

Greater Exeter Strategic Plan



Consultation: Issues
Regulation 18
February 2017



Introduction

The local authorities of East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, Teignbridge and Devon County Council are working together, engaging with stakeholders and communities, to prepare a new joint plan. By working together we are seeking to deliver the best possible outcomes for the provision of new homes, jobs and infrastructure for existing and future generations, while also protecting and enhancing the environment. The plan area is being called Greater Exeter and covers all of the four local authority areas, excluding Dartmoor National Park.

This document is the first stage in producing the joint plan and is designed to stimulate debate early in the process. Your input will help inform the contents of the new plan and decisions on future growth and development. We need to be proactive in setting out where development will be located to ensure we meet the government’s aim of boosting the supply of housing.

A new plan

The new document, looking forward to 2040, will be called the **Greater Exeter Strategic Plan**.

The purpose of preparing the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan is to:

- Have a joined-up vision and aspirations for the area
- Meet the area’s housing needs in the right locations
- Secure economic growth and increased prosperity
- Provide transport and infrastructure improvements needed to support sustainable growth
- Conserve and enhance the area’s environment



What is this document?

This is the first step in preparing the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan and, after setting out some background, we are asking your views on:

- The scope and content of the new joint plan**
- The key issues facing the area**

Your feedback will help shape the first draft of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan which will be consulted on in 2018.

How to get involved

You can make comments on this document between 27th February 2017 and 10th April 2017. Please fill in the online consultation form at:

www.gesp.org.uk/issues

If you need an alternative format to submit a response please email gesp@devon.gov.uk or call your district council office using the telephone number on the last page of this document.

We will be holding public exhibitions where you can learn more about the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

Date/time	Location
Wed 8th March: 2pm – 8pm	Mackarness Hall, High Street, Honiton EX14 1PG
Wed 15th March: 2pm – 8pm	Mid Devon District Council Office, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton EX16 6PP
Thurs 16th March: 2pm – 8pm	The Guildhall, High Street, Exeter EX4 3EB
Thurs 23rd March: 2pm – 8pm	Old Forde House, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4XX

If you would like to be informed of progress of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan without responding to this consultation, please contact us providing your name, address and email address.

Preparing the plan

Writing the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will involve extensive evidence gathering, public consultations and joint working with neighbouring authorities and partners. You can follow the progress of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan at: www.gesp.org.uk

We will prepare the plan using these steps:

Stage one (Current)	Issues Consultation and Call for Sites	You can comment on the content of the plan and provide local knowledge.
Stage two	Draft Greater Exeter Strategic Plan	You are invited to comment on draft policies, potential development locations and supporting information, based on the previous stage and evidence gathering.
Stage three	Publication version of Greater Exeter Strategic Plan	You can comment on the revised plan, changed in light of the previous stage and further evidence gathering. Plan and comments go to the Planning Inspector.
Stage four	Planning Inspector's hearings	An independent Planning Inspector examines the plan, evidence and comments made. He/she holds hearings to discuss the 'soundness' of the plan.
Stage five	Adopted Greater Exeter Strategic Plan	The plan is adopted and is used to inform local planning policy and decisions on planning applications.

Proposed contents of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan

Councils are required to produce planning policy documents to cover key issues such as housing, employment and the environment. We are proposing that the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will include:

- Vision and objectives
- Strategy (covering the overarching direction of the area, the function of places, housing, economy, connectivity, environment, healthy and resilient communities)
- Strategic policies
- Development policies
- Strategic proposals and allocations (development and infrastructure)
- Delivery policies
- Monitoring indicators

