



Plymouth Eastern Gateway
Issues Report
June 2003

Plymouth City Council

Llewelyn-Davies in association with King
Sturge, Scott Wilson, SIAS and Exeter Archaeology

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Area appreciation and audit	5
3	Archaeological and Historical Building Review	25
4	Natural Assets	33
5	Transport	39
6	Development Opportunities and Stakeholder Consultation	50
7	Initial Concepts	57
8	Next steps	64

Appendices

1	Archaeological Review
2	Stakeholder Consultation
3	SRB Scoping Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Plymouth City Council have commissioned consultation Llewelyn-Davies, in association with transport firms SIAS and Scott Wilson, and property advisors King Sturge, to carry out a Framework Study for one of the key gateways to the City of Plymouth.

The Eastern Gateway area is a key element of the regeneration initiatives in the city. The Planning and Transport department has identified the need for a framework plan to illustrate how the area could be developed. The study area stretches from Marsh Mills, along Embankment Road to Heles Terrace/Laira Bridge. A key issue is that a complex road and rail network passes through the area, severing access to some residential communities and potential development sites.

The overriding aim of the Study is:

“To identify and evaluate integrated solutions to transport, development and environmental issues within the Study area, having regard to the impacts of development and other proposals planned to take place outside of the Study area; and from this to identify deliverable short, medium and long -term proposals.” (PCC Brief)

In line with this aim, the Council have set out a number of key objectives for the Development Framework:

- To gain the fullest understanding of the existing and future issues affecting the Study area.
- To identify potential transport solutions or combinations of solutions to enable future travel demand from developments within and impacting the Study area to be met, within the context of the need for a high quality built and natural environment.
- To identify a strategic framework which accommodates the transport solutions and sets a framework for new development and environmental improvements throughout the Study area.
- To identify short, medium and long-term proposals which are deliverable, viable and sustainable.

- To produce a robust appraisal system by which the framework options and short, medium and long-term options are tested, and from this to make recommendations on preferred proposals.

This study is being carried out alongside the Plymouth SRB Gateway Project (see following chapter for more details). The SRB Scoping Report is contained in Appendix 3 and is referred to throughout this document.

This paper represents the Stage 1 Issues Report for the Plymouth Eastern Gateway Project, effectively the first task set out above. It looks at the current baseline positions in terms of transport, urban design, planning, regeneration initiatives, development opportunities and market analysis. This is followed a short outline of Initial Concepts, which will be developed further in Stage 2 Options.

2 Area appreciation and audit

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the study area in terms of current background policy framework, area context, character, current uses, development opportunities and movement framework. It sets out the current issues and looks in detail at the study area, drawing out key strengths, opportunities and threats to future redevelopment.

2.2 Planning Background

Regional Planning Guidance 10 (RPG) provides the framework for local authority land use plans and local transport plans up to 2016. It contains policies on housing, transport, economic development, environment, minerals and waste. Key objectives of the RPG include:

- Safeguarding and enhancing the quality and diversity of the natural, cultural and built environment, while giving the highest level of protection to designated areas and feature of national and international importance;
- Providing integrated, efficient and environmentally appropriate transport and communications systems to meet local, regional and international priorities;
- Ensuring that development makes the most prudent use of resources and that it contributes to new infrastructure provision in partnership with public investment;
- Ensuring at all levels of planning integrated relationships between economic activity and housing; and
- Improving accessibility to jobs and services and ensuring that patterns of future development reduce the need to travel and encourages access by walking, cycling and public transport.

The Devon Structure Plan provides policies to guide and encourage future development in Devon. The Deposit Draft of the Structure Plan was published on 4th July 2002. Changes to the Deposit Draft policies and proposals were published 30 January 2003.

There are a number of policies which are relevant to the Gateway study area:

Policy ST6 sets out policies for the Plymouth Area of Economic Activity(AEA) where priority should be given to:

- Developing and diversifying the economic by offering a range of investment opportunities (including a choice of large scale development sites)
- Providing for additional housing necessary to meet area's own needs and support its regional economic role
- Improving road, rail and public transport networks

In doing so, the Plymouth Principal Urban Area should:

- Act as the primary focus for economic investment and regeneration
- Enhance its role as the main commercial centre within the Western Sub-region
- Provide a wide range of regional serves and specialist facilities necessary to meet the needs of its extensive hinterland
- Enhance its role as a major focus for strategic transport routes

Ivybridge should meet its own needs, enhancing self-sufficiency and maintain its separate identity, while contributing towards meeting the wide needs of the AEA.

