

# CP ROBINSON FWR (multiple nos)

## CENTRAL PARK AREA ACTION PLAN - FURTHER STATEMENT FOR 23.04.08

I am submitting this document to provide further comments on the Central Park Area Action plan paying particular notice of the "Get Plymouth Active- Analysis of need" which was presented for first viewing at the pre- examination meeting on March 26th

### PROPOSAL CP1- THE LIFE CENTRE

#### d. Health facilities Test of Soundness 4a& 4b & 5

The information supplied in the Get Plymouth Active document makes no mention of the Heartbeat gym in the North Prospect Area of Plymouth. This is a locality based gym with facilities specifically targeted for those on low income in an area of social deprivation to improve and develop an active lifestyle.

Information about this gym and other facilities can be obtained via the Jan Cutting Healthy Living Centre, Scott Business Park, Beacon Park Road. Tel 01752 203670.

Facilities within this centre include Benefit Angels, Work-route- to help the unemployed return to work, Yoga and Tai Chi.

A larger more commercial centre, as envisioned in the plan is likely to compromise the success of locally based centres' whilst at the same time attracting only the more affluent members of the wider community as the "premier leisure centre of the city" page 1

The emphasis on Health and fitness facilities- page 35 of the Get Plymouth Active document is misplaced. National statistics produced by accountancy firm Deloitte suggests that gym membership is falling and evidence from the University of Leicester, is that they fail to deliver long term health improvements. Studies at the University of Ottawa suggested that following a more relaxed approach to activity could result in greater long- term weight loss. Current government recommendations suggest that 30 minutes of moderate exercise such as walking is enough to make an impact on health. Doing what is enjoyable such as gardening, cycling to work, playing football with the kids is of greater health benefit, rather than an "imposed discipline" of the gym.

The plan should reconsider the scale of development with the emphasis on locality based sustainable activities as above. Local council tax payers are being asked to subsidise this scheme, purchasing something which has already been identified as ineffective in the long term is nonsensical.

The Get Plymouth Active document was the first concrete plans available to outline the extent of what was being proposed in terms of facilities therefore it was not possible to comment until receipt of this document. It is noted that there are plans to redevelop the Marjon pool, p25. Marjon is a teacher training establishment with a high reputation for sporting excellence. Siteing the "elitist" sport centre within this locality, with all the other proposed facilities could provide a much better option rather than using green open spaces within the park. Transport to and from this facility already exists as it is in close proximity to the large conurbations of Derriford Hospital and the science park. Marjon is situated on land opposite to the airport providing ease of access for "national sports people"

Access would be readily available to use hydro therapy for the rehabilitation of a variety of medical conditions, providing a major research resource for the nearby Medical School. Car

parking facilities are available, traffic congestion on Outland Road would not be further compromised as with the current plan

The replacement of simple facilities, on the same footprint, for the local population at costs considerably lower than proposed would appear to be more economically viable. This would allow the retention of the “fun pool” at the Pavilions, retaining a facility for young children, where they can be exposed to the water as a recreation rather than in an environment designed for elitist sport as envisioned in the current plan

#### **f. Environmental Centre. Test of Soundness 2 & 4a**

A significant number of the preferred sports highlighted in the Get Plymouth Active document’s analysis of need refer to commercial enterprises. There is no mention of the role of gardening in the healthy lifestyles particularly for the older population. Gardening is one of the UK’s most popular hobbies and the development of an environmental centre could provide a source of knowledge and expertise for the local communities.

Research carried out by Professor Saul Becker with the University of Loughborough and the Thrive project, a national horticultural charity, in 2002 demonstrated gardening was able to improve the lives of disabled, disadvantaged and older people.

Many of the houses in the North Prospect area have reasonably large gardens. From personal observation many are untended and are a dumping ground for rubbish, possibly due to ignorance and also the purchase of equipment is more difficult on a restricted income. “Unemployment is above the regional and national norms and there is a higher than average proportion of the working age population on benefit” page 5. As part of a health improvement package for healthier eating and increased activity levels an environmental centre could provide demonstration plots and host tool banks for those on low income, the ability to hire tools is an essential to facilitate garden improvements. A simple example of the health improvements during World War 2 supports the need for such a centre

The Teaching Primary Care Trust already supports such local initiatives as demonstrated in the work of the Routeways organisation which is there to help and support people with mental health difficulties

#### **Social Centre**

Social activities for all age groups already take place in the Cricket Pavilion, this should be continued and commercial considerations of local entrepreneurs not be allowed to impact on these activities.