The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan and other plans

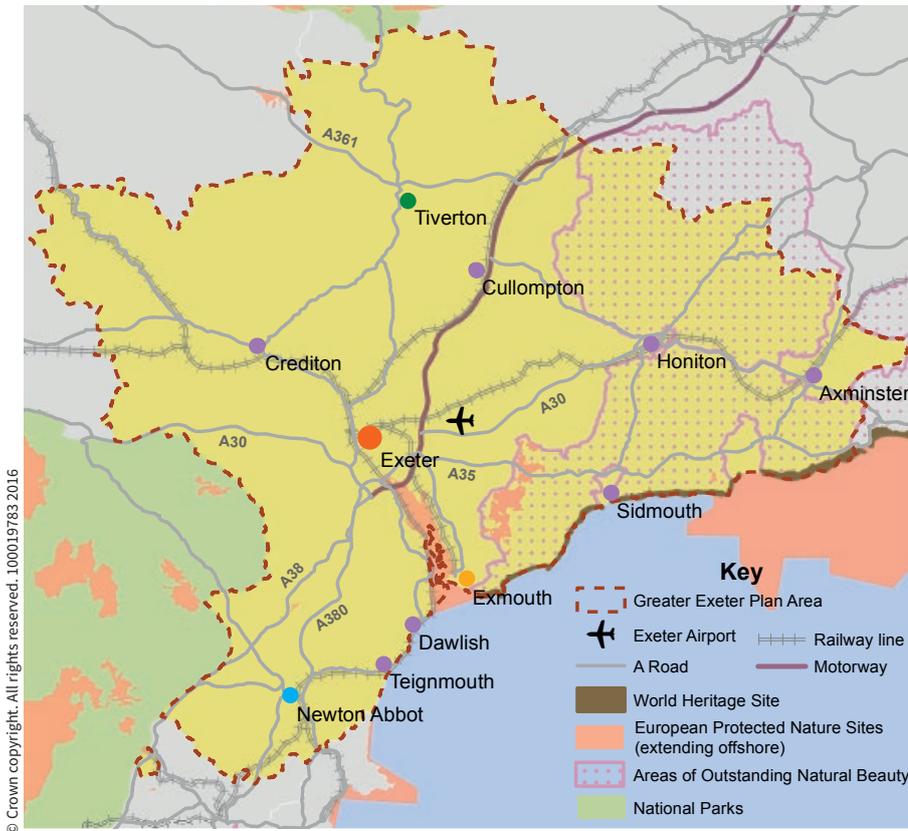
The relationship of planning documents in the Greater Exeter area is shown below:



Question 1

Do you have any comments on the content of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan and its relationship with other plans?

The place



● Exmouth

Exmouth is the largest coastal town in the Greater Exeter area and is an important residential and commercial centre. Beside the sea and estuary, it is a desirable visitor and tourist destination with access to the Jurassic Coast (a World Heritage site) and a reputation for water sports. The Exe Estuary is an important wildlife habitat with European protection. The town benefits from a local rail link to Exeter but has a constrained road connection to the M5 and Exeter.

● Other market and coastal towns

The market and coastal towns in Greater Exeter play an important role in providing local services, facilities and some job opportunities. They offer highly valued access to rural and coastal environments.

Recently, the catchment area of people travelling to Exeter has increased, indicating a need to travel to achieve higher wages and better work prospects. Increased movement for work has created challenges for our transport system. A reliance on car journeys and difficulties in improving roads due to environmental and financial limits makes travel an issue in some locations.

■ Rural areas and villages

Most of the Greater Exeter area is rural or coastal. These beautiful areas provide a vital environmental asset for the area in terms of quality of life.

Larger villages act as local centres, complementing the role of nearby towns and Exeter. Although farming is not as significant a part of the economy as it once was, it supports many residents and associated industries. It also performs a vital role in managing the countryside.

● Exeter

The attractive city of Exeter is located strategically in south east Devon. At the heart of the Greater Exeter area it acts as a hub for local road and rail connections. Exeter benefits from a university, retail, commercial and cultural strengths and this, together with its setting, has encouraged strong economic growth. Exeter has been successful in attracting investment in knowledge based industries, building on the strength of the university and key employers like the hospital and Met Office.

Due to Exeter's location and economic success the city's population and its surrounds have grown significantly in recent years.

● Newton Abbot

Newton Abbot, part of the heart of Teignbridge, is the largest market town in the south west of the area.

It is located on the Teign Estuary between the coast and Dartmoor. It is strategically located close to the A38 and the A380 and also has a mainline rail station. The town offers a retail centre and employment which complements the business offer of Exeter, with specialist manufacturing. The town has developed large, residential areas in the recent past.

● Tiverton

Tiverton provides the greatest range of social and commercial services in the northern part of the area. It has good access to the M5, a rail service at Tiverton Parkway and is connected to the North Devon Link Road. Tiverton has seen significant housing development in the recent past. The largest employment sector is retail and wholesale trade with some larger employers.

