

8(III)

NEW COMMUNITIES

The Expansion of Existing Settlements and the Development of New Communities

8.196 Proposal H1 in Chapter 8(i) sets out the proposed level and distribution of residential development in Devon for the period 1995 to 2011. The Development Strategy indicates that the Areas of Economic Activity will need to accommodate a significant proportion of the additional development provided for in the County as a whole. Similarly, these areas will also accommodate major employment land provision in the same period.

8.197 In accordance with the strategic Aims and Objectives set out in Chapter 4, this additional development should be provided for wherever possible within the existing settlements - especially within the Regional, Sub Regional and Area Centres. In Torbay and Newton Abbot and the Barnstaple Bideford Main Areas of Economic Activity identified in the Strategy, it has been concluded that existing settlements could accommodate the levels of development proposed. However, in the case of the Plymouth and Exeter Main Areas of Economic Activity the existing settlements can only partially meet development requirements.

Development within the Plymouth Main Area of Economic Activity

8.198 In order to meet the housing needs of the Plymouth Main Area of Economic Activity, Proposal H1 provides for an overall total of some 14,000 dwellings for that area in the period 1995 to 2011, and Proposal E3 provides for 190 ha of employment land development in that area. Plymouth City can accommodate 6,800 dwellings within the period of the Plan and the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West had already recognised that some development provision would need to be provided outside the City's boundaries.

8.199 If the housing needs of the area are to be met, a further 7,200 dwellings need to be located within the western part of South Hams District as indicated on the Key Diagram, and it is this level of provision that is included within Proposal H1 for that part of the Main Area of Economic Activity. Similarly, there is only scope to provide for 90 ha of employment land within Plymouth, leaving 100 ha to be provided for within the South Hams part of the Main Area of Economic Activity.

8.200 This level of dwelling change represents a considerable increase in past rates of development and a substantial addition to the existing dwelling stock in this part of the South Hams. The existing settlements within this area could not accommodate this level of change in full

without breaching major environmental and topographical constraints.

8.201 Similarly, development within South Hams in areas immediately adjacent to the built up area of Plymouth, i.e. peripheral urban development, could not provide sufficient capacity to meet the identified dwelling needs of the area in a sustainable way. A New Community is therefore proposed within South Hams District as the most appropriate way of meeting the needs of the area.

8.202 Proposal N1 requires the New Community within the South Hams part of the Plymouth Main Area of Economic Activity to provide for at least 2,500 dwellings in the period to 2011 together with associated employment land and a range of community facilities. This scale of provision should be regarded as part of a larger planned new community.

8.203 In the context of the need for settlement self-sufficiency and the potential future development needs of the area the new community should be planned to accommodate at least 4,500 dwellings in the longer term. The housing and other development needs for the period beyond 2011 will be the subject of further consideration when the Structure Plan is rolled forward.

8.204 The scale of the new community must reflect the development needs of the area, the ability of the local landscape and environment to accommodate such a major proposal in a satisfactory way, and the ability of the New Community itself to achieve a degree of self sufficiency and support as wide a range of local facilities as possible.

8.205 In locational terms, it will be important for the New Community to minimise the use of high quality agricultural land, avoid important mineral deposits and to minimise the effect on the National Park. While the New Community should have a distinct identity it will necessarily relate closely to existing settlements and especially to the Regional Centre of Plymouth. It will also need to be accessible to the major road system and local highway network. It will be essential therefore for the New Community to be linked to the City by an effective, high capacity public transport system so as to minimise dependence on the private car while establishing a high level of accessibility to higher level facilities and services within the City. In developing a proposal for an effective high capacity public transport system consideration should be given to providing a multi modal transport facility. The location and phasing of development and infrastructure will need to be defined in the Local Plan and other planning guidance. These and other requirements are set out in Policies N1, N3, N4 and N5.

