

Cranbrook

The East Devon New Community

Revised Planning Statement - March 2005

Hallam Land Management
Persimmon Homes
Redrow Homes
Westbury Homes
Taylor Woodrow

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with Cole Jarman Associates, Cooper Partnership, CPM, Ecology Solutions and WSP



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Introduction

- 1.1 An outline planning application was submitted to East Devon District Council in July 2003 for a new community to meet the housing needs of Exeter and East Devon, in accordance with the Devon Structure Plan requirements. The application was submitted by the consortium comprising: Hallam Land Management, Persimmon Homes Plc, Redrow Homes Plc, Westbury Homes Plc and Wilson Connolly Plc (now Taylor Woodrow Properties). For convenience the applicants are referred to as the East Devon New Community Partners.
- 1.2 Between July 2003 and the present day, the structure plan and local plan policy framework for the new community has advanced, and a thorough consultation process has been undertaken on the application. The planning application has now been amended to take on board the policy changes and in particular the outcome of the consultation process. Amended drawings have been submitted to East Devon District Council, supported by Further Information on the Original Environmental Statement (ES) and this Revised Planning Statement. An update on the non-technical summary of the ES has also been produced for ease of reference.
- 1.3 This Revised Planning Statement sets out the key changes to the application and provides an evaluation of the amended scheme demonstrating that it is fully compliant with policy. The statement will explain the consultation that has been undertaken and the changes that are proposed as a direct result of the process.

- 1.4 Where issues have been raised through the consultation process that it is not appropriate to address at the outline stage it is expected that these will be addressed through conditions or as part of the section 106 legal agreement to be agreed with East Devon District Council and the County Council. It is proposed that the full list of proposed conditions and heads of terms of the section 106 legal agreement will be set out in the officer's report on the planning application to committee. This will ensure that any remaining issues will be addressed at the appropriate stage of the detailed design and development process.

The following sections of this report will explain:

Section 2: Site location;

Section 3: The need and rationale for the new community;

Section 4: The content of the amended outline planning application;

Section 5: Changes to the planning policy framework since July 2003;

Section 6: The evaluation of the amendments to the planning application;

Section 7: How the new community will be delivered following the approval of outline planning permission.