Proposal ST8 states that in the period 2001-2016, the new community within South Hams District should include provision for at least 3,500 dwellings together with a range of community and other associated facilities. In particular the new community should be linked to Plymouth, in the first phases of its development, by an effective high capacity public transport system. The Plan gives further detailed guidance on the concepts and characteristics of new community development.

Proposal ST19 sets out Strategic Development Sites which should be of a sufficient scale to accommodate major economic development proposals. In the period 2001-2016 Strategic development sites at Plymouth International Business Park and Langage, South Hams should be identified.

Plymouth also provides a strategic location for a freight/transport multi-modal terminal as part of a European-wide combined transport network.

The City of Plymouth Local Plan 1995-2011 First Deposit version December 2001 identifies policies and proposals for the use, development and protection of land in Plymouth. All of the objectives within the plan need to be considered in this study. However, of particular relevance is Objective 2 which sets out the Plan's commitment to optimise the economic benefits Plymouth derives from its location, environmental quality and heritage, and support the provision of facilities for visitors to the city at gateway locations and along major transport routes.

The plan includes guidance on development in Area Visions and Strategies for Strategic Opportunity Areas - where the City Council and partners aim to focus urban regeneration and management strategies, because of the opportunity the areas provide. The East End is one such area of focus, and includes some parts of the study area. The Local Plan seeks to promote residential and commercial led regeneration in the East End. It is hoped that Site 17 in the East End Strategic Opportunity Area, the Former Bus depot at Laira Bridge Road, will be developed for mixed use or commercial development - there is currently an outstanding permission for non-food retail, but other uses will be accepted in principle. This area is also shown to be at risk from flooding.

Other Local Plan designations in the study area include:

- The area to the north of the former bus depot, currently Blagdon's boat yard, for marine employment. The site is also shown to be at risk from floods;
- Tavistock Junction Freight Yard, Marsh Mills (ref 93) where the Plan proposes a road to rail freight interchange;
- A number of scattered Designated Greenscape Areas are located within the study area, one of the most important being the Prince Rock Playing Field (ref 329), which is of District-wide importance for sport and recreation and a local informal amenity;
- The River Plym is designated as a Greenscape area incorporating a water body. It is of city-wide importance in terms of visual amenity and separation buffer, and national importance recreation (formal and informal) habitat and species, and as an access corridor.

On the eastern bank of the River Plym:

- Wakeham's Quarry and Breakwater Works, Oreston, Sites (101 and 102) are proposed for employment including marine-related employment;
- Plymstock Quarry (site 103) is designated for Mixed Use development where uses including community, cultural, health, education, leisure, transport and employment will be permitted subject to criteria including neighbouring land uses. Potentially up to 1,500 dwellings ;
- Chelston Meadow (109) is a designated waste management site and receives inert construction and demolition waste;
- The Saltram Estate (193) of national importance in terms of its historical and cultural heritage and countryside/food growing. It is of regional importance as an informal recreation space, city-wide importance in terms of visual amenity and acts as a separation buffer.

In terms of transport, specific policies which relate to the study area include:

- A Park and Ride site in the Plymstock area along the A379 corridor to help promote more sustainable travel patterns;

- The development of a Light Rapid Transit system linking strategic locations within Plymouth and South Hams, linking the new community with Plymouth.

The East End Regeneration Strategy and Masterplan, Consultation Draft was prepared in September 2002 by Urban Practitioners for the South West England regional Development Agency (SWERDA), Plymouth City Council (PCC) and the East End Partnership.

The East End study area is a mixed use area in close proximity to the city centre, on the edge of Sutton Harbour and includes the residential communities of Cattedown, Coxside and Prince Rock (including Lower St Judes) with a residential population in excess of 5,000.

In terms of traffic management, further investigation and evaluation of options including the East End Traffic model, Heles terrace, Embankment Road serving residential and public transport use and the potential for Light Rapid Transit.

With regard to community developing and encouraging vibrant communities, initiatives include the development a state-of-the-art community facility, a community garden, capacity building in community groups, introduce integrated estate management and street improvements.

This Eastern Gateway study is committed to incorporating some of the ideas and recommendations within the East End Study, which impinge upon the Gateway Area.