### **PROPOSAL CP2 – HOME PARK**

#### **a. Leisure and sporting facilities Test of Soundness 7& 8 & 9**

Get Plymouth Active highlights the need for improved access for all sporting activities. [www.plymouthcricketclub.com](http://www.plymouthcricketclub.com) demonstrates that there is already local facilities which are under threat in order to build leisure and sporting facilities at Home Park The existing facilities were built for the community by the community, they should be safeguarded for the future. Cricket, especially the 20/20 game is developing in Asia recent developments in India are evidence of the popularity and financial support there. Plymouth has an increasingly ethnically diverse population. The closure of such facilities could be seen as culturally insensitive and show a lack of forward planning in improving health. Cricket facilities should be supported and enhanced rather than denied.

### **c. Hotel Test of Soundness 7**

Plymouth Argyle club has recently advertised that a Japanese company, have taken a 20% stake in the club. The Evening Herald report that the company was set up to develop property, particularly the South Stand and hotel facilities

The transfer of Home Park to Plymouth Argyle Football club in May 06 included the following terms:

“(5) PAFC to covenant not to use the premises for purposes other than that of a Football Ground and related activities( e.g concerts conferencing, banqueting- subject to necessary consents and licences from the relevant authority) In addition no development is to occur without agreement of PCC as transferor, such agreement not to be unreasonably withheld by PCC as transferor

(6) in the event of circumstances triggering the redevelopment of the site for a more valuable use, the transferee is to pay 50% of the uplift of the land value”

The sale of this site prior to the first consultation documents in Dec 2006 is an example of a mistake by the council. Land for the development of a hotel on this site would be worth considerably more than the price paid. The whole of the land value could have been available, not 50% as outlined. At the time Dan McCauley, a previous Argyle Chairman offered £3.5 for the site.

The plan extols the redevelopment of Reading football stadium. It should be noted that prior to this redevelopment football was played at Elm Park, a very similarly situated stadium to Home Park. Redevelopment took place outside the town away from immediate centres of population.

Property developers should not take precedence over the needs of local people who will have to suffer the loss of open spaces, the loss of the cricket club and its facilities increased traffic and pollution and the loss of “asset value.” At the same time local tax payers are being expected to fund the anticipated losses at the Life Centre page 11

### **d & e. Leisure, sports related and refreshment related retailing**

Gates continue to fall at Home Park therefore facilities, other than those which exist, at present, should not be required. The gate for the last home match against Preston North End was 10,727 including 501 away fans. Information from the Evening Herald 21.04.08 Capacity is over 18,000

No further development of additional facilities needs to take place. The directors appear to have ignored simple economic facts that the wider community are unwilling/ unable to pay to watch football at Plymouth Argyle.

### **PROPOSAL CP3 TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE**

Page 56 Get Plymouth Active document states that “it is estimated that over a million visits per year will be made to the proposed facility” This is likely to generate a tremendous amount of traffic impacting locally on pollution and parking difficulties within the local area. The current swimming pool and leisure facilities do not attract this degree of demand, it is only on Argyle match days there are significant problems

Down sizing the Life Centre to make the facilities appropriate for recreational use, diverting the “elitist sports centre” to Marjon, retaining the fun pool at the Pavilions with improvements

there for the Ice Rink would significantly reduce the environmental impact of concentrating every facility into one area. It is noted that 16% of all visits to pools in Plymouth, closure of the Pavillions would see the overall visits made on foot, across the city fall. Page 25

## **PROPOSAL CP4 PARK ENHANCEMENTS**

It is difficult to accurately link enhancements in the park to the Get Plymouth Active document- analysis of need which refers to the Life Centre. Included in the document are subjects such as the Out door Recreation Provision which talks about a “rejuvenated park” page 48 which will meet identified sports needs, within an attractive leisure destination.

Page 49 describes the “Location of a ‘step 7’grass pitch with floodlighting in the north of the park. The recommendation is that further discussion takes place with Argyle to establish their future training needs”

Notwithstanding the amount of land which has been sold to the football club, the intention of the existing leaseholder to remove the cricket club, further land is being earmarked & developed to meet their needs rather than the local population. The current five a side flood lit, all- weather facilities, are well used by many local teams and groups.

There are many other comments which could have been made but these were not present in the initial submission due to the documentary evidence in the Get Plymouth Active paperwork not being provided until the pre –examination day. This is further evidence of the lack of Soundness of this plan

**Pat Robinson ( Mrs)**