

Central Park Area Action Plan - Submission
Version

1.	Introduction	5
	Planning Context	5
	Location of Central Park AAP	6
	Changes since Preferred Options	7
2.	Context	11
	History of the area	12
	Regeneration and Policy Context	14
	Plan Preparation	15
	Key issues	18
3.	Vision for Central Park	19
	Targets 2006-21	20
	Central Park Vision Diagram	21
4.	New Indoor Sports and Leisure Facilities	22
	The Life Centre	23
	Home Park	27
	Summary of Key Evidence	29
5.	Transport Improvements	31
	A Transport Interchange	32
	Summary of Key Evidence	34
6.	Park Enhancements	35
	Improved Landscape and Biodiversity	35
	A Well Connected Park	35
	A Park with Improved Facilities	37
	An Enhanced Park	38
	Movement Framework Diagram	41
	Open Space Framework Diagram	42
	Summary of Key Evidence	43
7.	Improved Relationship between Park & City	44
	Peverell	44

Summary of Key Evidence	48
Pennycomequick	49
Summary of Key Evidence	53
8. Delivery	54
Figure 1 - Delivery Timetables over the AAP Period	54
Figure 2 - Delivery of AAP Proposals	55
9. Community Benefits	57
Figure 3 - Community Benefits	57
10. Monitoring	58
Figure 4 - Monitoring of Sport, Leisure & Environmental Improvements	59
Figure 5 - Monitoring of Housing Development	59
Figure 6 - Monitoring of Employment Development	59
Figure 7 - Housing Trajectory for AAP Proposals	60
11. Proposals Map	61
1. Evidence Base Links	1
2. Glossary of terms	2
Policies	
Policy/Proposal CP 1 - Proposal - The Life Centre	23
Policy/Proposal CP 2 - Proposal - Home Park	27
Policy/Proposal CP 3 - Proposal - A Transport Interchange	32
Policy/Proposal CP 4 - Proposal - Park Enhancements	38
Policy/Proposal CP 5 - Proposal Peverell Park Road, Outland Road Corner	44
Policy/Proposal CP 6 - Proposal - Pennycomequick	49

Maps

- Movement Framework Diagram	41
- Open Space Framework	42
- Central Park Proposals Map	61

Tables

Table 1 - Central Park Development Targets	20
Table 2 - Key Evidence relating to Sport and Leisure	29
Table 3 - Key Evidence relating to Transport Improvements	34
Table 4 - Key Evidence relating to Park Enhancements	43
Table 5 - Key Evidence relating to Peverell Park Road / Outland Road Corner	48
Table 6 - Key Evidence relating to Pennycomequick	53
Table 7 - Key Evidence Base Documents and Links	1

1 Introduction

Planning Context

- 1.1** This Area Action Plan is part of a portfolio of documents called the Local Development Framework (LDF). When adopted, Plymouth's LDF together with the Regional Spatial Strategy will form the statutory Development Plan for this area.
- 1.2** The LDF Core Strategy (adopted in April 2007) sets out the key high-level principles for development in Plymouth and these are expanded in the Area Action Plans to provide more specific detail on the opportunities within key areas. This Plan does not repeat the policies contained within the Core Strategy, but amplifies the Core Strategy Area Vision 7 for Central Park and the two Plans should be read together to aid decision-making. Core Strategy policies will be material to decisions within the Plan area, but where there is a fundamental difference between the two plans the detail and policies of the Area Action Plan should take precedence over those in the Core Strategy. The timescale for this Area Action Plan is for the period from 2006 to 2021.
- 1.3** The Central Park Area Action Plan is being produced because of the need to substantially improve the environmental qualities of the park improving both the recreational and sporting facilities that exist there and to create a premier park for the people of Plymouth to enjoy. The Area Action Plan will give statutory basis for these changes to happen.

Location of Central Park AAP



City wide location plan and aerial view of Central Park

Changes since Preferred Options

(Text to be deleted on adoption.)

