

17/0006/03: Construction of 82 dwellings, access, estate roads, landscaping and associated infrastructure

30th January 2017

Dear Michael

Exeter Cycling Campaign welcomes the opportunity to comment on access and parking arrangements for this Proposed Development. The documents presented for consultation (see link below) have been reviewed and we offer the following comments and recommendations. Full account has been taken of adopted local and national planning policy and guidance, including relevant SPDs and Masterplans on Sustainable Transport and the Newcourt Area.

<http://pub.exeter.gov.uk/scripts/acolnet/planning/AcolnetCGI.gov?ACTION=UNWRAP&RIPNAME=Root.PgeDocs&TheSystemkey=73812>

Executive Summary

Exeter Cycling Campaign **provisionally OBJECT** to the Proposed Development on the following grounds:

- Non-compliance with the adopted Newcourt Area Masterplan;
- The Proposed Development in its current form compromises delivery of the E9 strategic cycle route between Newcourt and the city centre. Plans should be amended to ensure that the Proposed Development contributes to the delivery of the route through the site via adoption of Cycling UK's 'Space for Cycling' principles - see following link to the short, 'Space for Cycling: Guide for Decision Makers' document:
http://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/space_for_cycling_guide_for_decision_makers.pdf ;
- Permeability through the site for pedestrians and cyclists is poor. An additional pedestrian and cycle access should be provided to Admiral Way to facilitate convenient trips northbound in the direction of Newcourt train station and Newcourt Community Centre;
- Improvement are required on Admiral Way to facilitate safe access for cyclists leaving the carriageway to enter the site, particularly on the southbound carriageway from the direction of Newcourt train station;
- Insufficient details of cycle parking provision are provided.

Subject to the above issues being resolved, Exeter Cycling Campaign would have no objection. We note that this is a detailed application that is contrary to the adopted Development Plan and therefore all issues should be resolved prior to permission being granted. However, where the Applicant is not able to provide certainty on minor issues at this stage, planning conditions and obligations should be used to ensure an acceptable scheme is delivered.

Newcourt Area Masterplan and Exeter Core Strategy

For the reasons outlined in the 'Site Access' section below, the Proposed Development is not in accordance with the adopted Newcourt Area Masterplan (2010). Particular attention is drawn to the following provisions of the Masterplan and the Masterplan Figure (Appendix 1):

“Old Rydon Lane will be managed with the aim of avoiding additional traffic using this route to access the Masterplan area and to ensure that it does not become attractive as a through route for private vehicular traffic....

Cycle links throughout the scheme will follow alignments of proposed primary and secondary routes and existing roads. Old Rydon Lane will be managed to make this route attractive to cyclists...

Links through development areas to connect to the strategic routes should be accommodated in the detailed layout”.

The Newcourt Area Masterplan is a key document that supplements the adopted Core Strategy (2012) and is a material consideration. In addition to more general transport policies of the Local Plan requiring developments to enhance pedestrian and cycle links (notably CP9 of the Core Strategy), attention is also drawn to policy CP17 of the adopted Core Strategy - this requires that development at Newcourt should:

“create a safe and secure environment that encourages social interaction and inclusion and promotes healthy living and a sense of well-being”; and

“be set around a high quality sustainable movement network to encourage pedestrian and cycle trips and to provide easy access to the Exe Valley strategic greenway and to Ludwell Valley Park”.

These policies are dated in the context of more recent Devon County Council plans for strategic cycle routes, including the E9 route through the Proposed Development site and along Old Rydon Lane. However, they nonetheless require a high standard of sustainable movement network in the Newcourt Area and the delivery of the more recent E9 strategic cycle route is consistent with this policy.

Site Access

The Proposed Development is well located in relation to existing amenities and services, but the current design of the proposals are inadequate in terms of delivering the E9 strategic cycle route and allowing cross-site permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. The following observations and recommendations are made:

- The Proposed Development includes land on which the E9 strategic cycle route from Newcourt to the city centre is intended to run (Appendix 2). Furthermore, the Applicant proposes that vehicular access is achieved via Old Rydon Lane, a key section of the route on which there are longstanding plans to improve cycling infrastructure and prevent additional vehicular traffic. Exeter Cycling Campaign have significant concerns that the Proposed Development will undermine these plans unless best practice highway design is followed and the impacts of vehicle movements on Old Rydon Lane are demonstrated to be acceptable.

