant number of students decide to stay in Exeter once they have completed their studies with real benefits to the local economy. St James should provide opportunities for students entering employment or post graduate education to continue to live within the ward.

Traffic circulation continues to cause significant issues in the Ward. These are a major concern to local people. The City and County Councils are working together with key landowners 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 railway 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



Figure 3: St James Community Hub

5.0 The St James Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2028

5.1 Vision

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that St. James is a vibrant neighbourhood with a balanced and diverse community (as defined in the preamble to Policy C1). It will be a great place to live and work close to the city centre and University and will support Exeter's character, identity and cultural life. St James will become known by people at all stages of their lives as one of the best parts of the City in which to live.

St James will be known for its strong 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 and beyond 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 community hub for St James shown in figure 3 opposite 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 hub for 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. Development should also provide for people who currently find it difficult to find appropriate accommodation in St James including families, university staff, older people and first time buyers seeking good quality sustainable housing.
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 and improving the pedestrian crossing and public space near the Clock Tower.
4. Defining a future character for Sidwell Street that helps it to respond to the shifting balance of uses and new development proposed in the Grecian Quarter, and which helps to secure a long term future for the Methodist Church. This new future is likely to build on the potential for it to accommodate a mix of small scale independent traders that meet the needs of passing trade and the growing student population.
5. 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 and Exeter City Council.
6. 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. The potential to secure funding for community projects in Exeter has been made possible through the creation of a Local Infrastructure Fund which allocates a proportion of New Homes Bonus towards community projects. Other sources of funding are also open to communities. Major development proposals on the edge of St James in the future offer the prospect of s106 and CIL funding to address major issues such as public realm enhancements and transport infrastructure improvements.

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 Council's Core Strategy. When development is proposed within St James either by developers, private individuals or other organisations, these policies will be referred to by Exeter City Council (ECC), Devon County Council (DCC) and the Government when planning decisions are made.

It is recognised that the Devon County Council as highways authority have considerable powers to implement changes to traffic infrastructure and transport systems and that the transport policies set out in this document will only apply in a limited number of circumstances. The principal means by which the transport policies will be implemented will be through the creation of a partnership between the community, DCC, and ECC to address major transport issues as Exeter grows.

6.1 Projects

The community has demonstrated 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. These 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 regenerate 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 six projects which will help to achieve these outcomes are described on the following pages.

Following comments received on the draft Neighbourhood Plan 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 through traffic and parking as the city centre grows. There is a need to address transport issues in a positive and creative way to seek solutions which reduce community impacts and allow the council to achieve their strategic economic development aims.

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 Exeter Community Initiatives through its Harvest project 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;
- Creation of a community management company
- A community design exercise involving a professional landscape architect 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
- Consideration of the potential for small scale community growing plots
- New seating, a possible water feature and community art
- A small toddlers/infants play area
- A 'pop up' café kiosk
- Bidding for funding
- Implementation

Project 2: Work with the Council and University to manage any adverse impacts that arise from the high level of student accommodation within the ward.

Whilst student residents are a positive part of the community of St James, the large concentration of student accommodation within some streets has a significant impact on both permanent and student resident alike, as revealed by the University's 2011 Community Survey. The University and the University's Community Liaison Officer are doing much to deal with these impacts and have a community engagement plan. Many of the



Project 1: Improve Queens Crescent Garden



Powderham Crescent



Pennsylvania Road

impacts are no fault of the student residents. For example, over the last decade the urban quality of some streets such as Victoria Street and Springfield Road has declined markedly because landlords of HMOs have not always maintained their properties. In some 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 refuse bags, it is possible more could be done, perhaps drawing on experience from elsewhere in the UK and Europe. This project involves working with the University to manage the impacts of high levels of HMO concentration on the ward. The project may include:

- The creation of a joint ECC/Community/University steering group;
- Research into how the impacts of high levels of student accommodation have been managed elsewhere;
- Development of proposals to address the main impacts, including:
 - Establishment of landlord accreditation scheme and possible landlord directory together with other measures to encourage / require landlords to improve and maintain their properties;
 - Implementation of waste management, glass recycling and storage issues;
 - Investment in small scale community projects to support the community.

Project 3: Identification of key streets for environmental enhancement to reduce and slow traffic, improve safety and enhance the streetscape.

