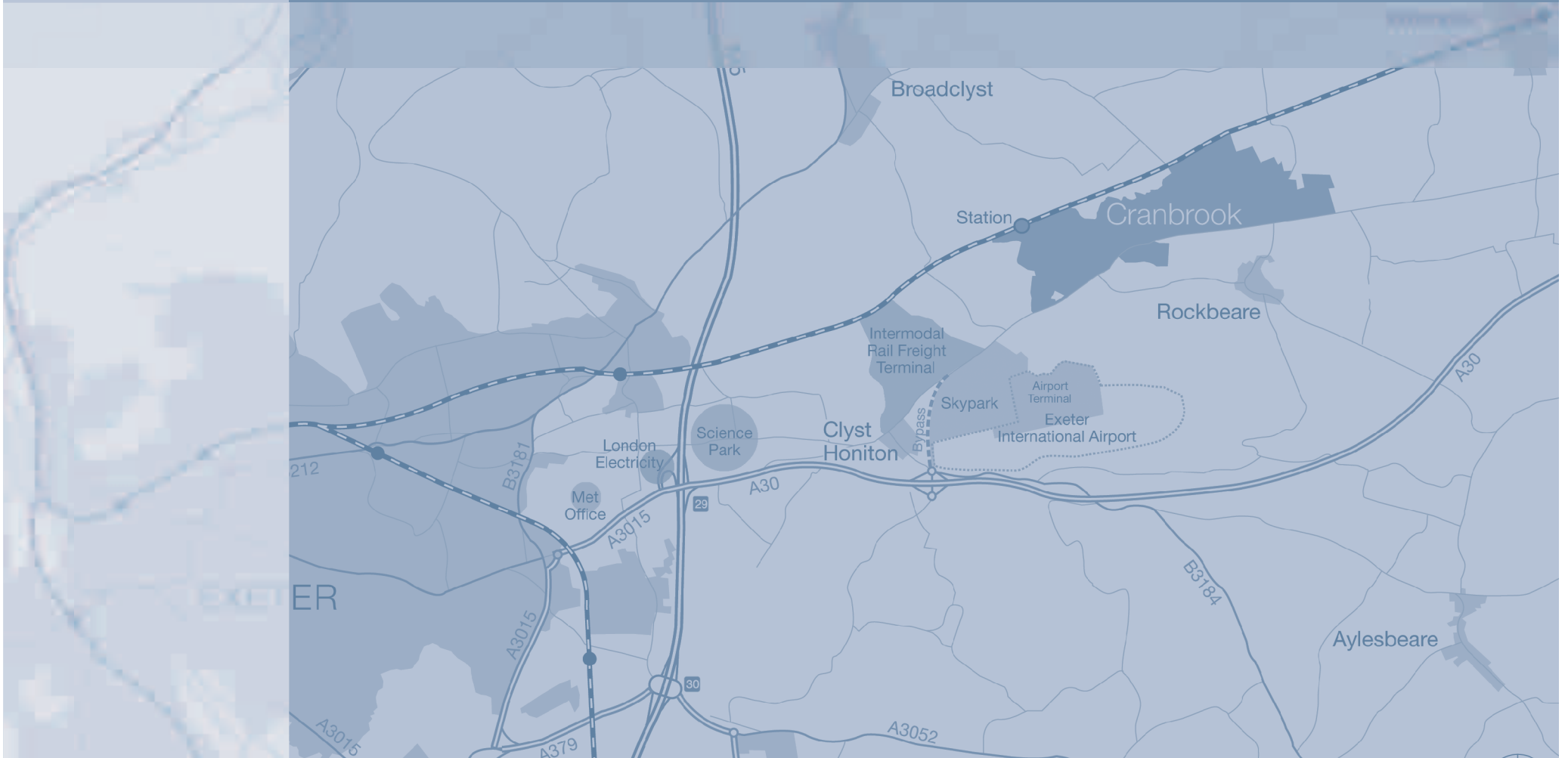


# 3

## The Need for the New Community



**The need for a new community to the east of Exeter was established in the Devon Structure Plan, adopted by Devon County Council in 1999 and has since been robustly endorsed in the new Devon Structure Plan, Devon to 2016, adopted in October 2004.**