Recommendation: The Proposed Development must follow best practice highway design that prioritises pedestrian and cycle movements across the site. Cycling UK’s ‘Space for Cycling’ design principles should be incorporated throughout the development, with particular focus on the main spine road and junctions to deliver the E9 route through the site. While there are various design solutions in which the ‘Space for Cycling’ principles can be implemented, the following core principles must be achieved:

- ❑ Protected space for cyclists along the main spine road e.g. through provision of segregated cycle lanes or a ‘stepped’ cycle track. Shared space with pedestrians should be avoided (See Figures 2 and 3), particularly given the strategic nature of the E9 route and its importance in connecting the wider Newcourt area to the city centre and NCN Route 2 to the south;
- ❑ Safe junctions and crossings within the site and at all site accesses. Particular attention should be given to junctions on the E9 route at Old Rydon Lane and Admiral Way;
- ❑ Safe side streets through good urban design that ensures a ‘low speed environment’ and supported by a 20mph speed limit across the site.

Given the negative impact of the Proposed Development in terms of increased vehicle traffic on Old Rydon Lane, which is contrary to adopted policy, the Applicant should also be required to make a S106 contribution to fund improvements to the wider Old Rydon Lane section of the E9 route.

- Only one pedestrian and cycle link is provided from the Proposed Development to Admiral Way on the southern boundary (Drawing EGCC 002 (Site Plan)). This link is off the desire line and inconvenient for residents living in the northern part of the Proposed Development and wishing to travel northbound along Admiral Way. Furthermore, the proposed link is positioned at an oblique angle, favouring movements to/ from Topsham Road but difficult to use for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to/from the direction of Newcourt train station to the north. No provision is made for cyclists on the Admiral Way southbound carriageway to safely turn and leave the carriageway to access the shared pedestrian and cycle link to site (Figure 1)

Recommendation: Additional pedestrian and cycle links should be provided from the Application Site to Admiral Way to facilitate convenient access to/from all areas of the Proposed Development. Refuge points/waiting boxes should be provided on the Admiral Way southbound carriageway to allow cyclists to safely wait for oncoming cars to pass before turning right to access the site entrances via a dropped kerb. Provision of safe waiting and turning infrastructure here is vital as there is no shared use path along the eastern side of Admiral Way to act as an alternative refuge (Figure 1). Exeter Cycling Campaign strongly advises that provision of these areas is accompanied by the creation of dedicated cycle lanes along Admiral Way, using the space on the undeveloped eastern side to expand the carriageway if necessary. This would further aid safety for cyclists on a stretch of Admiral Way that is prone to excessive driver speeds, and help connect the E9 route on site with NCN Route 2 on Topsham Road to the south.



Figure 1 (Google 2017): Lack of refuge/waiting areas or dropped kerbs on Admiral Way to allow cyclists travelling southbound to safely turn into the proposed site access without obstructing vehicle traffic. The 'speed bumps' installed along this stretch of straight road have had only a limited effect on controlling excessively fast vehicle speeds which present a danger to cyclists and discourage further uptake.



Figure 2 (Google, 2017): Parked cars and a waiting bus block cycle movements and prevents safe over-taking on the Admiral Way carriageway just after junction with Topsham Road, while insufficient width and regular use by pedestrians (including young children) prevents safe use of pavements as an alternative on this key link from NCN Route 2 to E9.



Figure 3 (Google, 2017): Insufficient carriageway width prevents safe use of the road by cyclists, while parked cars and other items left for delivery or pickup (including weekly bin collections) obstruct 'shared space' footways on Admiral Way. The highway network on the Proposed Development must avoid these design flaws and adopt 'Space for Cycling' principles to ensure the E9 strategic route on-site is of a high quality and allows for safe and convenient movement for all highway users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

- The Applicant acknowledges in the Transport Assessment that a number of collisions have been reported at the junction of Admiral Way and Topsham Road. The frequency of collisions can be expected to increase as a result of additional development in the Newcourt Area.

Recommendation: The Applicant is encouraged to make a contribution to the improvement of this junction given its importance for connecting the site and the E9 strategic cycle route within it to NCN Route 2 on Topsham Road.

- The Applicant should be required to provide a Travel Plan to encourage uptake of sustainable transport modes.

Cycle Parking

Exeter Cycling Campaign query the lack of a Design and Access Statement on the application Documents page. Without provision of a DAS we cannot comment in detail on cycle parking arrangements, but note that no provision is evident on the submitted highways or landscape plans. It is essential that the Applicant meets the minimum requirements of the Exeter City Council Sustainable Transport (2013) and Residential Design Guide (2010) SPDs. Consideration should also be given to the provision of additional covered cycle racks at Newcourt Train Station and Newcourt Community Centre (where no covered provision currently exists) to cater for increased demand arising from the Proposed Development.

