

Strategic Planning & Highways Group Chair's Report 27 Aug 2025

SP&H communicated via emails and telephone calls since its SP&H meeting on 6 March 2025. It had a meeting on 31 July 2025.

Issues covered by 31 July Meeting

Energy Centre – preparation for presentation at ECC Planning Committee on 4 Aug, where we will act as opposer

Former Police Station and Magistrate's Court Redevelopment – discussion of new full application, GV to lead our response, could be dealt with as early as 8 Sep in front of ECC Planning Committee; we won't act as opposer, as our concerns refer to details, not the overall scheme which we see improved

Mary Arches Car Park Redevelopment – we have major concerns here with type of flats, excluding mixed development (co-living only); co-living units are very small and community space is a major problem; architecture and massing also major concern; KL to co-ordinate our response

North Street Project – Improvement of the public realm, ideas and planning for a workshop after a positive response from Nicola Wheeler from InExeter, GV to co-ordinate

Short discussion of **Musgrave Row and Fore Street plans from InExeter** – we won't become active here, but monitor

Legal team consultation of Barley Lane – one of the major green sites west of Exeter where we need to monitor carefully what is going on; early stages at the moment

Responses by SP&H Group to Consultations

1. Exeter Energy and Riverside Valley Park (Planning Application 24/1536/OUT) ECS acted together with Chris Pope as opposer at the ECC Planning Committee meeting. KL's presentation was concise and welcomed, but in the end it did not have any effects in the decision taking (voted 8:2 for the project). Express and Echo requested comments after the meeting which were included in a prominent article in the **xx** August issue.

A report of the meeting can be found on our website under:

<https://exetercivicsociety.org.uk/decision-on-energy-plant-in-riverside-valley-park/> , including KL's statement under: <https://exetercivicsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Statement-to-ECC-Planning-Committee-4-August-2025-v3.docx> .

KL has contacted local councillors to discuss whether we want to further pursue the relocation of the plant closer to the railway station. One response so far: negative.

2. Mary Archer Car Park Redevelopment

We handed in our response on 5 August: In its current form, the proposal lacks the architectural quality, contextual sensitivity, sustainable ambition, and appropriate facilities required for such a significant site and use. Our key concerns include:

- Poor articulation of the corner site and public frontage
- Inactive elevations
- Overbearing and inappropriate massing

- Superficial elevation treatment lacking contextual response
- Weak housing mix and social inclusivity strategy
- Inadequate dining and kitchen facilities
- Inadequate servicing and management plans
- Insufficient environmental and adaptability strategies
- A lack of car parking for residents who need to use a car.

We request that this planning application is Refused, as significant revisions are needed to ensure this scheme becomes a positive and lasting contribution to the city.

Full response under: <https://exetercivicsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ECS-letter-of-objection-redevelopment-Mary-Arches-Car-park.pdf>

3 Redevelopment of the Former Police Station and Magistrate's Court Site

GV is co-ordinating our response to the recent Full Planning Application 25/0676/FUL; <https://publicaccess.exeter.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal= SX2Y6MHBGLL00>. He received input from Keith Lewis, Chris Dent and Chris Pope and putting our response together by end of August.

Further Activities

North Street Project

We decided to run a workshop for local businesses and residents which took place on 26 Aug 2025 at the Mint Methodist Church Centre. Nicola Wheeler was helping to get the businesses on board, GV is in contact with Daniel Raven-Ellison, a local citizen with good connections into the neighbourhoods, GV dropped 80 leaflets in local businesses and residents' post boxes.

We had 16 attending: 6 from 4 businesses, 2 from InExeter, 2 Cllrs, and 6 residents. It was a productive and interesting afternoon/evening, with lots of details gathered. The attendees seemed to be genuinely interested and committed to do something, as they all felt there was change needed to make North Street more attractive. In the recent past food businesses have moved out (and nail studios and barbers moved in) because of lack of footfall and the unattractive feel of the street; remaining businesses want to reverse this trend and bring back some more interesting businesses.

Keith and GV will process the data, set up project/concern page and news on website, info to Express & Echo, and go back to Fabrica Architecture in early Sep. We asked all attendees to spread the word, as some have further contacts in the area and surprisingly a lot did not even know about Mary Arches Redevelopment plans. InExeter will include information about the meeting and project in their next newsletter and Nicola Wheeler offered to continue using InExeter's database for contacting local businesses. Nooko was not able to attend, but left KL and GV with contact details, so we can arrange a meeting with them (and potentially Sostrene Green, the new shop in Paternoster House which opened last weekend).

We plan for a second meeting, with more concrete suggestions / a plan which we then could finalise. We need to create a map with the businesses pencilled in. For

the second meeting we would invite ECC & DCC officers. Once we have an agreed routemap for change, we can look for funding. Our efforts have to focus on a possibly very tight timeline, depending on when the Mary Arches planning application will make it to ECC Planning Committee.

Tree Preservation Taskforce

David Solman organised **a meeting on 21 August 2025.**

- 1) The group agreed on an approach how most effectively highlight the deficiencies of the TPO map to ECC and officers.
- 2) A two-case study-based approach (in collaboration with Ed Dolphin, Sidmouth Arboretum) to engage with local communities about trees in the city was started: stage 1 trees in Bullmeadow Park, St Leonard's, to be identified and mapped (with the Sep walk to be opened up as community event); stage 2 street trees in Prospect Park, Pennsylvania (door-to-door enquiry).

Notes from the meeting can be found on our website under:

<https://exetercivicsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Tree-Preservation-Taskforce-meeting-21-August-2025-Final.pdf>

Tree walk 10 Sep, see information under:

<https://exetercivicsociety.org.uk/events/then-now-and-next-walk-tree-walk-in-bull-meadow-park-st-leonards-20250910/>

Gert Vonhoff, 26 August 2025