

.Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP)

The GESP has recently been released and contains plans for significant development within the village of Newton St Cyres. The complete document and Plan can be viewed on the Parish Council website.

The Parish Council will be holding a Public Consultation in early September.

What is the GESP?

The local authorities of East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, and Teignbridge are working together, engaging with stakeholders and communities, to prepare a new joint plan in partnership with Devon County Council).

By working together they are seeking to deliver the best possible outcomes for the provision of new homes, jobs and infrastructure for existing and future generations, whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment. The plan area is called Greater Exeter and it covers all of the four local authority areas, excluding Dartmoor National Park.

The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) will be a formal statutory document, providing the overall spatial strategy and level of housing and employment land required in the period to 2040, together with key aspirations for the environment, infrastructure and digital communications. The agreed document will provide the high level strategic planning policies for the area.

Local plans for each of the councils will continue to be prepared. They will contain more localised policies and allocations for smaller scale development. Communities are also still able to prepare neighbourhood development plans, looking even more closely at their local area. The timetable is to have the GESP adopted by 2023.

Geographical Area covered

The GESP covers the planning authority areas of East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge, an area of 2,200 square kilometres with a population of just under 450,000. The Greater Exeter area aligns with the Exeter Travel to Work Area. The fact that most people living in the Greater Exeter area also work there underlines the value of the four Greater Exeter councils coming together to achieve effective strategic planning.

Plan Timetable

The GESP timetable is set out in the Local Development Scheme, which can be read on the website www.gesp.org.uk.

This currently states that the Greater Exeter councils are aiming to consult on a draft plan later commencing late September 2020 before a further consultation on the final draft in 2022. The aim is to adopt the plan in 2023. However, in light of the coronavirus and its impacts on communities, stakeholders and the Greater Exeter councils, the timetable may need to be reviewed. A revised Local Development Scheme will be published once the full implications for the existing timetable of the coronavirus have been considered.

Housing Target and Distribution

The Greater Exeter councils will target the delivery of 2,663 homes per year in the Greater Exeter area (53,260 total) between 2020 and 2040. From the date of adoption of the GESP, the Housing Delivery Test and five-year housing land supply calculations will be assessed against this target on a Greater Exeter area wide basis. Delivery to meet this target is proposed from the following sources (which allow for a headroom of about 20% against the overall target):

- A. Approximately 33,390 homes from existing planning commitments
- B. Approximately 18,500 homes on GESP allocations [sites to be determined after this consultation and identified in the next version of the GESP]
- C. Approximately 12,000 homes to be identified in future local and neighbourhood development plans [distribution between local planning authorities to be determined after this consultation and identified in the next version of the GESP]
- D. Local plans should allocate additional housing sites to make up for any under-provision in planning commitments within a local planning authority against the assumptions contained in A above
- E. Local plans may vary housing supply from these figures when justified by overall planning and sustainability considerations provided that any reductions are made in the context of effective duty to cooperate agreements with other local planning authorities which do not reduce the overall GESP housing delivery

Newton St Cyres and Sweetham

Parish(es) Newton St Cyres, Shobrooke, Upton Pyne.

District(s) Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council

Site size: 303 hectares

Number of homes considered in Sustainability Appraisal Report 3,787 – 4,886 homes

Indicative number of homes factoring in sensitivities and requirements (see below) 1,200 homes

Potential for employment use: It would need to provide a mix of employment uses alongside housing.

Relationship with existing allocations and other potential GESP sites: Possible relationship with site options SA-MD-3 (Crediton South) and SA-ED-26 (Cowley) to collectively deliver transport infrastructure, including rail, bus and cycle improvements.

Planning status: None

Summary description of the site

The site is around 8km from Exeter and comprises predominantly gently undulating agricultural land. The hamlet of Sweetham is located in the centre of the site with the larger village of Newton St Cyres on the south-west boundary. The site includes farms and isolated dwellings, with a golf course near Higher Rewe.

The Tarka Line railway segregates the site with a small station at Sweetham.

Option Site Area excluded from site: Ancient Woodland, Conservation Area, County Wildlife Site, Flood Risk Area, Listed Building, Public Right of Way, Scheduled Monument, Slope 1:6 - 1:3 (Steep) Slope More than 1:3 (Very Steep)

This site is identified for consideration in the GESP because:

- The site is reasonably close to Exeter, with the potential to access high quality jobs in the city
- The train station offers the potential for residents to travel by rail, with less than 10 minute journey time, into Exeter (or beyond)
- With provision of an appropriate route residents could cycle to Exeter or Crediton
- The characteristics of the site provides the opportunity to deliver a new sensitively designed rural settlement based on garden village principles
- In combination with the other potential GESP sites (Crediton and Cowley) there is potential to bring investment in improved rail services and cycle links e.g. the proposed cycle route (the Boniface Trail) from Crediton to Exeter

Sensitivities

The site has a number of sensitivities which development would need to take into account, including:

- A number of designated heritage assets are within or the edge of the site including Grade II listed buildings and the Newton St Cyres Conservation Area
- A large area of the site is affected by flooding along the River Creedy and includes sections of Langford Road and Station Road
- The highway network in the area is restricted and is likely to require significant investment to provide increased capacity and flood resilient access to the site
- The site is segregated by the Tarka Line railway, with access points to Sweetham over railway bridges on Langford Road and Station Road
- Crediton and Exeter Air Quality Management Areas could be impacted from increased travel movements.
- A large proportion of the site is high grade agricultural land

Requirements

Planning requirements for the site will aim to create a great place to live and work, providing well designed new neighbourhoods with appropriate and well managed public open space and safe walking/cycling routes.

All sites will need to provide a mix of homes (including affordable and custom build), investment in low carbon energy and transport, high speed internet and wildlife enhancements. More detail on these can be found in the policies within Section B of the GESP document.

Other emerging requirements include:

- Contribution to the strategic cycle link from Crediton to Exeter (the Boniface Trail)
- Enhancements to public transport infrastructure to enable increased frequency of rail and bus services between Crediton and Exeter, with more frequent stops at Newton St Cyres station
- Improved cycle facilities at Newton St Cyres railway station
- A package of improvements to upgrade Langford Road to address increased capacity and enable flood resilient access to the site
- A primary school
- Financial contributions towards secondary school provision and transport, and GP services
- A village centre to include local services, a multi-functional community building, and employment space such as a work hub
- Measures to address the risk of flooding on site
- Development will need to respect the privacy of existing dwellings located nearby

The Village Response

The Parish Council will be holding a Public Consultation in early September. Ideally this will be held in the Village Hall but, if restrictions remain in place, it will be held on line using Zoom. More than one meeting may be required.

We have around 4 months in which to enter submissions.

It is recommended that, in addition to the Parish Council consensus response, individual residents also put in their own response.

The Village presently consists of around 800 dwellings.

Regards, Jim

Jim Enright, Chairman, Newton St Cyres Parish Council