- 1.4 This is the submission version of the Area Action Plan (AAP) and is being submitted to the Government for an independent public examination. To reach this stage the Council's large evidence base has been used and extensive public consultation has been undertaken. Details of consultations and the Council's responses can be found in the Consultation Report published alongside this Area Action Plan. Details of the evidence base can be found on the Council's website, or from the City Council.
- 1.5 This Plan is in accordance with the Plymouth Local Development Scheme and has been prepared in compliance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The final Sustainability Report is also available with this AAP and this covers the sustainability factors and options that helped us refine the proposals in this document.
- 1.6 The Plan and its policies and proposals have been subject to sustainability appraisal and the results have been considered within this submission Plan. Key issues raised at the consultation stages or by the sustainability appraisal are referred to in the text.
- 1.7 Key representations made during the consultation of both the Issues and Options and Preferred Options have been considered and additional new evidence base work has now been completed. These factors have influenced the preparation of this AAP whilst maintaining the overall requirement for the Plan proposals to deliver significant improvements to the park. The main outcomes are follows:
 - **The Life Centre:** There was significant concern expressed for the inclusion of commercial leisure uses in the Life Centre and for the residential development shown in the published alternatives at Preferred Options stage. In addition there was concern expressed that the Life Centre footprint was too extensive and was taking up too much green parkland. In response the Life Centre proposal has been redefined making it separate from proposals identified at Home Park. Commercial leisure is not specifically provided as part of the mix of the Life Centre uses, although some commercial leisure is allowed for at Home Park. Additionally, the AAP Proposal is more focused on the key uses required to deliver the Life Centre concept. The development zone has been drawn more tightly and the proposal now explicitly provides for the existing solicitors and vets site to be redeveloped, encouraging a more compact footprint to be developed. As a result the uses within the Life Centre now include the potential for employment in the form of offices. Furthermore to assist with the deliverability and appeal of the Life Centre, the proposal allows for an Environment Centre, which includes opportunities for the interpretation of the park and a presence for the Council's Parks Service as well as retailing of horticultural products and plant sales.
 - **Home Park:** A separate proposal to the Life Centre is now identified for Home Park given that this is a distinctive initiative in itself, comprising the completion of the southern stand and complementary uses to support the delivery of the project. Such uses may include a private leisure or sporting facility such as indoor tennis, specialist sports training and ten pin bowling, conference and exhibition space, hotel, healthy eating and refreshment outlets

(Use Class A3) and limited complementary sports related retailing consistent with the Core Strategy. Cinema use is no longer specifically provided for. Such a use would be more appropriate within the City Centre and the associated needs for car parking with this use could put too much pressure on the development footprint.

- **A Transport Interchange:** The Council has clarified its position as regards the Park and Ride facility at Central Park in response to the concerns expressed by the public and confirms its intention to retain a Park and Ride at this location. The car parking provision will be remodelled to meet the needs of the Life Centre and the city's transport needs.
- **New and Existing Routes:** The consultation at Preferred Options stage highlighted significant concerns about the option of providing a new direct footpath route and prominent park entrance on Peverell Park Road. Respondents were concerned with the impact this would have on allotments, displacing 12 plots and fragmenting their current arrangement. Although this proposal would have improved access to the park from the Peverell neighbourhood, the Council accepts that the concerns of allotment holders in this instance outweighs the need for the proposal given the ability to provide an alternative new route. The AAP will retain established allotments in their current form and develop the alternative footpath route to Peverell Park Road with entrance improvements as promoted by allotment holders and outlined in the Preferred Options Report. As a consequence of this the proposed new allotments shown at Preferred Options stage at this location is not required.
- **A Link Between the Park and City:** The option of providing a new pedestrian and cycleway bridge link between the Railway Station and Central Park is not identified as a proposal in the AAP given that it is unlikely to be deliverable within the Plan period. This idea remains a long-term aspiration and will be considered as an option for the redevelopment of the Rail Station within the City Centre AAP.
- **Milehouse Junction and City Bus Site:** This option too has not been carried forward in the AAP. There was considerable public concern for proposals to change the Milehouse Junction and the perceived disruption and congestion that this would cause to the city's traffic system. New evidence in the form of traffic modelling has since been completed which indicates that the changes to the Milehouse Junction are unworkable in transport terms. It is now considered more appropriate to consider options for the future development of the bus depot site itself as part of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Development Plan Document. The challenge remains within this AAP to find workable solutions which would improve pedestrian links across the Milehouse Junction and for the Sustainable Neighbourhoods DPD, ways to improve linkages between the Stoke neighbourhood and the park through the redevelopment of the bus depot.
- **Pennycomequick:** The option of new housing development at the southern boundary of the park and on the disused and vacant allotment site generated high levels of concern, particularly in relation to the loss of parkland. In response the AAP has been radically amended. The most pressing need for development relates to the opportunity to repair the relationship of the park to this part of the city. A significantly reduced proposal is identified which achieves this objective, minimising loss of greenspace.
- **Contributions from Developments:** The primary objective of this plan have always been to make significant improvements to the fabric of the park in addition to the building of the Life Centre and its associated works and development is only justified in the context of this. In order to provide a level of certainty and to pump prime the process of improvement, the