One specific recommendation is the Community Village planned for Cattedown Road. (Local Plan proposal 23). This development is consists of four elements:

1. The relocation of the Nomany Family Centre – a National Children’s Home for vulnerable children
2. The relocation of a GP surgery
3. A new community and youth centre
4. 30 sheltered housing units

The development is to be funded by SRB6, Centre Of Excellence Funds and NCH finance and outline planning permission for the first phase (Nomany Family Centre) has been submitted.

Other relevant proposals include:

- Tothill sidings (Local Plan proposal 24) allocation for coach parking and Safeguarded for potential LRT, and cycleway
- Land at Barbican Approach, Gdynia Way, St Johns Road (Local Plan proposal 21) for mixed use

- Penrose Yard (Local Plan proposal 22) for mixed use development including residential (16 dwellings)
- Brentor Road (Local Plan proposal 25) for residential development (60 dwellings)
- Stenlake Terrace (Local Plan proposal 26) for residential development (12 dwellings)
- Cattedown Road (Local Plan proposal 27) for residential development (45 dwellings)
- Western Power, Eliot Road (Local Plan proposal 28) for residential development (110 dwellings)

The Plymouth SRB Gateway Project is being carried out concurrently with this study, with a comparable study area. Key objectives for the project are:

- To provide a unique opportunity to raise the profile of Plymouth as an important international city of culture;
- To remove unsightly features along the route and replace, through innovative design, good quality landscaping, public art and other associated features;
- To create a sense of pride for local people;
- To enhance the awareness of the beauty of the natural environment through the enhancement of the vistas across the Plym, including the Saltram Estate;
- To provide a gateway that is cost effective and sustainable both in financial and resources procurement;
- To ensure that the project engages all sectors of the community, including public, private and voluntary sectors;
- To improve job opportunities in the area through construction jobs and inward investment opportunities.

The initial Scoping Study for the SRB project is reproduced in full in Appendix 3. Much of the text and accompanying diagrams is relevant to this Eastern Gateway project. Where applicable, reference to the SRB Scoping Report has been made, and in some instances text is reproduced in the main part of this document.

The Plymouth 2020 Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Plymouth City and brings together four different sectors - public, private, voluntary and community. Its mission is to:

1. Lead the City in proposing a distinctive long-term vision and strategy that the public and other stakeholders can help shape and commit towards achieving.
2. Validate newly proposed initiatives, programmes and investments that support the achievement of the vision and initiate others where there are gaps in the provision.
3. Monitor performance against the vision and strategy recommending more effective solutions and structures where they become evident.

4. Support the effective delivery of publicly funded services.
5. Establish and maintain lines of accountability and systems of governance.
6. Communicate directly with the public and indirectly through other channels such as those made available through partner organisations.

The Partnership's Draft strategy sets out a Vision for the City and suggests ways in which the quality of life in the City can be improved in a number of key areas. It acts as a framework to enable services and investment to be delivered in a more responsive, better co-ordinated and sustainable way.

The aspirations and visions of the Draft Strategy need to be incorporated into the Gateway Vision Study.

2.3 Study area appreciation

2.3.1 Context

The study area is to the east of the city centre abutting the River Plym. It focuses on the key routes into the city from the east from the A38 expressway which links Plymouth to the motorway network at Exeter. It specifically looks at the A38 at Marsh Mills and the A374 from Marsh Mills and the A379 from the east into the city as far as Heles Terrace/Laira Bridge.

The study area includes a number of rail lines including the London Paddington to Penzance line, Virgin Trains cross country route to major cities in the Midlands, the North of England and Scotland. In addition, freight lines to Laira Goods Yard and south into Cattedown run through the study area.