One of the key messages that should be projected by the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan is that St James is a good place in which to live for people at all stages of their lives. This message might be projected by choosing one or more key streets where there is a real opportunity to reverse the loss of balance in community by investing in the environment. Physical improvements to streets

and spaces can encourage people to invest in their own properties and help promote the conversion of neglected properties back to residential use. Two to three key streets improved in this way would 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 increase its desirability as a place in which to live.

It would be entirely up to residents' associations to identify streets that could be enhanced in this way. Well Street does not currently have a residents association but would be an important candidate for enhancement due to its location at the heart of the ward and adjacent community uses which include shops, school, pub and railway station. Some improvement of streets in the student areas around the end of Springfield Road and Victoria Street and at Danes Road and Hoopern Street could also have a major impact on overall perceptions of the Ward.

The project may include:

- Residents' association identification of potential to enhance key streets;
- 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;
- Drawing up and implementing plans for enhancements in partnership with Exeter City Council and Devon County Council.

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. It can also help to mitigate the impacts of climate change by helping cool the urban 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;
- Involvement of an arboriculturist or landscape architect in the selection of appropriate tree species to avoid impacts on pavements, services and buildings;
- ESJF support for RA ideas for preparation of a 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. Trees which enrich the biodiversity of St James would be encouraged.

Project 5: Promote the development of 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 student residents rather than other sectors of the community. This project seeks to promote the development of affordable homes in St James. 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 suitable sites;
- 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.

This project may result in the creation of a Community Interest Company set up with the specific aim of regenerating St James through the development of affordable homes and the conversion of HMO back to residential use. Such a company would have a charitable status and would be established to invest any proceeds of development back in to the community.

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 for key sites through a Neighbourhood Development Order or could even become involved in bringing forward homes through the Community Right to Build, a new power granted to local communities by Government.

Major Partnership Project:

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 similar wards in the city. There has been an increase in bicycle use amongst the student population and anecdotal evidence of a decrease in car use. 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, Exeter City Council, the Police, major land owners such as Land Securities and other transport bodies, work together to resolve transport issues and monitor impacts of changes.

In particular:

- the encouragement of sustainable public transport, in particular greater use of the rail halt at St James' Park to reduce the number of cars entering the ward;
- effective cycle routes through and around St James between the University campus and the city;
- a solution for the direct and safe flow of pedestrians and cyclists across key junctions, in particular the Blackall Road and York Road traffic route which separates the main residential areas of St James from the City Centre and the pedestrian crossing near the Clock Tower;
- 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 access needs;

measures to discourage the use of residential streets as alternative through routes;

- the restriction of HGV traffic through St James and monitoring and management of HGVs to local shops; provision of appropriate cycle and short term parking adjacent to shops and businesses and effective management of residents parking.

Policies

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 which seek to influence planning and development outcomes in order that they help to achieve the vision for St James. The policies are compliant with UK Government Policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and strategic policies set out in the Exeter City Council Core Strategy and the emerging Site Allocations and Development Management Document.

In line with the principles of sustainable development, which require that planning addresses environmental, social and economic issues, the main policy areas are specified under each of the following seven headings:

- Environment
- Design
- Community
- Economy
- Sustainable Development
- Heritage
- Transport