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The New Community

Site Location

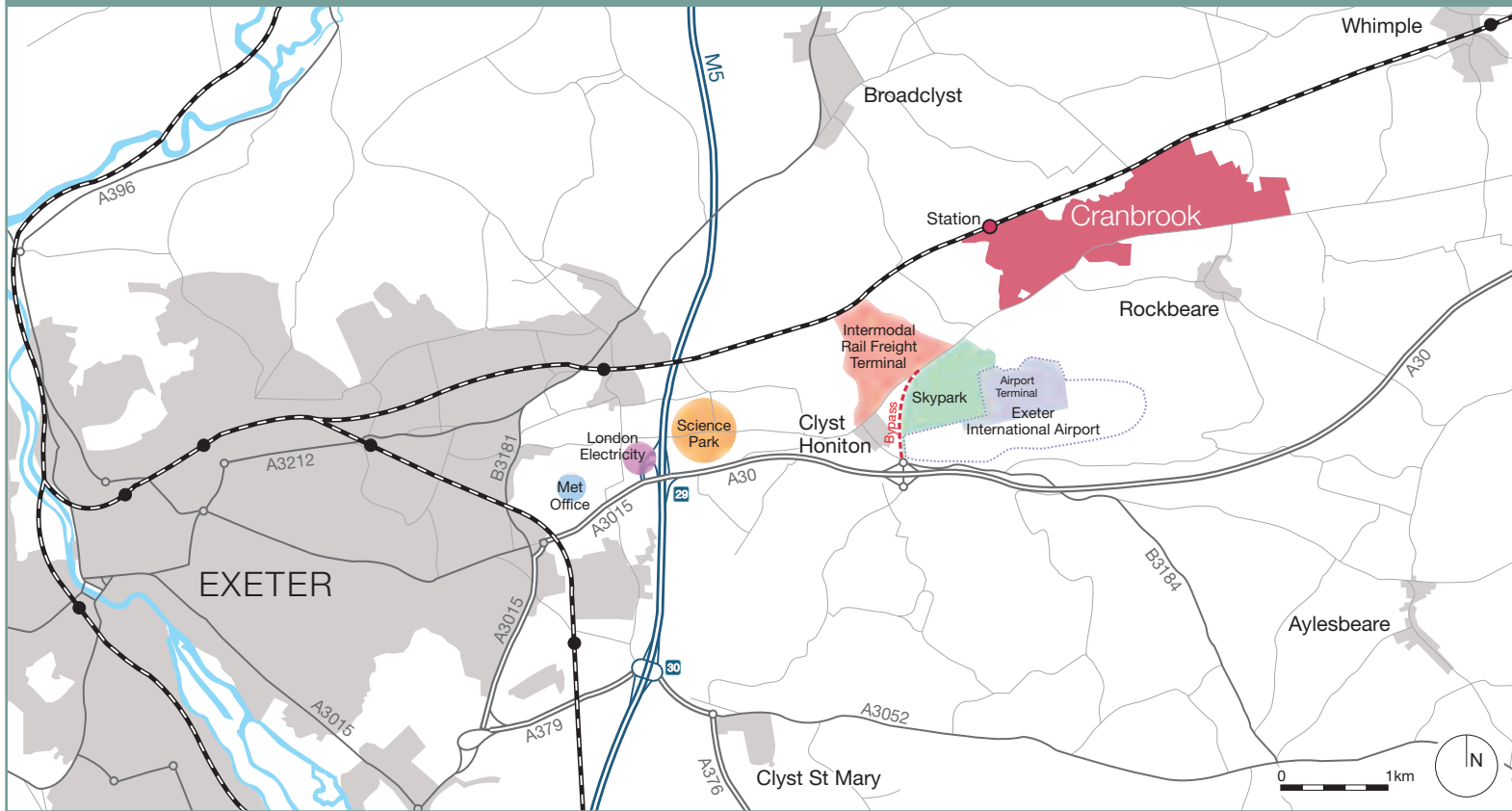
- 2.1 The application site for the East Devon new community is located in between Broadclyst, Whimble and Rockbeare, to the north of the former A30, to the east of Station Road (Broadclyst), and to the south of the Waterloo to Exeter railway line. The land comprises the area identified in the East Devon Local Plan (EDLP) Revised Deposit Draft 2003 as the preferred location for the new community.
- 2.2 The outline planning application, as per the amended drawings, comprises 176 hectares of land and seeks to accommodate 2,900 dwellings with related infrastructure and associated development.
- 2.3 The new community site originated in the Devon Structure Plan First Review, adopted in 1999. The local plan allocation and the planning application accord with the indicative location for the new community described on that Key Diagram. The newly adopted Structure Plan provides even further certainty regarding the location of the new community. By the time that the Panel considered the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016, the original outline planning application had been submitted. Whilst the Panel acknowledged that it was not normally the task of the Structure Plan to identify specific sites, in this instance, the Panel considered it appropriate to deal with the new community “on the basis of the site defined in the application”¹. Having done so, and found that the new community in that location represented the most sustainable approach to development east of Exeter, the now adopted Structure Plan clearly identifies the local plan allocation/planning application location.

Other Strategic Developments

- 2.4 The EDLP also proposes sites for the Structure Plan proposals for further strategic employment and infrastructure developments in the vicinity of the new community, making provision for the strategic employment site known as Skypark, an Intermodal Rail Freight Terminal (IMRFT) and for the expansion and development of Exeter Airport. Skypark is located less than 1km to the west, to the south of the old A30. Exeter International Airport is adjacent to Skypark and the proposed IMRFT is on the northern side of the former A30 opposite the proposed Skypark development, also less than 1 km to the west of the new community.
- 2.5 Slightly further afield, the application site has strong physical connections to major employment concentrations to the east of Exeter on both sides of the M5. These include the Meteorological Office, London Electricity, and now the Science Park proposal that has been endorsed in the now adopted Structure Plan 2001 to 2016. The relationship of the application site to the other strategic developments in the vicinity is shown on the context plan.