The inclusion of a new community in the Structure Plan followed a careful assessment of the needs of the Exeter area and the opportunities available to meet those needs. Exeter has a regional role as a focal point for investment and in helping to spread the benefits of economic growth throughout Devon and the region. The momentum of growth has gathered considerable pace to the east of Exeter and a major expansion of employment east of the city is underway. Planned growth of at least 5000 new jobs is anticipated at Exeter Airport, the Skypark development and the Intermodal Rail Freight Terminal.

Meanwhile, new house building in the Exeter area has lagged behind expectations and house prices have risen sharply. New house building on previously developed (brownfield) land in Exeter has accelerated and new greenfield developments are taking place on the fringes of the city. However, this is not enough to meet the housing needs of such a fast-growing area.

Having considered each of the alternative options, Devon County Council concluded that a new community close to employment represents the most sustainable option. The Devon Structure Plan proposed a new community at a location within East Devon District, where a new railway station could be opened on the Exeter-London Waterloo railway line.

The exact location of the new community was then identified in the East Devon District Council Local Plan. The Revised Deposit Draft has been published since the outline application was submitted reaffirming the location and the Local Plan Inquiry held on the policies relating to the new community.

The New Community planning application site and development proposals are fully in accordance with the site location and policy requirements set out in the Local Plan (policy AEA1) which seek to deliver a New Community that will be integrated with the employment developments taking place east of Exeter, to create a sustainable balance between transport provision, housing, employment, local services and other facilities.

## The Way Ahead – Delivering Sustainable Communities in the South West

Further policy support for the new community has also arisen since the submission of the outline planning application through the publication of 'The Way Ahead' by the regional partners in the South West, in February 2005. This robustly underlines the commitment to the development strategy to the east of Exeter and forms part of the UK Sustainable Communities Plan; it sets out to deliver accelerated growth in a small number of places identified in RPG10.

Prepared jointly by the South West of England Regional Development Agency, by the Government Office for the South West and the South West Regional Assembly, the document works within existing planning policy but aims to make a major impact on regional economic performance by “targeting accelerated interventions in a small number of the places identified in RPG10”. The small number of locations where accelerated growth is to be encouraged are Bristol, Plymouth, Swindon, key Cornish towns and Exeter.

The proposals for Exeter include actions to improve productivity, increase housing supply and address regional inequalities and deprivation. It refers specifically to:

- the accelerated delivery of Skypark as a strategic employment site;
- the development of a Science Park close to Junction 29 of the M5;
- the IMRFT and airport improvements; and
- **“accelerated provision of the new settlement in East Devon”**

## Environmental Impact Assessment

An *Environmental Impact Assessment* on the proposals for the New Community development was undertaken and a report of its findings (the *Environmental Statement*) was submitted to the District Council with the outline planning application in July 2003.

In response to requests for some further technical information to complete the ES and to consider the changes to the scheme arising as a result of the consultation process 'Further Information' on the Environmental Statement has been submitted to East Devon District Council. This booklet summarises the findings of the original Environmental Statement and the Further Information submitted in March 2005 in non-technical language for ease of reference.

The Environmental Impact Assessment reported upon in the original Environmental Statement (ES) considered the likely effects of the New Community development on:

- geology and contamination;
- soils and agriculture;
- water resources (hydrology and drainage);
- landscape and visual;
- ecology and nature conservation;
- transport;

- air quality;
- noise and vibration;
- cultural heritage (archaeology and listed buildings);
- society and economy;
- energy and resource use (including services and utilities); and
- waste management.

The 'Further Information' to complete the ES and consider any new impacts arising from the new development framework plan, submitted in March 2005, has for ease of reference been set out under the same chapter headings as the original ES. The remainder of this booklet, as with the original Non-Technical Summary, sets out the findings of the complete Environmental Impact Assessment process, as set out in the July 2003 ES and the March 2005 Further Information for each of these topics.