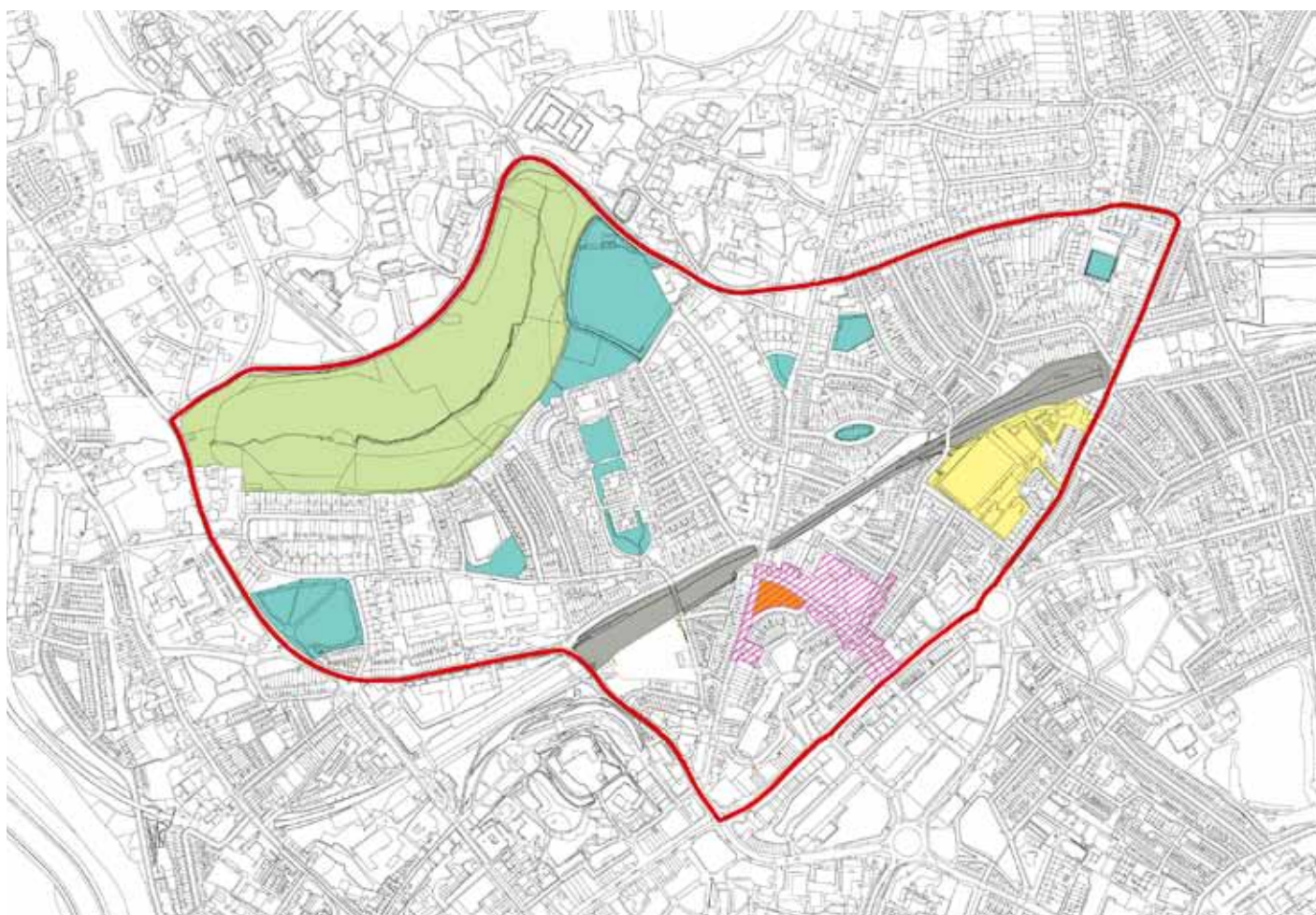
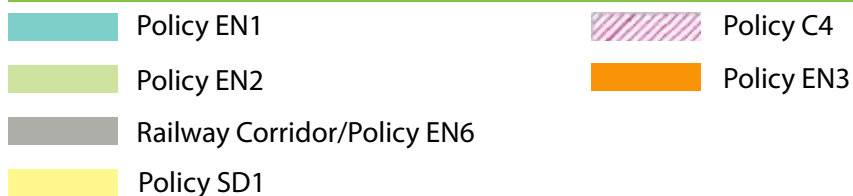


Figure 4: Policy Map



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 are seeking to ensure that they are protected and enhanced.

EN1: Protection of green spaces

Development that results in the loss of green spaces identified on Figure 4 or that results in any harm to their character, setting, accessibility, appearance, general quality or amenity value would only be permitted if the community would gain equivalent benefit from the provision of suitable replacement green space or gain significant social, economic or environmental benefits from an alternative facility

Hoopern Valley

This is by far the largest open space in the ward and is a valuable asset not just for St James but for 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. It includes walking and cycling links and recreational green space. The Hoopern Valley will also help the city to adapt to the effects of climate change and helps to mitigate against downstream flooding by allowing for infiltration and water attenuation. 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. The University and Exeter City are working together to manage the Hoopern Valley / Taddiforde Brook and have

developed a 5 year management plan which was adopted in 2012. The community supports the management plan and the intention to conserve the landscape and ecological value of the area. There is a strong desire within some sectors of the community to see improved access to the valley and improved footpath surfacing.