Proposal N1

A new community should be provided for within South Hams District, within the Plymouth Area of Economic Activity as shown on the Key Diagram. The new community should include provision for at least 2,500 dwellings in the period up to 2011, associated employment land provision and a range of community and other associated facilities. The new community should be located where it will:

- 1. be assimilated into the landscape of the area,**
- 2. avoid, as far as possible, the use of significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land,**
- 3. be well related to but separate from existing settlements,**
- 4. be linked to Plymouth in the first phase of its development by an effective high capacity public transport system,**
- 5. be accessible to the High Quality Road Network and the Local highway system,**
- 6. avoid areas of known mineral deposits, and**
- 7. be capable of accommodating further development beyond the current plan period.**

Development within the Exeter Main Area of Economic Activity

8.206 The Exeter Main Area of Economic Activity is identified in the strategy as a key area for the future development of the County's economy and Proposals H1 and E3 reflect this in providing for 9,500 dwellings and 140 ha of employment land in the area over the period 1995 to 2011. As in the case of the Plymouth area, there is insufficient capacity within existing settlements to meet this level of provision. Exeter itself can provide for 6,000 dwellings and 100 ha of employment land, leaving a further 3,500 dwellings and 40 ha of employment land to be located within the western part of East Devon District.

8.207 The peripheral expansion of Exeter itself is constrained by topography, agricultural land and other physical constraints, and that part of the Exeter Main Area of Economic Activity within East Devon District does not include any established Area Centres - there is limited scope for accommodating change through settlement expansion. The Review therefore proposes the development of a New Community within the western part of East Devon District. The New Community would need to provide for about 2,000 dwellings together with associated employment land provision in the period to 2011. This scale of provision should be regarded as part of a larger planned new community.

8.208 In the context of the need for settlement self-sufficiency and the future development needs of the area

the new community should be planned to accommodate at least 3,000 dwellings in the longer term. Housing and other development needs beyond 2011 will be the subject of further consideration when the structure plan is rolled forward.

8.209 The New Community must provide a range of community and other facilities and should be located where it can be accommodated within the landscape and where it can access the major and local highway networks. It should also be able to access the main Exeter to Waterloo line by way of a new station forming an integral part of the overall development scheme. The new station will provide a key public transport link between the New Community and the Regional Centre of Exeter. A specific consideration within this part of East Devon is the relationship between the proposed New Community and the operational requirements of Exeter Airport. The New Community must be located where it would not adversely affect - or be affected by - the operation of the Airport which is identified in the Review as a strategic element of the County's transport infrastructure. The location and phasing of development and infrastructure will need to be defined in the Local Plan and other guidance. These and other requirements are set out in Policies N2, N3, N4 and N5.

Proposal N2

A new community should be provided for within East Devon District, within the Exeter Area of Economic Activity as shown on the Key Diagram. The new community should include provision for about 2,000 dwellings in the period up to 2011, associated employment land provision and a range of community and other associated facilities.

The new community should be located where it will:

- 1. be assimilated into the landscape of the area,**
- 2. avoid, as far as possible, the use of significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land,**
- 3. be well related to but separate from existing settlements,**
- 4. be linked to Exeter in the first phase of its development by an effective road based public transport system,**
- 5. access the Exeter-Waterloo rail line by way of a new rail station to be provided in the first phase of the overall development scheme,**
- 6. be accessible to the High Quality Road Network and the Local highway system**
- 7. be developed without adversely affecting the operation of Exeter Airport and where it would not be affected by unacceptable levels of aircraft noise,**
- 8. be capable of accommodating further development beyond the current plan period.**

The Concept of New Community Development

8.210 The two New Community proposals set out in Proposals N1 and N2 above represent a major new

approach to the accommodation of development within Devon. As such it is essential that the form and nature of the development proposed is clearly understood, and that sufficient safeguards and guidance is developed to ensure that the proposals are implemented in the way envisaged by the responsible Local Authorities. Such major development will only be acceptable if it can be achieved in a sustainable way incorporating the highest standards of design. The quality of development is important throughout the County, but the New Communities present a special challenge. Any specific proposals must be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and the Local Planning Authority should prepare a full design and development brief for the new communities as a whole.

8.211 The concept of settlement self sufficiency is embodied within the overall development Objectives set out in Chapter 4 and will be particularly important in the context of the New Community proposals. This requires that as full a range of facilities and services as possible are provided locally, including employment opportunities, and that these facilities are compatible in scale with the needs of the New Community's population.