¹ Paragraph 11.2. Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016, Panel Report. November 2003.

Context Plan



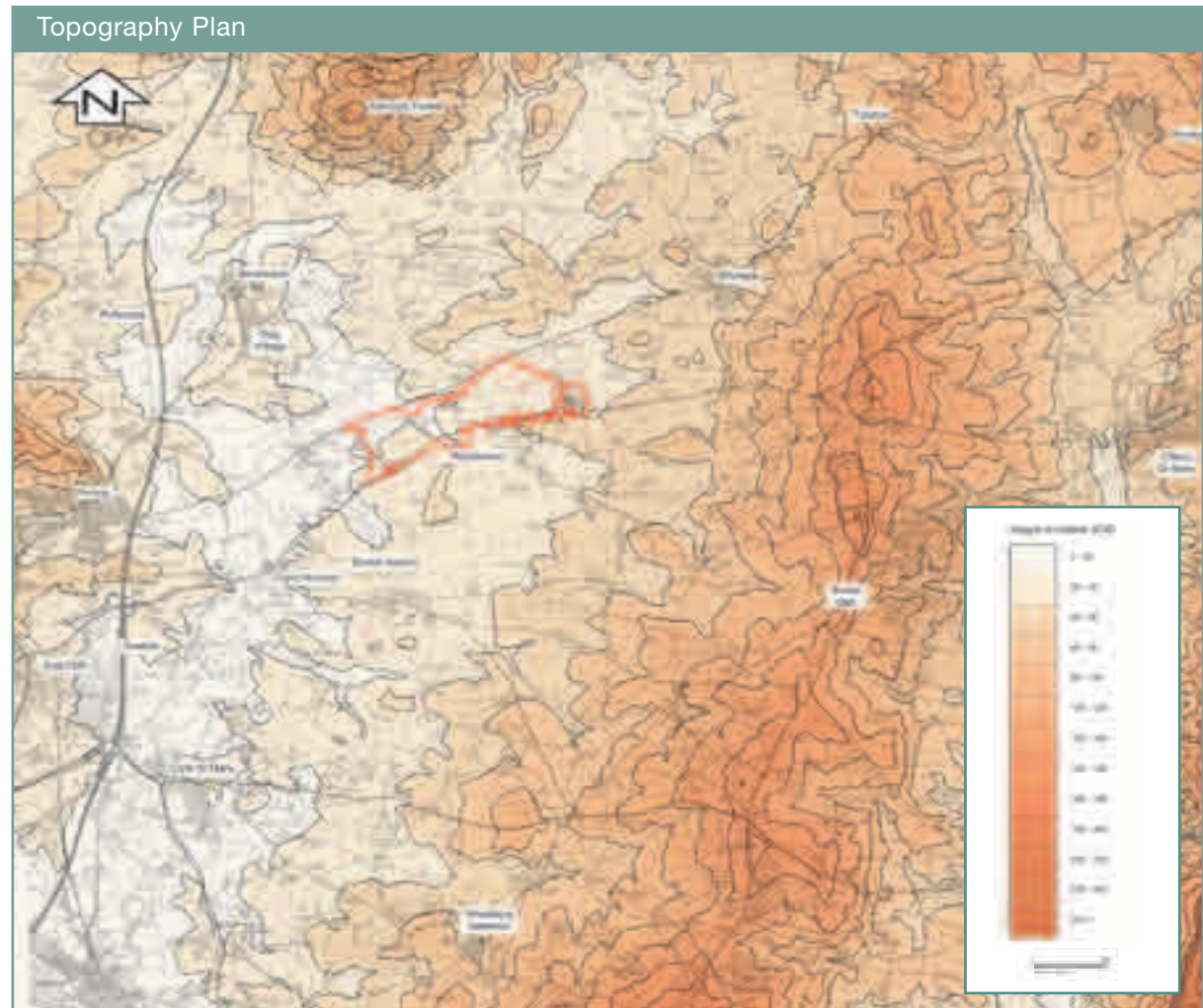
The Site and the Surrounding Area

- 2.6 The majority of the site is presently used as farmland with a small part of the site at the south-eastern end presently in low key use as a nursery. It includes several poorly maintained greenhouses. The nursery and garden centre, approximately 5 hectares, constitutes previously developed land (in accordance with PPG3 Housing).
- 2.7 Within and adjoining the site are a number of existing dwellings (including farmhouses). Included within the application boundary are Tillhouse Farm and Young Hayes Farm. There are also a number of existing properties that abut the application site boundary along the former A30.