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 which would detract from the landscape or ecological value of 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 its distinctive character, biodiversity and recreational value is retained and there would be no harm to its special qualities including its wildlife habitats, corridors and any other features of ecological interest including those related to protected species. Where appropriate, development should also restore, conserve or enhance the biodiversity value of the area, for example through the incorporation of biodiversity features into buildings and landscape.

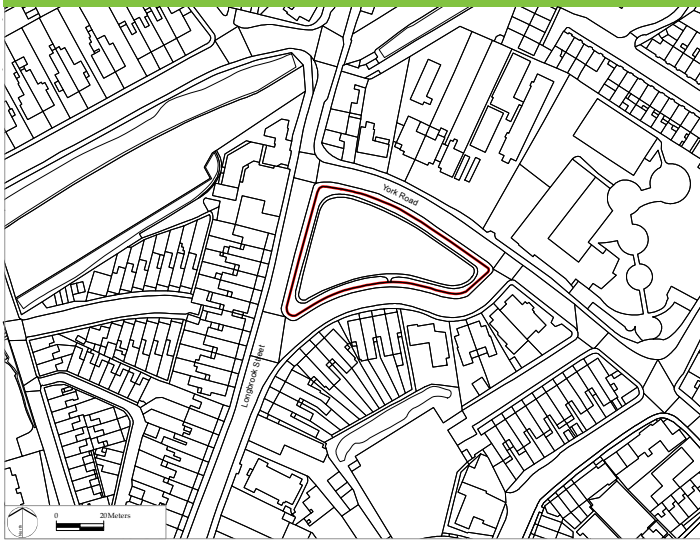
Queens Crescent Garden

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. Ownership issues mean that over time the site has been 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 Green Space

Development within Queens Crescent garden would only be permitted where it forms a part of a comprehensive landscape design for the garden. Proposals would be expected to enhance the community enjoyment of the green space and contribute to an improvement to the character, accessibility, appearance and general quality or amenity value of the garden through new planting, improvements to walls, paths and provision of features in accordance with the comprehensive plan.



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. In the longer term gardens will be essential to help society adapt to the effects of climate change and allow for the growing of local food. They are therefore a resource to be protected for now and for the future. Development affecting residential gardens should;

- ensure that the visual and physical connectivity of private green space provided by gardens is maintained;
- take opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of green space corridors provided by private gardens; and
- meet the standards of design as set out by policy D1.

EN4: Gardens

Development which results in the loss of or significant harm to the ecological or landscape value of private residential gardens will not normally 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. Trees will also help St James adapt to the effects of Climate Change. 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 should be designed to retain ancient trees or trees of arboricultural and amenity value. Proposals should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees.

Biodiversity

St James has a good network of green spaces and reasonable biodiversity for an urban area. This biodiversity is important to the ward and its residents. The key biodiversity assets of the ward are the Hoopern Valley and the railway corridor together with the network of gardens that connect the two.

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 wildlife 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 of St James Park station which again contribute to the biodiversity of the area and provide an important community facility.

EN6: Biodiversity

Proposals which result in a loss of biodiversity will not normally be permitted. Development that is likely to have either a direct or indirect adverse impact upon areas of local biodiversity importance should demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation could be provided and where possible achieve a net enhancement to the biodiversity within the ward.



Queens Crescent Garden

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 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 but also respect the scale and rhythm of streets established by plot width and building setback.

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.

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:

- a) achieving high quality design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings;*
- b) respecting established building set back and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges;*
- c) 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;*
- d) using good quality materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within St James;*
- e) adopting the principles of sustainable urban drainage;*
- f) meeting the requirements of 'Secure by Design' to minimise the likelihood and fear of crime;*
- g) innovation to achieve low carbon sustainable design.*

Good design should provide sufficient external amenity space, refuse and recycling storage and car and bicycle parking to ensure a high quality and well managed streetscape. 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.