plan prioritises the provision of planning obligations towards the improvement of the park and its facilities, forgoing normal contributions to affordable housing.

1.8 Alternative suggestions that were received through the Preferred Options consultation and rejected during the preparation of the AAP were:

- All three published alternatives for the Life Centre indicated in the Preferred Options Report. These include:
 - Alternative A, the option to develop a new facility based on improving and expanding existing facilities.
 - Alternative B, the option of developing a Life Centre with integral residential development.
 - Alternative C, the option of providing a Life Centre as part of a wider residential composition fronting Outland Road.
- Ideas to provide the Life Centre at alternative sites away from Central Park such as at Millbay, Derriford, Coxside, Cattedown and at the City Bus Depot at Milehouse.
- The published Alternative A in the Preferred Options Report for the transport interchange, which suggested not providing such a facility.
- Ideas to provide the transport interchange on other sites than Central Park such as Plymouth Rail Station, the City Bus Depot, and within the Milehouse Road Junction.
- All three published alternatives for the redevelopment of Peverell Park Road / Outland Road Corner as shown in the Preferred Options Report, which includes:
 - Alternative A, which retains the existing Jubilee building with new car parking to the rear minimising impact upon allotments.
 - Alternative B, which is similar to Alternative A but includes residential development to help deliver the scheme.
 - Alternative C, which retains the existing Jubilee building and provides car parking to the south.
- Ideas to remove the Jubilee building without replacing it, providing car parking and a viewing point.
- An alternative to provide increased car parking for shoppers on side roads.
- An alternative to remove landscape features within Pounds House to maximise space for car parking.
- Ideas for the alternative use of the disused and vacant allotment site at Pennycomequick. This includes; its use as a City Farm, performance and events space, bowls facility, as allotments or demonstration allotments, as sensory garden, as mixed use residential development, use for children's play and its use for a multi-storey car park.

1.9 Proposals that were received through the Preferred Options consultation and which have been incorporated into the submitted AAP include:

- In respect of the option for an Improved Parkland, ideas such as improving existing ponds and watercourses, improved land drainage, and sensitive and effective maintenance regimes have all been supported in the new plan.
- As regards the option for a Well Connected Park, the alternative option of developing a connecting route to Peverell Park Road which avoids any loss of existing allotments has

been supported and the idea for a new linking footpath route to Central Park Avenue at Pennycomequick is provided in the AAP.

1.10 No significant alternatives were generated during the sustainability appraisal of the Central Park AAP.

1.11 You can make further representations on this document, but these must be limited to the “soundness” of the document. Further explanation on timescales and what we mean by “soundness” are provided on the submission sage representation forms available on the Councils website.

How do we create an Area Action Plan?