The issues

Here are our initial ideas on the issues affecting those who live and work in the Greater Exeter area which could be addressed in the plan:



Housing

We know many residents in Greater Exeter find **houses unaffordable** and/or **struggle to find the right properties** to meet their needs (for example young families, older people). However, the picture is not the same everywhere; disparity is created by mixed levels of wealth and different house prices in the area.

The quality of our homes is also a key issue for many; we have homes which could be in **better condition**.



Economy and employment

Greater Exeter has a good level of employment. However, **wages are low** compared to national averages. To improve the choice of jobs and the wages people receive, we need to maximise the assets we have for **high value economic growth** and ensure our workforce is appropriately **skilled and productive**.



Transport

Many people living in Greater Exeter experience barriers to reaching employment and services. The rural nature of much of the area is a cause of this in a lot of cases. **High car dependency** is an **expensive** burden on many households and it is causing **traffic issues** on parts of our road network. It is also difficult to serve the rural areas efficiently with regular **bus services**. The reliance on cars has an **environmental cost** too. Transport can also be an opportunity – walking and cycling have significant health benefits.



Environment

We live in an exceptional environment in terms of our city, towns and villages, coastline, rural areas and our heritage. It is important socially, economically, and inherently, that our **natural and built environment** is **conserved and enhanced**.



Healthy communities

Our health is linked to many factors - the quality of our homes, our affluence, our lifestyles, the environment we live in. Whilst ensuring we **maximise opportunities to improve health** we also need to respond to new challenges. We have an **ageing population**; parts of Greater Exeter have significantly higher than average numbers of older people who may have specific requirements which need to be planned for. **Fuel poverty** also has a negative effect on people's health.



Adapting to future challenges

The impact of **climate change** on Greater Exeter is a difficult issue to quantify but the extreme storms in 2014, which damaged the railway at Dawlish, and **flood risk** are examples of challenges to which we may need to respond more often due to changes in our climate. Alongside environmental challenges we also need to be prepared for **economic pressures**, with uncertainty due to our withdrawal from the European Union and fluctuations in costs of goods (for example fuel).



Infrastructure

For communities to function and prosper they need infrastructure to support them, for example schools, health services, buses, trains, roads, broadband and flood defences. As the Greater Exeter population grows, further infrastructure will be required to ensure residents can thrive. Infrastructure **capacity** and **location/accessibility** are issues to be addressed.



Question 2

Do these reflect the issues you see facing Greater Exeter?
If not, what should we add or change?

What will Greater Exeter be like in the future?

We need to bring together a strong, clear and aspirational vision for the area. We want to make sure that the Plan deals with the current issues and helps to achieve an improved future.

Greater Exeter up to 2040

Exeter has an important role to play as a critical focus for investment and innovation to increase the prosperity of residents across the wider area. It has the potential to expand significantly the contribution it makes to the economic well-being of the southwest and the national economy, focusing on new, high tech industries such as applied environmental sciences and applied data analytics. The towns surrounding Exeter also have a key role in realising their full economic potential to support local residents too.

One of the key assets of the area, and one of the things most valued by residents, is the quality of the natural environment - the coast, the wider landscape and the historic and cultural heritage it contains.

There is also a strong relationship between the city of Exeter and the towns and communities in the wider area. This is a relationship that brings benefits to the whole area in terms of economic prosperity, access to facilities and overall quality of life.

Draft vision

The unique benefits of having a thriving, historic, University City situated within a vibrant network of rural towns and villages are maximised. The needs of Greater Exeter's communities are embraced, with economic successes built upon and new growth opportunities realised. Our exceptional coastal and rural environments are maintained and enhanced, supporting the healthy lifestyles of our communities. The area is a global leader at addressing the economic and environmental challenges associated with low carbon, energy, climate change and transport and Greater Exeter is established as a leading location for innovative, data-driven and knowledge-led businesses. Growth is sustainable, resilient and proactively managed to benefit both urban and rural communities.



Question 3

Is the draft vision appropriate for guiding the future of the Greater Exeter area up to 2040?
If not, what changes would you like to see?