D2: Retail and Commercial Frontages

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

Introduction

Development of appropriate housing to improve the social balance of the ward will be encouraged. In St James there is currently an imbalance between the number of HMOs and other forms of residential property. This has been recognised by ECC which has put in place an Article 4 Direction which removes permitted development rights for HMO development. The high proportion of HMOs has arisen as a result of demand primarily from students. Due to its proximity to the University St James is always likely to have a high proportion of student residents. However, a key aim of the plan is to ensure an appropriate balance between student resident and permanent resident population to ensure the long term sustainability of the community. This will be achieved by restricting further HMO development and encouraging an appropriate range of services and housing types to meet the needs of all sectors of the community.

Community Balance

The proportion of people in full time education in St James was 42% at the last 2001 census. The equivalent figure for St Thomas to the south of the city centre was 3.1%, and for St Leonards the figure was 5.9%. In 2001 41.4% of the population of St James was aged between 19-25, by 2011 this had risen to 52.8%, an increase of 11.4%. By contrast the equivalent figure for St Thomas and St Leonards was around 10%. St James will always have a significant student population due to its proximity to the University. Student residents help to give the area some of its character and vitality. However, the very high proportion of people aged 18-24 and the impact of HMO conversions are leading to a lack of balance and some parts of the ward have lost almost all their permanent resident population. Whilst the growth of the University is a good thing for Exeter, over the past decade the proportion of students living in residential streets can no longer be absorbed without affecting the very neighbourhood they wish to live in.

The neighbourhood plan does not seek to set an ideal balance in terms of the desired size of the student population. It does seek to halt the conversion of properties to HMO and ensure that the area stays attractive to all sectors of the population. The term 'community balance' therefore refers to the desire of the residents of St James to have a diverse population which includes people at all stages of their lives and which is not dominated by a single group of the population. Exeter City Council has defined 'balance' using the number of council tax exemptions in a given area as a proxy for HMO and student accommodation. When over 20% of properties in a defined area are council tax exempt it is generally considered that additional HMOs would change the character of the area and undermine the maintenance of a balanced and mixed community. Many streets within the ward have greater than 20% council tax exemption.

C1: Houses in Multiple Occupation:

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 would be provided at an appropriate quantity, and would be of a high standard 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.*



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

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 under construction in this area and in some locations on the western side of Sidwell Street within St James such as at the Stoneman & Bowker site. 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 emerging 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. For the purposes of this policy 'large scale' purpose built student accommodation is taken to apply to single developments providing 10 or more student beds.

C2: 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 intact streets of traditional terraced, semi-detached and detached forms of 2-3 storey residential development;*
- b) where the servicing and parking requirements could be achieved with no unacceptable impact on the amenity of the adjacent area for residents;*
- c) where the scale and massing of any purpose built accommodation proposed would be broadly similar to that of surrounding buildings.*

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, over time, all small scale development opportunities become student accommodation, the balance of the community and individual streets and spaces within the ward 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. The following policy adds to policy DM16 in the ECC emerging Site Allocations and Development Management document to address the issue of purpose built student accommodation in the context of St. James. For the purposes of this policy 'balanced community' is as per the description in the supporting text to policy C1 and 'small scale' purpose built student accommodation is taken to apply to single developments providing fewer than 10 student beds.

C3: Small Scale Purpose Built Student Accommodation

The development of small scale purpose built student accommodation will be permitted provided that the proposal would not prejudice the objective of creating a balanced community.

Community Focus and Local Community Hub

St James lacks a community focus and 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 residents who wish to support and

promote appropriate new development so that this area becomes a focus for the community and develops as a local hub. A new designation, 'St James Local Community Hub', has been defined in the Neighbourhood Plan.

St James Local Community Hub refers to the cluster of shops, services, organisations and businesses around Well Street, York Road, Queens Crescent and Longbrook Street shown by Figure 6.



Figure 6: St James Local Community Hub

C4: St James Local Community Hub

Development within the St. James Local Community Hub that enhances the character, viability or vitality of the area will be supported. Appropriate and well located community, local retail /food and drink development will be permitted provided that:

- a) the development would respond well to its local context, would reinforce local distinctiveness and would not detract from the special community character of the Local Community Hub;*
- b) the proposed use is not already oversupplied in the area, and would not result in the excessive concentration of uses such as takeaway restaurants;*
- c) proposals would not adversely impact residential amenity of nearby properties;*
- d) proposals would not adversely impact upon road safety.*

Existing ECC policy should be utilised to determine the oversupply or excessive concentration of a particular use within the St. James Local Community Hub.