Topography

- 2.8 The site lies on the eastern side of the Clyst Valley, with the land rising gently from west to east, towards higher ground at Rockbeare Hill further to the east. Beyond the site to the west, the land slopes down to the River Clyst before rising to the hills surrounding Exeter.
- 2.9 The topography within the application site is defined by the valleys of the Cranny Brook (along the northern edge of the site) and the Rockbeare Stream (running north-south across the site). Generally the land rises to the east and south, with the former A30 being the highest point of the site.
- 2.10 A study of the visual impact of the development has been carried out within the Environmental Statement. The undulating folds of stream valleys and minor ridges mean that the new community will have limited visual impact in the surrounding landscape.



Landscape Character

2.11 Devon County Council has produced an evaluation of landscape character in the county, entitled *The Devon Landscape (2002)*. This defines the site as being entirely within the *Central Devon Landscape Character Zone Group 8: Mid-Devon Farming Belt*. This zone is described as having the following key characteristic features:

- flat or rolling farmland with distinctive red soils;
- relatively few woodlands, meaning hedgerow trees are an important landscape element;
- major road and rail corridors: also the route of transmission lines; and
- heavily settled, by Devon standards, with many villages and scattered farms and a number of large towns.

Significant Vegetation and Hedgerows

2.12 An assessment of the quality of the trees and hedgerows within the site has been carried out in significantly greater detail since July 2003. This has identified the best quality trees and hedgerows to be retained (either in part or full) as landscape features within the public realm. The management regime will ensure that they are maintained and seek to enhance the biodiversity and green setting, creating wildlife and green corridors through the new community.

Ecology

2.13 Ecological assessments of the site have shown the site to be generally poor in ecological terms being characterised by heavily improved pasture fields and species poor hedgerows.

2.14 There are no National Nature Reserves, SSSIs, Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Local Nature Reserves or Nature Conservation Zones within or immediately adjoining the site. However there are areas with potential for localised ecological value within the site although these are limited effectively to some small ponds, a 'green lane' and some mature trees. Detail on the further ecological surveys undertaken since 2003 is set out in the ES Further Information, along with the proposed ecological enhancements arising from the scheme.

2.15 North of the railway line is the Hellings Park Fen County Wildlife Site. No impact is anticipated on the CWS, an assessment shared by the Structure Plan Examination in Public Panel: "*this site is on the other side of the railway line and we see no reason to conclude that it would be affected by the new community*"².

² Paragraph 11.22. *Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016, Panel Report. November 2003.*

Archaeology and Historic Buildings

- 2.16 There are no scheduled ancient monuments within or adjoining the site.
- 2.17 Tillhouse Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building and Rockbeare Bridge a listed structure, neither of which would be demolished or altered as a result of the development. The design of the new community will respect the setting of the listed building and structure and the setting of Tillhouse Farm, in particular, will be enhanced.
- 2.18 In part, the former A30 follows the line of a former roman road, which also passes through the country park area proposed to the south of the former A30. There are two listed residential properties (Stone Villa and Hillside Cottage) abutting the site. Further to the east there are listed buildings within Rockbeare, including Rockbeare Court. The application proposals respond to the existing listed buildings by making provision for lower density development in locations closer to those buildings. Further guidance on the form of development in such locations will be set out in detailed design guidance to be to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, explained in section four of this document.
- 2.19 Archaeological assessments undertaken since the original submission include a programme of geophysical surveys and trial trenching agreed with the County Archaeologist. These confirmed that the site contains only features of limited archaeological interest and the approach subsequently agreed is that the most suitable mitigation for known and potential remains would be

preservation by record. Details of the further archaeological investigations are provided in the Environmental Statement Further Information.

