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Soils and Agriculture



Surveys of the quality of agricultural land undertaken by the former Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF, now DEFRA, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) have found that around 3/4 of agricultural land in East Devon around Exeter and is high quality (termed the best and most versatile), which consists of Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3a land.

Of the 176 hectares of land within the New Community site, as shown on the revised Development Framework Plan none is classed as Grade 1 quality (the highest quality), 20% (35 hectares) is Grade 2 and 53% (94 hectares) is Grade 3a. 74% of the land within the New Community site is accordingly classed as high agricultural quality, and therefore the site is typical of the area.

The New Community will involve the development of 133 hectares of the 178 hectares within the site, for development areas (although including gardens and a number of playing fields) of which 96 hectares are classified grade 2 or 3a (25 ha of grade 2 and 71 ha of the subgrade grade 3a). The remainder of the New Community site (47 hectares) will become the country park, informal open space and existing landscape corridors.

During the construction of the New Community, the topsoil will be stripped, conserved and reused in the completed development as a growing medium in gardens, open space and landscaped areas.

The creation of the New Community will replace the existing farm businesses within the site. It is estimated that there are approximately ten full and part-time workers, plus some seasonal workers, employed at the farms within the site. The impact on individual farms has been considered in the further information and will be considered further as part of the prepared of the phasing plan for development. The agricultural jobs to be lost through the development will however be replaced many times over by the new employment generating activities to be located within the New Community.