2 Context

- 2.1** Central Park is a strategically important park within Plymouth and is an outstanding and enviable environmental asset. It covers 94 hectares (232 acres) of dramatic landscape from high hilltop to deep valley offering rare panoramic views of the city and Plymouth Sound.
- 2.2** However the park doesn't meet reasonable expectations one would associate with a premier city venue, and at key locations it fails to be inspiring with some elements of environment being particularly unattractive. Development needs to address:
1. The poor arrangement recreational buildings which currently fail to create quality destination
 2. The inadequate quality of Plymouth Argyle's southern site at Home Park, providing a poor main entrance and approach
 3. The relationships of the above facilities to one another and the park
 4. The inadequate transport provision, including public transport access from the north and east of the city, remote and unrelated car parking and bus stops
 5. The ill provided, tired and unrelated public spaces associated with the main buildings and the park
 6. The uncompleted network of footpaths and cycleways, with a clear need to improve creating safe and understandable routes
 7. The current poor range of park facilities available to enhance the public use and enjoyment of the park
 8. The poor relationships of buildings and housing on the periphery of the park, with a clear need to improve improving access and surveillance.
- 2.3** As the name suggests, Central Park sits centrally within Plymouth and is surrounded by many residential neighbourhoods. These include Beacon Park and Pennycross, Peverell, Mutley and Stoke. For many local residents the park is on their doorstep and it has a particular importance in their lives. The park also has a citywide profile as the venue for the city's sporting activities. It is home to Plymouth Argyle Football Club and is a host for the many amateur competitions held on the outdoor sports pitches and facilities. It is also a place for informal recreation and children's play and is a landscape rich in wildlife.
- 2.4** The park has six distinct elements:
1. Centrally and to the west lies the built core of the park incorporating the city's football club, (Plymouth Argyle), a large swimming pool (Central Park Pools), recreation centre (the Mayflower Centre), an events field, Milehouse Park and Ride car park, a skatepark and a large equipped children's playground
 2. Centrally and to the south is a large open hill top sports park
 3. To the north, the formal gardens and parkland associated with Pounds House
 4. To the east is a deeply wooded valley
 5. Centrally to the east is a patchwork of informal sloping meadows
 6. To the south and west is an extensive series of allotment gardens.

History of the area

- 2.5** The parkland was acquired in the late 1920's and its purchase and improvement was enabled by the then Ministry of Health, which at the time widely promoted the link between public health and recreation.
- 2.6** Thomas Mawson and his family practice of landscape architects were commissioned to conceive a design for the park which would promote active recreation and sport in contrast to the style of formal Victorian pleasure gardens that preceded this period. A comprehensive plan was drafted and approved in 1928. The plan proposed a 50 metre outdoor swimming pool, a large facility for tennis, outdoor bowls, a grand pavilion and terrace, all located around the convergence of the park's main avenues. This was termed the "Social Centre", which today is the circular space accommodating the cube clock feature. The design also included a 700-800 space car park which now includes the Milehouse Park and Ride car park. Other elements of the design included an aviary, athletics track, glasshouse and nursery gardens though these were never implemented and the planned comprehensive footpath system which was never completed.
- 2.7** Pragmatic decisions since the 1920's and 1930's have resulted in some fundamental departures from the concepts promoted by the original design. Additionally, in the late 1980's the construction of the large Milehouse Road junction removed the western corner of the park, which now separates the Milehouse community from the park. This Area Action Plan presents an exciting opportunity to re-visit the original park designs and to refresh the park and its facilities such that it is fit for the twenty-first century.