Public Access

- 2.20 There are no public rights of way within the site. There is a public footpath to the south of the site on the other side of the former A30, which links Jack-in-the-Green with Rockbeare. Following development of the new community this footpath would provide a convenient link between Rockbeare and the new village centre and the proposed secondary school.
- 2.21 There are 2 existing roads running through the site, Southbrook Lane at the eastern end and Crannaford Lane through the centre. The roads have been carefully integrated into the site and full regard has been had to the existing uses that are served off these roads. It is proposed that the routes will retain much of their existing character and will remain in large part unimproved. There is potential for a demand management scheme immediately to the north of the railway crossing to limit traffic whilst maintaining access for existing businesses. The scheme for Crannaford Lane will involve road narrowing and diversion of through movements, with the potential for the banning of through movements in either direction for fixed periods of the day, principally the peak hours. Access from all directions, at all times, will be retained to the existing business to the north of the rail line and other existing properties.

Identified Archaeology and Cultural Heritage



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The Need and Rationale for a New Community in the Exeter PUA

- 3.1 The inclusion of a new community in the Devon Structure Plan, adopted in 1999, followed a careful assessment of the needs of the Exeter and East Devon area and the opportunities available to meet the development needs of the sub-region. The selection process identified the new community proposal as the most sustainable, consistent with PPG3 and the sequential approach.
- 3.2 The need for the new community has become more apparent since 1999 and has since been robustly endorsed first in the now adopted Structure Plan to 2016 and second, in the East Devon Local Plan. There is no more sustainable alternative available to meet the development needs of the Exeter area.

The Way Ahead – Delivering Sustainable Communities in the South West

- 3.3 The publication of ‘The Way Ahead’ by the regional partners in the South West, in February 2005, robustly underlines the commitment to the development strategy to the east of Exeter. The document has been worked up as part of the UK Sustainable Communities Plan and sets out to deliver accelerated growth in a small number of places identified in RPG10.
- 3.4 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”³. The small number of locations where accelerated growth is to be encouraged are Bristol, Plymouth, Swindon, key Cornish towns and **Exeter**.
- 3.5 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”**
- 3.6 The delivery mechanisms required to assist with the acceleration of economic growth and housing provision are explored with recognition given to the need for public sector intervention to invest in the additional infrastructure needed up front.

Exeter’s growth and sub-regional role

- 3.7 Government policy therefore strongly supports Exeter’s growing economic role. The City has a regional role as a focal point for investment and in helping to spread the benefits of growth throughout the region. Continued economic development within the Exeter area, is the enduring message in Regional Planning Guidance 10 (now RSS10). Crucially, regional guidance emphasises the key supporting role of housing growth as a necessary condition for the strategic priority of economic growth.
- 3.8 Specifically RPG10 seeks to:
- raise the economic performance of the Central sub-region of the South West (within which Exeter falls) (Policy SS3); and
 - identifies Exeter as the “capital” centre of the Central Sub-region. The importance of Exeter’s *“continuing economic vitality is fully recognised and supported”* (para 3.12).
- 3.9 To this end, Policy SS15 of RPG10 sets out a strategy for Exeter which aims to develop the City’s key role as a focus for strategic economic investment, including explicitly *“providing additional housing to support this enhanced role”*. Delivery of the strategy is to be achieved by securing an adequate land supply for development and *“capitalising on the opportunities offered to the east of the city”* (para 3.46).

- 3.10 In reality, to the east of the City, the momentum of growth has gathered considerable pace. On the City's eastern edge, the Meteorological Office and other developments have proceeded quickly. The airport continues to attract higher passenger numbers and is generating new jobs. British European also, is expanding its workforce. A planning application for a relocated airport terminal anticipates some 1,000 new jobs at the airport and British European in the coming years. Earlier in 2004, the District Council resolved to grant consent for the relocated airport terminal.
- 3.11 The need for, and commitment to, the Skypark development, has also strengthened through the now adopted Structure Plan to 2016. A planning application for Skypark awaits determination. Skypark remains a key element of SWERDA's Development Strategy and is a regional, strategic development site. It is a high priority and, it is expected to bring 3,150 jobs to the doorstep of the new community⁴. The Intermodal Rail Freight Terminal is supported by the County Council and awaits determination. The two phases of its development are anticipated to bring over 1,500 jobs to within 1 km of the new community, according to the application documentation.
- 3.12 A substantial expansion of employment in the immediate vicinity of the application site is underway and accelerating (in line with regional planning and economic strategies).