8.212 The New Communities will need to function effectively in social terms and provide a comprehensive range of housing types, including affordable housing, that will enable them to develop and evolve over time in an organic and balanced way - meeting housing needs in the area and providing choice and a mix of social and community characteristics.

8.213 The development of the New Communities provides an opportunity to develop an integrated transportation system and other design features reflecting the most recent thinking in terms of sustainability and sustainable development. The pattern of land uses and the transportation systems should promote the use of modes other than the private car and minimise the need to travel, and minimise waste and pollution. To be fully consistent with the principles of sustainability, the transportation networks associated with each proposal, both within the settlement and linking it to existing development, should give priority to public transport and pedestrian and cycle movement.

8.214 The design of the New Community must incorporate other features that promote sustainability - particularly in terms of the promotion of energy conservation, high standards of open space provision and structural landscaping to enhance the setting within the surrounding countryside.

8.215 The New Communities will need to incorporate all associated physical infrastructure - including sewerage, drainage, water services, other utilities and telecommunications. Policy N3 provides guidance on the factors that will need to be addressed in bringing forward specific development proposals within South Hams and East Devon Districts.

Policy N3

The new communities provided for in Proposals N1 and N2 should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment and should be developed to secure the highest standards of design, and in such a way as to avoid pollution, minimise the use of resources and minimise waste. They must include provision for:

- 1. local community facilities, including primary and secondary education, shopping, cultural and health facilities, together with local employment opportunities,**
- 2. a range of housing types, including a significant element of affordable housing,**
- 3. a land use and transportation system that promotes pedestrian, cycle and public transport accessibility and minimises the need for travel by private car,**
- 4. design features and layout of buildings that promotes energy conservation,**
- 5. provision for public and private open space, structural landscaping and features that promote nature conservation,**
- 6. all necessary physical infrastructure.**

Implementation of the New Community Proposals

8.216 If the New Community proposals are to be successfully implemented in accordance with the criteria and guidance set out in Proposals N1 and N2, and Policy N3 it is essential for effective mechanisms to be in place to ensure that the development process is co-ordinated and planned in a comprehensive way. This will involve the development of specific proposals through the relevant District wide Local Plans, the preparation of an overall development scheme incorporating clear guidance on phasing, infrastructure provision, and the identification of any requirement for specific legal agreements between the developer and the Local Authority.

8.217 The phasing of development will be of critical importance - ensuring that the mix of land uses comes forward in a co-ordinated way and in a way that ensures that at each phase of development there is an appropriate range of facilities and infrastructure available to support the resident population. In both cases it will be important to have key elements of transportation and other infrastructure, especially education, in place in the first phase of the development process so that the New Communities can function in as sustainable a way as possible at all stages in their development.

8.218 Policy N4 gives strategic guidance on the mechanisms for implementation of the New Community proposals and highlights the key role to be played by the Local Plan process, the importance of effective phasing and the need for specific agreements to be determined at an early stage.

Policy N4

The new communities provided for in Proposals N1 and N2 should be included as specific proposals within the District wide Local Plans for South Hams and East Devon respectively, and should be:

1. developed in fully comprehensive way in accordance with an overall development scheme agreed with the appropriate Local Planning Authority
2. developed in accordance with an agreed phasing programme, so as to ensure the early provision of community, infrastructure and other facilities as residential development progresses, and promote the self sufficiency of each phase of the development
3. subject to specific agreements between the developer and the Local Planning Authority so as to ensure the provision of infrastructure, the full implementation of the development scheme and the phasing programme.

Protection of the Open Countryside close to the New Communities

8.219 Both of the New Community proposals set out in Proposals N1 and N2 above will involve the development of major new areas in the vicinity of existing settlements. The New Communities are intended to function as much as possible as independent and self contained settlements and while they need to be well related to the existing settlement pattern, it will be important for them to maintain a distinct identity. It will also be important to ensure that the open countryside between the New Communities and existing built up areas is protected from development - preventing coalescence and maintaining the setting of those settlements. Policy N5 requires the appropriate Local Plans to include policies to ensure that these objectives are achieved.

Proposal N5

Where new communities are proposed in accordance with Proposals N1 and N2, the appropriate District-wide Local Plans should include policies to protect the setting of those new communities within the landscape, ensure that they retain a separate identity and do not coalesce with existing settlements.