Late 1920s aerial view of Pounds House

Regeneration and Policy Context

- 2.8** Central Park is a cherished environmental asset for the people of Plymouth and at the heart of this strategy for change is the protection and enhancement of the park's valuable green spaces, wildlife habitats, and landscape quality including its rare views towards the city, its neighbourhoods and Plymouth Sound. While the park has obvious natural qualities there are very real issues that face the park and prevent it being a high quality destination befitting a premier city park.
- 2.9** Recent figures from Sport England's "Active People Survey" indicate that Plymouth is in the bottom quarter of authorities nationally with below average regular participation in sport and active recreation, with only 18.6% of the city's population achieving Sport England's target of 30 minutes of activity 3 days a week. The provision of new integrated and accessible high quality sports and leisure facilities central to the city would stimulate interest in active recreation and help to improve participation rates within the city.
- 2.10** The city exhibits significant inequalities and variations in health across wards with recent figures showing the most effected neighbourhoods are those to the west of the city and near to Central Park. The provision of good physical environments are seen as one of the many factors which effects the health of people and providing quality facilities for active recreation within an attractive, safe and accessible environment at Central Park is seen as having significant health benefits for the people of Plymouth.
- 2.11** There are also important needs regionally, sub-regionally and from city's communities that require the best sporting, recreational and leisure facilities that can be achieved. The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West considers that the development of key community facilities including those for sport leisure and culture are fundamental to the growth agenda such as that proposed for Plymouth. Such facilities should meet needs of all groups in society taking into account age, gender, faith, sexuality, ethnicity and ability. In particular the Draft RSS identifies the need for regionally significant recreational facilities and improvements to the cultural provision in the city.
- 2.12** The Plymouth Sustainable Community Strategy (2007-2020), April 2007, sets out four visionary goals for the city. These are:
1. A healthy place to live and work
 2. A wealthy city which creates and shares prosperity
 3. A safe and strong city
 4. A wise city - a location for learning achievement and leisure.
- 2.13** These goals have influenced the drafting of this plan and it is consistent with its aims. The goals of the Sustainable Community Strategy have been embodied into the Council's Corporate Plan 2007-2010. For Central Park the three most relevant objectives are set out below:
- Strategic Objective 1, Improving Health and Well-Being: "To improve the health, well-being and social care of the people, reduce inequalities and help people at all stages in their life to enjoy the best possible health."

- Strategic Objective 7, Maintaining a Clean and Sustainable Environment: "To create a more attractive environment that is safe, clean and tidy, as well as a more healthy and diverse natural environment."
- Strategic Objective 8, Stimulating Culture and Leisure Activities: "To stimulate participation in cultural pursuits, promoting creativity and extending opportunities for people to experience high quality recreational and leisure activities."

2.14 In terms of its city wide context this plan helps to deliver the City Vision as identified in the LDF Core Strategy and informed by MBM Arquitectes/ AZ Urban Studio's "Vision for Plymouth". This promotes the creation of an outstanding venue of regional sporting and leisure excellence known as the Life Centre, together with a transport interchange, comprehensive improvements to the environmental qualities of the park including new facilities and the provision of new pedestrian and cycleway links between the park and it's surrounding neighbourhoods.

2.15 The proposals for new sport and leisure facilities at Central Park are linked to the regeneration proposals for Millbay as set out in the adopted Millbay and Stonehouse Area Action Plan. Here new facilities at Central Park will allow for the closure of the pool and ice rink at the Pavilions to allow the linking Boulevard to be constructed and the remaining Arena facility to be remodelled.

Plan Preparation

(Text to be deleted on adoption.)

Issues and Options

- 2.16** The issues and options consultation for this AAP was carried out in March / April 2005 and it generated 472 responses. There was a significant amount of interest shown in the options consulted upon at this stage, although the large majority of responses expressed concerns. Principle issues were:
- The need to improve the existing recreational and leisure facilities that exist in the park
 - Concern about the building of residential development within the park and the loss of parkland greenspace as a result
 - Concern about the composition of the Life Centre such as the inclusion of commercial leisure, Hotel, conference and exhibition facilities
 - Concern expressed regarding the creation of a transport interchange and perceived loss of valued car parking spaces
 - Concern regarding the perceived loss of the Parks Depot at Central Park and the valued presence and contribution this makes to the park and users
 - Concern about the need to fund the Life Centre by enabling developments on Central Park
 - The need for car parking to service shops at Peverell Park Road-Outland Road corner
 - The need for improved footpaths generally throughout the park
 - The need for improved park facilities such as public toilets, children's play, and lighting
 - Concern for the resultant loss of allotments
 - The need for improved public transport facilities to serve the park and new Life Centre

2.17 In addition, during April and May of 2006 a petition was organised by the Plymouth Evening Herald to support the city's bid for lottery funding to build a Life Centre at Central Park. This petition received 10,202 signatures from a broad range of residents and the public.

Preferred Options

2.18 Preferred options consultation for this AAP took place in November and December of 2006 . 451 representations were received. The results indicate general support for the aspirations of the AAP to improve the park environment and sports and leisure facilities. However, there were significant levels of concern about options which involved commercial and residential development on the park and the relocation of existing allotments.