Themes for the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan

To deliver the vision and address the planning issues identified, we think the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan should consider the following to inform our objectives:



Housing

- Quantity and cost
- Type
- Quality
- Location



Economy and employment

- More and better paid jobs
- New investment
- Building on specialist expertise
- Growing existing industries



Transport and communications

- Accessibility
- Rail, road and air links
- Sustainable and active travel
- Communication and technological systems, for example broadband



Environment

- Conserving and enhancing our environment
- Landscape and seascape
- Heritage
- Biodiversity
- Public spaces



Healthy communities

- Active lifestyles
- Balanced communities
- Social, sports and cultural facilities
- A healthy living environment



Adapting to future challenges

- Flooding
- Environmental adaptation
- Economic diversification
- Low carbon and energy



Infrastructure

- The effective use of existing assets
- Innovation



Delivery

- Infrastructure provision and funding
- Design standards
- Affordable housing



Question 4

Have we missed anything?
If yes, what additions or changes should we make?

Growth in the Greater Exeter area

If we want to secure the supply of high quality, reasonably priced housing for current and future generations, and continue to grow and develop our economy and prosperity, we need to plan for new development in addition to what is in our existing planning documents. If we do this proactively we can make sure that new development conserves, enhances and harnesses our special environment and provides for our quality of life.

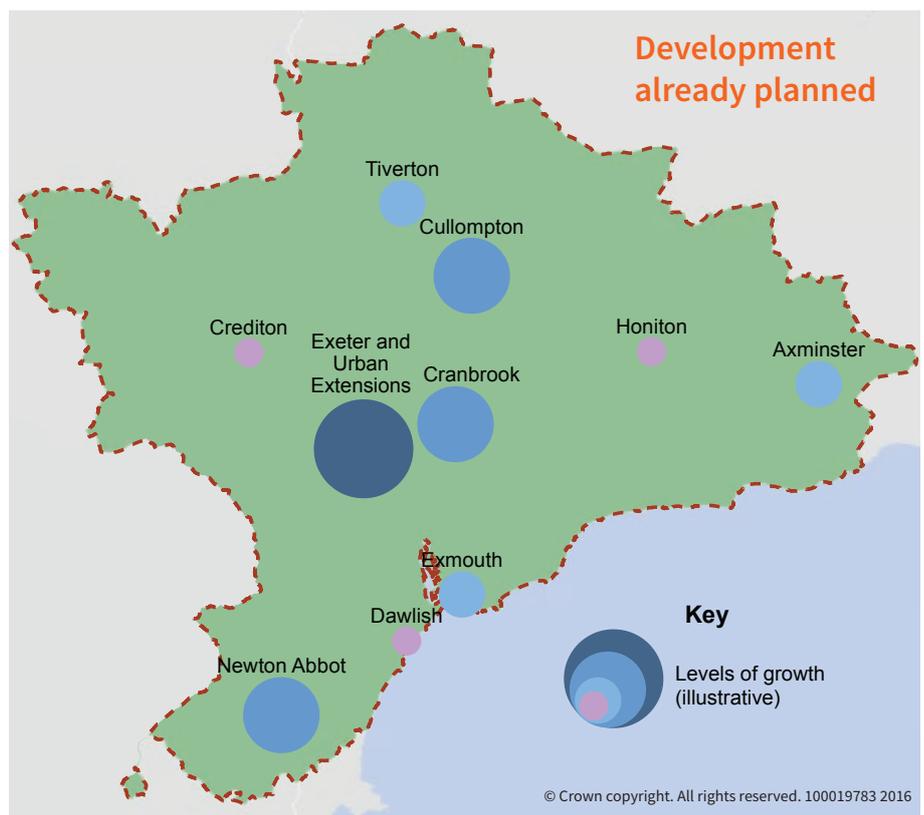
Now

Current plans (which only go up to between 2026 and 2033 depending on the area) set out the need for approximately 2500 new homes to be provided each year in the area. The broad pattern of development set out in these plans currently focuses growth in Exeter and its immediate surrounding area through the delivery of a new community at Cranbrook and a series of large urban extensions on the edge of the city at Newcourt, Monkerton and South West Exeter. This is complemented by smaller developments on the edge of Exeter, including Pinhoe.