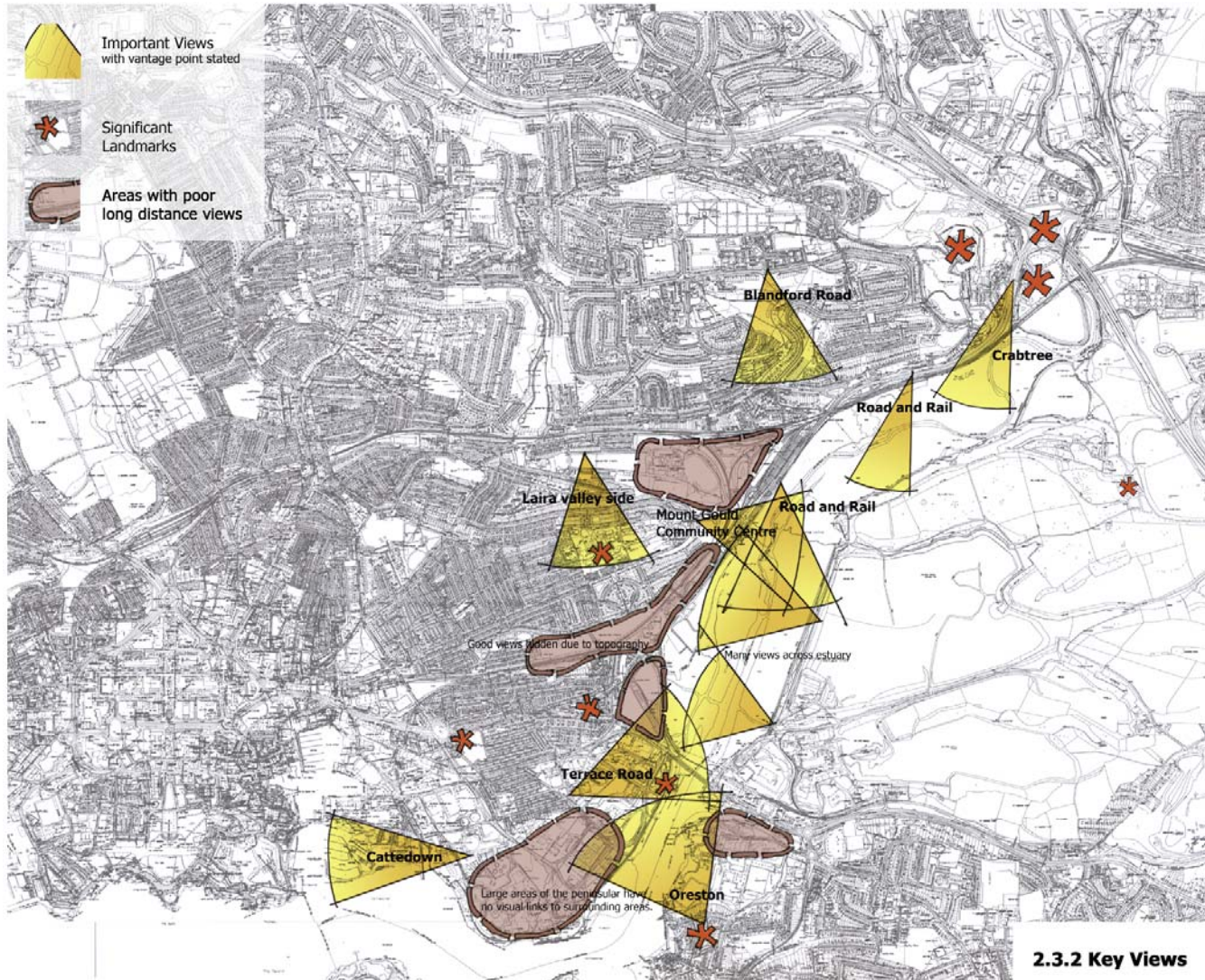
It incorporates potential development sites such as the former Western National bus depot, Blagdon's boatyard, Laira Embankment public open space, Heywoods Concrete Works Playing Fields and other public open space

The area can easily be identified as a gateway to Plymouth – both the Exeter/London railway line and the approach road from the A38 lead through the gateway site. The visitor to the city centre from the east via these methods of transport will see Brunel's Railway and the Plym Estuary, both important parts of Plymouth's heritage. They will also see the unutilised development capacity of the area and its strong ecological potential. The visitor by car journeys through sections of culverted one way routes before arriving at the city centre. The current gateway point is rather uninspiring and very close to the city centre.

The majority of the study area is within the wards of Sutton, Eford and Mount Gould. Sutton and Mount Gould in particular suffer from deprivation, compared with other wards in the city, with high levels of unemployment, crime and low car ownership. More details of the socio-economics of the area are set out in detail in Appendix 3.

The following analysis sketches show the issues germane to this study highlighting problems and opportunities extant in the gateway area.