2.19 78% of respondents were local residents e.g. those who live in properties within half a mile of Central Park. In particular the highest concentrations of response was focused around Peverell Park Road and from around Central Park Avenue, emphasizing levels of concern about the Preferred Options relating to the new footpath link through existing allotments and the residential development at the southern end of the park at Pennycomequick.

2.20 In addition to the returned consultation forms the Council received 5 petitions collectively containing 2,211 signatures. Two of these were primarily from allotment holders and supporters expressing their concern for Preferred Options that would result in changes to established allotments. There were two petitions from residents and friends groups surrounding the park that made general and specific objections to the development proposals. A final petition was received from pupils of Tamarside Community College and again making general objections to the development strategy for Central Park.

Sustainability Appraisals

2.21 Sustainability appraisals were carried out at Issues and Options, Preferred Options and at Submission stages of the Plan.

2.22 At issues and options stage it indicated that the proposals were broadly consistent with sustainable development principles, but identified the need to promote greater public transport use with effective links to the rest of the city. This was addressed in part through the preferred options for a new High Quality Public Transport (HQPT) interchange at the Life Centre, being a major destination on the proposed strategic network of HQPT for the city. It was also addressed by the preferred option to improve public transport facilities within immediate local centres and highways. The preferred options report also provided the development of a strategic network of routes within the park linking surrounding communities to the parks facilities, to each other and the City Centre.

2.23 At Preferred Options stage the Sustainability Appraisal was generally positive about the AAP proposals, but stressed importance of providing an improved public transport service for the development proposals which were widely available and frequent enough to encourage a modal shift away from car use. It considered that increased visitor numbers and use of the park may have negative impacts upon the bio-diversity of the park and its role as a wildlife

corridor. It considered that measures needed to be put in place to investigate, minimise or mitigate these impacts. The sustainability appraisal also considered that any development proposal which significantly increased impermeable surfaces needed to take account of the potential flood risk that may result on or surrounding the site. The importance of ensuring that any new constructions reduced energy consumption, recycled and source material locally was highlighted. Attention was also drawn to the issue of waste generation as a result of increased activity and the provision of catering on site.

- 2.24** At Submission stage the Sustainability Appraisal acknowledged the substantial changes that the AAP has undergone since the Preferred Options Report and overall has seen these as positive against the sustainability objectives. The appraisal considers that the Life Centre and Home Park developments provide significant opportunities to achieve local exemplars in sustainable construction. The Appraisal considered that the AAP should be more explicit in its requirements to address sustainability issues relating to both the Life Centre and Home Park proposals and that it should benchmark these against recognised standards. This has since been addressed in the AAP with the need for these developments to submit with their planning applications a Climate Change Statement. Guidance is given in the plan as to what this might include. In relation to the transport improvements the Appraisal considers that comprehensive measures should be put in place to encourage a model shift towards the use of public transport. This has since been done and policies for both the Life Centre and Home Park contain statements which require demand management measures as part of holistic transport solutions for both developments. The Appraisal highlights the benefits to the park's bio-diversity and landscape a result of the reduced development footprints and the positive benefits brought about by the inclusion of more specific measures to enhance habitats and species. The Appraisal does consider that the Plan should include specific targets for achieving specific habitats. However in response the plan has set an overall target in respect of the parks entire greenspace and has required the delivery of the improvements via a masterplan which will be developed with further public involvement.
- 2.25** To amplify three areas of the Sustainability Appraisal for this AAP, three separate studies have been prepared that are included as appendices to Sustainability Appraisal, these are; An Assessment of Health Impacts, Habitats Regulations Assessment and an Equalities Assessment. Neither of these studies found any negative impacts arising from the policies and proposals in the Plan, or require any mitigation.
- 2.26** The Assessment of Health Impacts concluded that the development of the Life Centre would be beneficial, encouraging people to participate in active recreation and sport. The general enhancements to the park including improved accessibility, environment quality and park facilities was also seen as a key elements to attract people to the park and where through informal activity positive health benefits could result.
- 2.27** The Habitats Regulations Assessment has been prepared to consider the impact these proposals might have upon sites of European importance for biodiversity, e.g. Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Areas. This assessment concluded that the Central Park AAP will not have a significant adverse impact on the integrity of these protected areas.
- 2.28** The Equalities Impact Assessment noted that the benefit of providing a high quality recreational resource at the heart of the community which was accessible to all.