Development close to Exeter and at Cranbrook accounts for almost half of the total housing provision planned in the area. Major employment sites are already planned for the east of Exeter at Science Park, Skypark and at a freight terminal.

Growth in and around Exeter is complemented by a series of urban extensions at Newton Abbot, Tiverton, Cullompton, Dawlish and Axminster, with some smaller scale growth in the remaining market and coastal towns such as Exmouth.

The current development pattern has been successful in delivering housing and economic growth although care has been needed to minimise pressure on sites of environmental importance, particularly the European protected Exe Estuary and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths. The transport network continues to be affected, with significant traffic and slower average speeds on some parts of the road network.



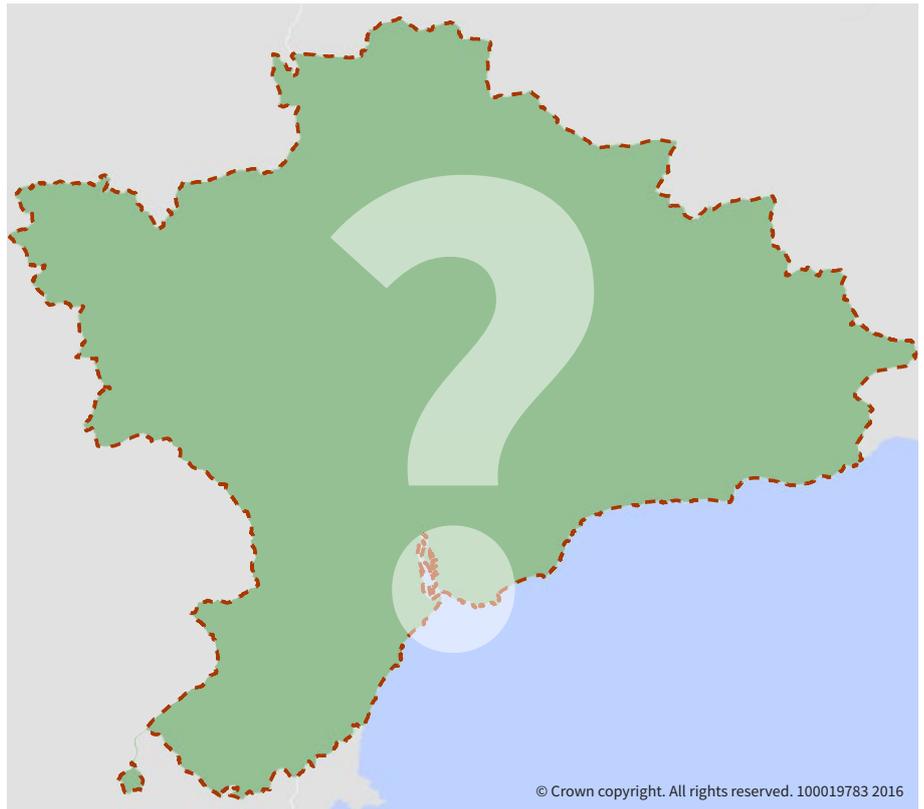
The future

Looking to the future we will need to think about how development can be best accommodated if we are to deliver the housing and economic provision the area needs. We also need to respond to central Government's focus on increasing housing supply.

Technical work is underway to consider the number of houses and jobs we need in future. Evidence is also being prepared to cover environmental issues, transport, infrastructure and other themes.

While the detail is being worked up it is useful to consider how we could provide for future growth in the Greater Exeter area while conserving the high quality environment. We will need to think about how forms of development we are currently seeing may work in the future.

Future stages of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will set out more detail, suggesting where future development could be located.



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Question 5

If we are to meet the area's needs for housing and employment, what forms of development do you feel best deliver our draft vision?

For example:

- More efficient use of land in Exeter
- Major urban extensions in Exeter and main towns
- Dispersed small scale development
- Stand alone new communities
- Other



Question 6

Are there any further comments you would like to make on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan?

Thank you very much for taking the time to look at this document.
Your views are valued and responses to the questions will help shape
the future of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

To request this information in
an alternative format or language
please call your district council
office (telephone number below) or
email gesp@devon.gov.uk

We consider requests on an individual basis.

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Exeter City Council **01392 265615**

Mid Devon District Council **01884 234221**

Teignbridge District Council **01626 215735**