

Exeter and its Relationship with East Devon

1. Local Government Boundary Changes 1987

Following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England the District Boundaries Order provided that there should transfer from East Devon to Exeter an area of 266 hectares comprising a population of 189 and properties with a rateable value of £650,000 (mainly the Sowton Industrial Estate).

By contrast there was transferred to East Devon from Exeter an area of 89 hectares comprising a population of 9 and a rateable value of £100.

2. Local Government Reorganisation 1994/98

Exeter made a case that it should be established as a Unitary Council but this was rejected by the government of the time, although Plymouth and Torbay were successful. Both Plymouth and Torbay are larger in population and size than Exeter. Torbay, (comprising Torquay, Paignton and Brixham) is the third largest urban area in the south - west. At the time EDDC's stance was that the existing two - tier structure should be retained across Devon with the exception of Plymouth which should be granted unitary status. If this was not acceptable then East Devon should become a unitary in its own right.

3. Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016

The adopted Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016 defines an Exeter Principal Urban Area (PUA) which includes a significant part of East Devon extending from the M5 along the Exeter to Waterloo railway line and along the new A30 eastwards to include a series of major developments. These developments directly deal with the intimate interaction between East Devon and Exeter.

1. Major Highway Improvements and new or improved park and ride facilities to serve Exeter (A30 east, Honiton Road interchange).
2. Science Park Employment Site (25 hectares).
3. Public Transport, Infrastructure Investment/Links. This includes a line extending from the M5 through the new developments to the New Community.
4. Intermodal Freight Facility.
5. Skypark Employment Site (30 hectares).
6. Airport/Improvements – Additional terminal capacity at Exeter Airport, expansion of role of airport as an Accessibility Point in the European Airport Network.
7. New Community 3000 plus dwellings.
8. New Railway Station east of Exeter.
9. A total of 65 hectares of Employment Land including Skypark and the Science Park.
10. 500 dwellings in East Devon at the PUA.

The key diagram indicates the scale of new employment and housing development to be located in the Exeter PUA including the major developments in East Devon. Proposal ST11 requires the provision of about 10,350 dwellings and 150 hectares of employment land to be located at the Exeter PUA (including the proposed New Community and the Strategic Employment Sites at Skypark and the proposed Science Park with East Devon).

4. Regional Spatial Strategy 2006 to 2026

The latest draft of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy 2006 to 2026 states:

“Exeter is a key economic driver for the region, as recognised in the “The Way Ahead – Delivering Sustainable Communities in the South West”. Current levels of job generation in the Exeter travel to work area are projected to continue in the period up to 2026 (22,300 to 28,500 jobs), offering the potential to increase the access to, and dispersal of prosperity across a greater cross section of the community.

Such high economic growth prospects will enable Exeter to realise its economic potential, attracting investment in knowledge based industries, building on the potential of the University, Medical School and key employers like the Meteorological Office, the Airport and associated strategic employment sites, and developing the skill base of the area. LDDs for Exeter and East Devon should make provision for the further development of the City as a centre for business and service sectors, together with safeguarded strategic sites suitable for further investment in specialised, science and technologically based industries. These forms of economic growth are generally compatible with the conservation of the area’s high environmental quality.

The role of the City as a major Regional Centre for services, retailing and culture should be developed and enhanced, realising its economic opportunities, providing a stronger commercial and tourism centre within the central part of the South West region. In developing its role, Exeter should be a focus for strategic economic development and should realise its full potential for further economic and commercial investment.”

It also states that :

“To complement the urban focused strategy, a strategic urban extension east of the M5 Motorway, the ‘New Community’ has been identified through technical work undertaken by the strategic planning authority, is proposed to provide a continuous supply and choice of residential, economic and social opportunities to meet the identified development requirements.”

Proposals in the draft RSS are for “about 6,500” at Cranbrook. It also proposes that to cater for development requirements after 2021 a second strategic urban extension (or new community) should be identified, providing for at least 1,500 dwellings on the eastern or southern sides of Exeter and that Devon County Council, Exeter City, East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils should work together to plan for this.

A section of the draft RSS headed “Towns within the Exeter area of Influence” states:

The City’s economy continues to be a dominant influence over a number of towns within the wider sub region, with substantial levels of inward commuting from towns such as Exmouth, Honiton and Ottery St Mary. In these towns there has been a considerable scale of housing development over the last 20 years but this has not been matched by local job creation. There are therefore strong and complex functional relationships between a number of towns in the sub region and the city itself.