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 continue 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 will not normally be permitted unless:

- a) replacement provision be made, of at least equivalent quality, where it would be located at reasonable convenience for the existing plot holders; or*
- b) where clear and significant social, economic and environmental community benefits could be derived from the proposal.*

Economy

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 seeks to support local businesses, encourage new businesses, home working and social enterprises that benefit the community, and help to move St James towards a low carbon economy by encouraging local jobs and enterprise.

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 they would:

- a) not involve the loss of dwellings;*
- b) contribute to the character and vitality of the local area;*
- c) be well integrated into and complement existing clusters of activity, such as the businesses at Hems Court;*
- d) protect residential amenity;*
- e) not 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. For the purposes of this policy 'balanced

community' is as per the description in the supporting text to policy C1.

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 will be supported provided they would:

- 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) be 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 minimise 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. As such any proposals for development should involve consultation with the local community.

SD2: Exeter Cricket Club

Development that ensures a long term and viable future for the Cricket Club site will be supported where:

- a) proposals are supported by a thorough landscape and visual appraisal of the site to determine impact on local views and the Hooper Valley;*
- b) proposals are supported by an appropriate heritage assessment and include measures which will mitigate or compensate for the loss of any heritage values identified;*
- c) high standards of sustainable design and construction would be achieved which respond to the identified landscape and heritage values of the site.*

Infill / Windfall Sites

St James has few opportunities for large scale housing development. However throughout the ward there are a number of small infill sites or sites that may arise due to the closure of commercial uses that may be suitable for development. Proposals should be informed by consultation with the owners and residents of adjacent properties. The community will support the development of such sites for affordable homes for local people or good quality private residential development.

SD3: Infill / Windfall Sites

Proposals to develop small infill/windfall sites for affordable homes for local people or good quality private residential development will be supported where they:

- a) have a scale and form which would be complementary to surrounding properties and would not result in the loss of amenity for existing residents;*
- b) would achieve high standards of sustainable and low carbon design;*
- c) would be accompanied by appropriate provisions for parking, access and storage of waste.*

Howell Road Car Park:

This is an important asset for businesses and retailers in St James. A key objective of the Plan is to ensure adequate parking is provided for these facilities. However it could also provide a good location for affordable housing which meets the needs of local people. When 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.

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;*
- e) adopt best practice in sustainable urban drainage.*
- d) link the provision of low and zero carbon energy infrastructure in new developments to existing buildings.*

Introduction

In developing the Neighbourhood Plan the community has placed considerable emphasis on the importance of heritage and the evidence-base includes proposals for a heritage trail within

The best way to ensure heritage is protected is through good design as required by Policy D1, in particular with regard to build scale, form, massing, setback and materials.

Development affecting heritage assets within St James must pay special regard to the need to conserve and enhance their settings and any special architectural or historic features of significance.