Development Plan Policy

- 3.13 The Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016 has revisited the development strategy for the Exeter area and rolls forward the Structure Plan to 2016. The new plan was adopted in October 2004.
- 3.14 The revised strategy affirms the intention to facilitate economic growth and continues to support housing development in the Exeter area. Policy ST10 gives priority to:
- developing and diversifying the economy, particularly to the east of Exeter, by offering a range of economic investment opportunities; and to
 - *"a significant scale of additional housing necessary to meet the area's own needs and support its regional economic role"*.
- 3.15 Within the Exeter area, the strategy of capitalising on opportunities to the east of Exeter is not only reaffirmed but reinforced with the confirmation that the Skypark development continues to be supported as a strategic development site of regional significance and the addition of a further strategic development site to be known as East Devon Science Park which is also to be located to the east of the M5.
- 3.16 The strategic housing requirement has been rolled forward to cover the period 2001-2016. It identifies the need for "about

⁴ Lacey Hickie, *Development Strategy and Design Report, November 2000.*

10,350” dwellings in the Exeter Principal Urban Area (PUA). The Exeter PUA is drawn tightly around the urban area of Exeter but also includes the new community in recognition of the key role that the new community is to play in meeting the needs of the City and the region.

3.17 Of the 10,350 dwellings now advocated, 6,700 are to be provided within the boundary of Exeter City leaving about 3,650 dwellings to be accommodated within the PUA but in East Devon and Teignbridge districts. The vast majority, 3,500 dwellings, is to be accommodated in the parts of the PUA that fall in East Devon.

3.18 The effect of the changes on the implied build rate are described in Table 3.4

3.19 The new Structure Plan policy therefore implies a higher rate of development in the Exeter PUA, notwithstanding a reduced rate of development in the county of Devon as a whole. This is entirely consistent with regional planning policy for the South West namely to concentrate a larger proportion of the region’s development in, and at, its principal urban areas. This is the most effective means of accommodating the region’s development needs sustainably.

Table 3.4: Changes in Dwelling Requirement (Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016)

	1999 Adopted Structure Plan (1995-2011)		2004 Adopted Structure Plan (2001-2016)	
	Dwellings	Per annum	Dwellings	Per annum
East Devon part of PUA	3,500	219	3,500	233
Exeter City	6,000	375	6,700	447
Exeter PUA	9,500	594	10,350	690

3.20 In reviewing the development strategy for the Exeter PUA, the Panel that conducted the Examination in Public into the Structure Plan had reconsidered afresh the need for, and role of, the new community. In policy terms, the Panel concluded that the new community proposals accorded squarely with the advice in PPG3 and in RPG10.

3.21 Moreover the Panel was content that the proposals themselves (which were considered on the basis of the application proposals then before the Panel) would not have an undue impact on landscape, on local drainage and floodplain, on nature conservation interests, on existing communities or on Exeter International Airport. The Panel concluded also that there were sustainable transport solutions.

3.22 Other development options within the PUA were examined. None offered a more sustainable alternative. Accordingly the Panel concluded that the new community should be retained and confirmed in the Structure Plan.

East Devon Local Plan

3.33 Those policies that apply to the Exeter PUA within the revised East Devon Local Plan have been considered recently at the Local Plan Inquiry. Following the Structure Plan's endorsement of the principle and location of the new community in East Devon, the Local Plan Inquiry has focussed on matters of detailed objection. The Inspector's report is expected shortly.

3.34 Policy S1B sets out a clear strategic commitment to strategic development east of Exeter – to include the new community of 2,900 dwellings as well as the remaining strategic developments identified in the Structure Plan. The development is identified as being of regional importance.