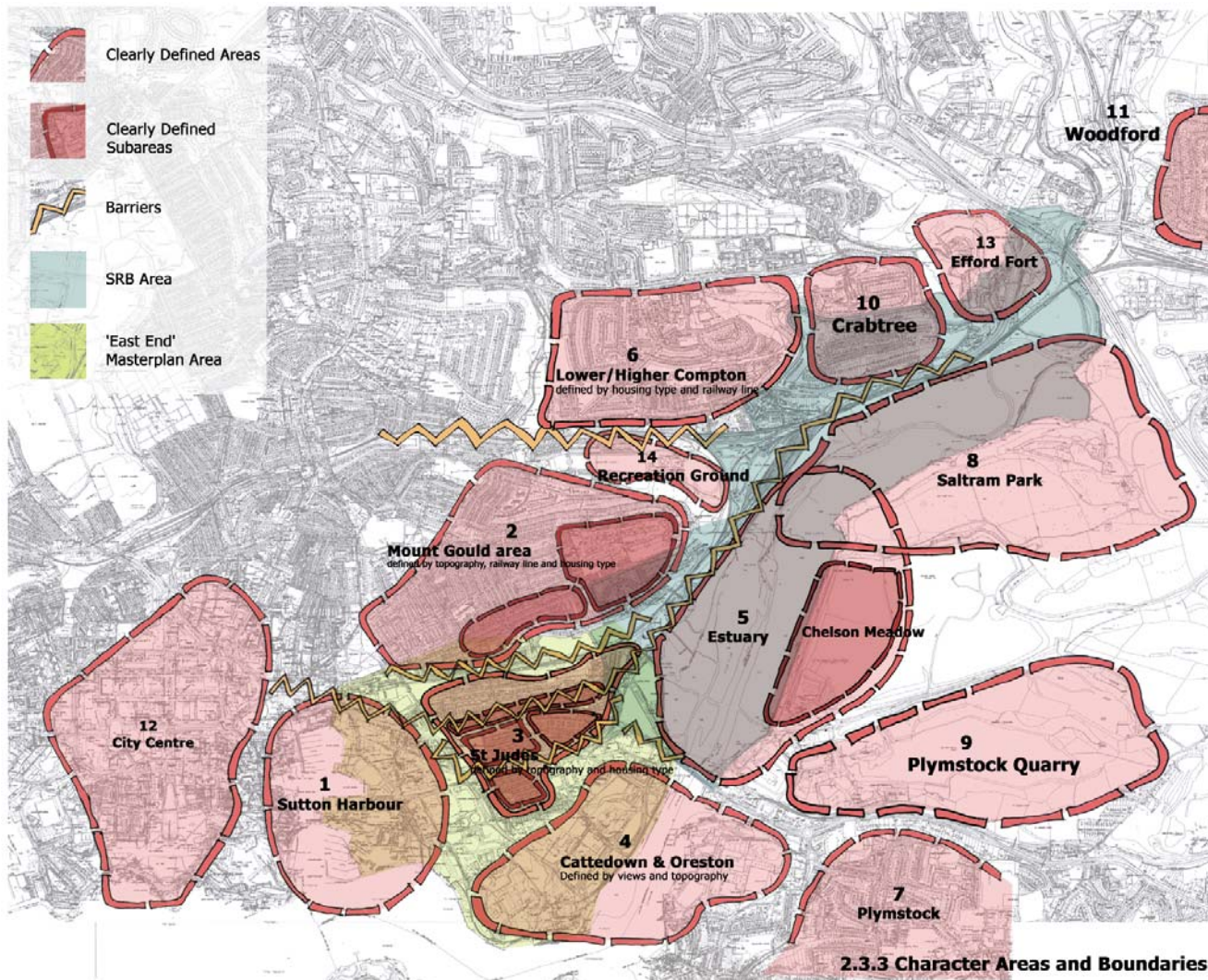
2.3.2 Key views



The diagram shows that at first glance the area is very well connected visually – particularly with the eastern bank of the estuary and further east to Dartmoor. However, on further examination, it can be seen that there are areas of poor visual connectedness which need to be addressed. In particular, the area to the south of the peninsular feels disconnected with the city centre due to the surrounding topography and the level of permeability of this area.



2.3.3 Character Areas and Boundaries



2.3.3 Character Areas and Boundaries

The areas defined on the accompanying sketch analysis shows the character areas that make up this part of Plymouth. The gateway area is divided into many distinct areas - some have more in common with locations away from the study area than those within (see Cattedown and Oreston). The diagram also shows the predominant barriers and areas of severance.

The character areas have been defined by:

1. Movement barriers - as shown,
2. Topography – changes in gradient can separate areas
3. Style of buildings or building form – buildings of similar style provide linkages
4. Land use – e.g. the city centre is defined by the retail in the area

Areas are also defined by other methods. For example, the 'East End' area, and the SRB area transcend and include many character areas in this study. One of the aims of regeneration projects is to link segregated character areas.