Kind regards,

Spencer Powell

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for and on behalf of:

EXETER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

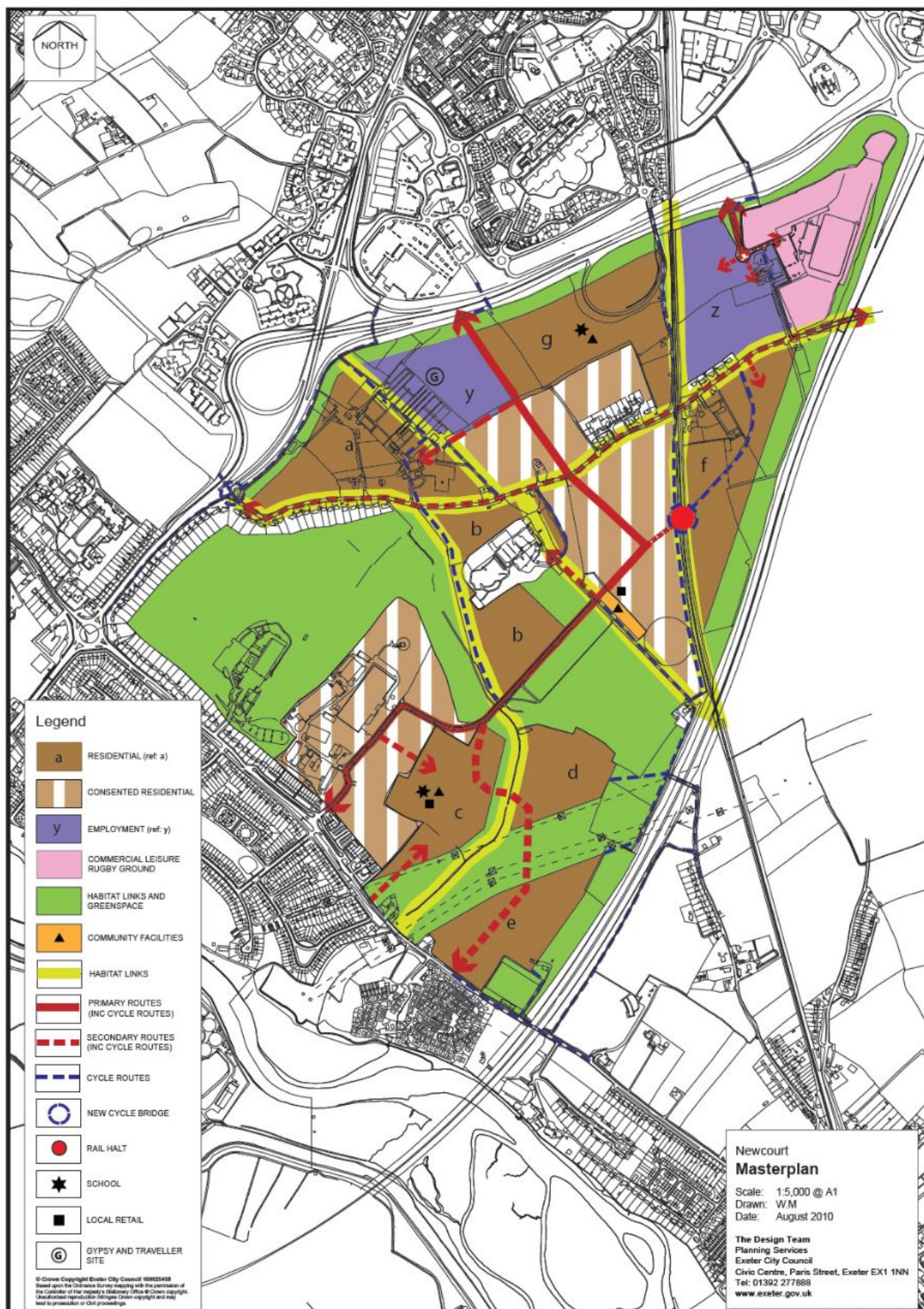
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Appendix 1 (see following page): Exeter City Council's Newcourt Area Masterplan Figure (NB: Pre-dates proposals for strategic E9 cycle route through application site and along Old Rydon Lane.

Masterplan Figure



Appendix 2 (see following page): Planned Exeter Strategic Cycle Routes, including E9 route that is proposed to run from Admiral Way, through the Proposed Development and west along Old Rydon Lane to the city centre.

Exeter Strategic Cycle Routes - Overview Map