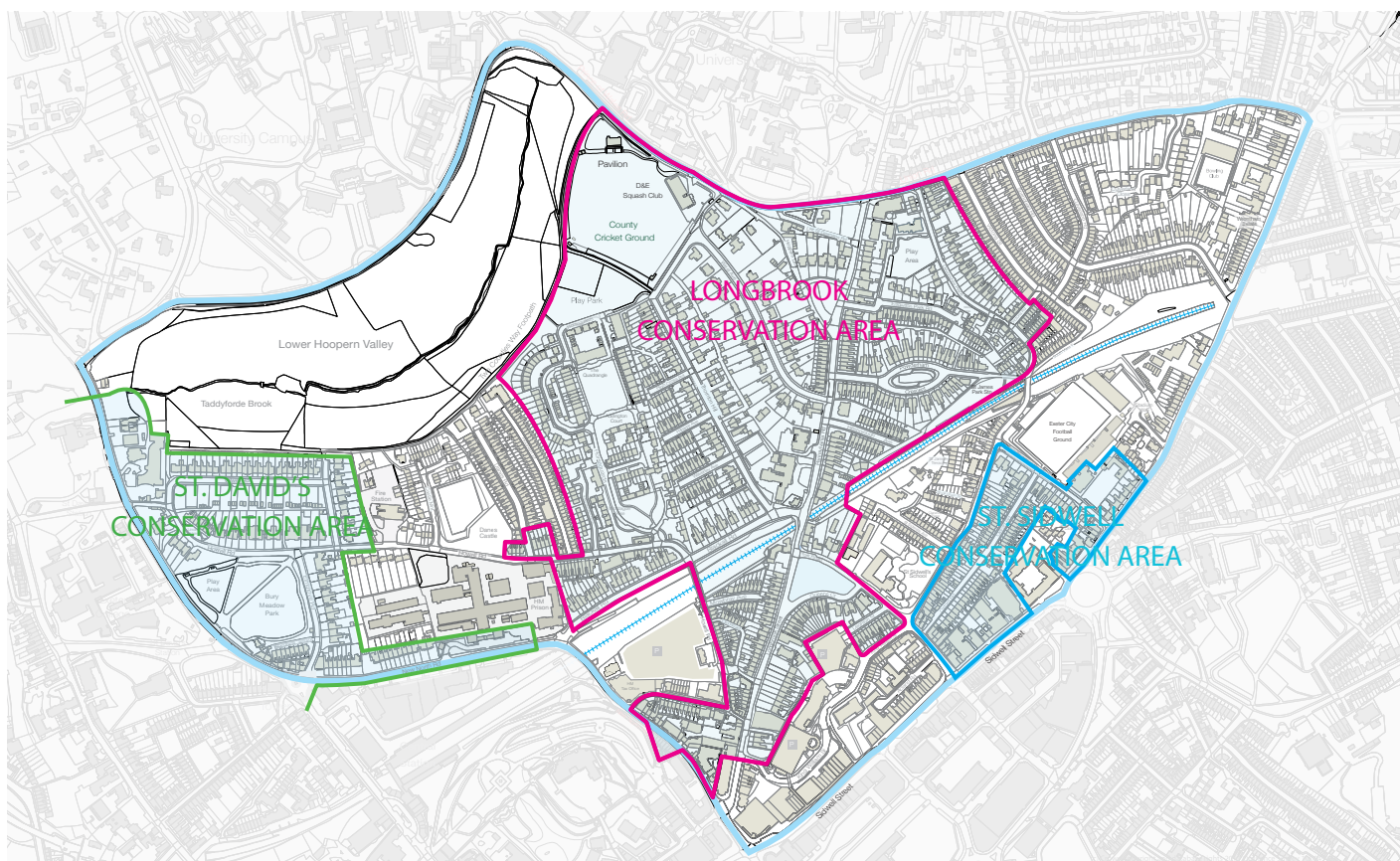


Figure 7: Conservation Areas

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, main line train stations and the University Campus. 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, DCC and major landowners.

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

Development as appropriate to its scale and location should include proposals which enhance the attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport within St. James. Specific development proposals to enhance St James Park rail halt, such as improved accessibility for disabled people, will be supported.

Through traffic

Following 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 several community buildings, including St Sidwell's School. Longbrook Street is a main walking and cycling

artery into the town. The increased congestion has detracted substantially from the experience of approaching the city by foot. Major features on the edge of the ward such as the Clock Tower roundabout and the nearby pedestrian crossing are affected by traffic volumes and speeds.

ESJF will work with ECC, DCC and major landowners to address the impact of through traffic, and in particular HGV traffic, within the ward. This may include the diversion of through traffic around and away from the ward through good signage and education of car users and measures to slow traffic or establish pedestrian priority through the use of 'shared space' principles.

T2: Through traffic

Design and highways proposals that mitigate the impact of through traffic within St James will be supported. Proposals as appropriate to their scale and location may include;

- a) traffic management measures to minimise the impact of traffic on residential and community streets; and*
- b) signage to direct through traffic away from and around St James.*

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. Residential streets are those streets which are predominantly living places and which do not serve any through traffic function. 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

Proposals to protect and mitigate against the impact of traffic within residential areas will be supported.

Such proposals may include

- a) traffic calming and gateway treatments to deter through traffic;*
- b) shared space treatments to create 'home zones';*
- c) 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. 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.

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.

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 to enable elderly and disabled people to access services. 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 Park Station:

Proposals to improve facilities and accessibility of St James Park Station will be supported. Proposals should also contribute 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.

St James Exeter

A Neighbourhood Plan for our
vibrant and diverse community