Key issues

2.29 The Central Park AAP sets out the Council's planning approach, the relevant issues and specific proposals. It adds to the vision statement for the Central Park area identified in the adopted Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy highlights some significant issues and regeneration opportunities that needs to be addressed in order for Central Park to realise its full potential. These are set out below:

- The need to integrate the proposals for Plymouth's new Life Centre within the existing parkland landscape
- The poor relationship of existing recreational buildings, facilities and spaces and lack of visible activity
- Degraded sense of place, where key spaces are too large and featureless to form an exciting and memorable environment
- The remoteness and relatively poor quality of private and public transport facilities
- The difficulty people have in accessing the park from surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre by virtue of the busy highways that ring the park and the challenging topography
- The relatively unsafe nature of existing footpath links to surrounding neighbourhoods and limited choice for alternatives
- The poor relationships between the edge of the city and the park to the south and to the Peverell neighbourhood to the north and west
- The urban separation caused by the City Bus Depot between the park and communities in the Stoke neighbourhood
- The general lack of public facilities within the park.

3 Vision for Central Park

3.1 The Council's vision for Central Park as set out in the Core Strategy is set out below:

Core Strategy - Area Vision 7 - Central Park

To create an outstanding venue of regional and national significance for active recreation, health, art, education culture and the environment, which will provide state of the art facilities for the people of Plymouth and the Sub-region of Devon and Cornwall. The Council's objectives to deliver this vision are:

1. **To create a landmark regional Life Centre complex of high quality design and innovative technology**
2. **To create a park with desirable, high quality, vibrant spaces that can be used by the whole Plymouth community whilst also safeguarding its value as an important wildlife corridor**
3. **To create a safe and well-connected park with its surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre**
4. **To provide high quality public and sustainable transport facilities serving the park and new facilities**
5. **To improve and strengthen the relationship between the park and surrounding city in a sustainable manner**
6. **To improve the range and quality of public facilities available to park users.**

3.2 Central Park will continue to be a unique environmental asset for the city and will be a destination that has successfully enhanced its landscape and wildlife qualities to create a quality and distinctive parkland for the people of Plymouth and future generations to enjoy.

3.3 By 2021 Central Park will be firmly established as one of the highest quality urban parks in the country. At its heart will be the Life Centre. This high quality sports and leisure complex will be a major landmark on the approach to the City Centre from the north and will be the centrepiece for the newly refurbished Central Park. As with the original intent for the park back in 1928, the Life Centre will have a strong focus on health, providing state-of-the-art active leisure facilities for the people of Plymouth, hosting regional events, attracting audiences and providing investment to the city. However, the Life Centre will achieve much more. It will provide facilities for arts, education and culture and the environment and provide a base and much-needed facilities to help the community enjoy the wider park.

3.4 By 2021 the park will be connected to the City Centre and the rest of the city by excellent transport links. It will have state of the art facilities linking the wider city to the park via the improved Northern Corridor High Quality Public Transport route. A transport interchange at Central Park will support sustainable transport, including walking and cycling, providing key information on transport, the Life Centre and Central Park.

- 3.5** By 2021 the park's important network of footpaths and cycleways will be completed linking the surrounding communities to the park and the city in a safe and understandable manner, building a series of distinctive park entrances. As a result the park will be more accessible to people, particular the disabled, the very young and old.
- 3.6** By 2021 the relationship between the park and its communities at Peverell Park Road Corner and Pennycomequick will have been successfully repaired. This will be the result of a range of development, including new homes, simplified and safe pedestrian and cycle access and facilities to improve public transport. At Peverell Park Road Corner changes will regenerate the local centre to provide a mix of uses including shops, employment, apartments and car parking.

Targets 2006-21

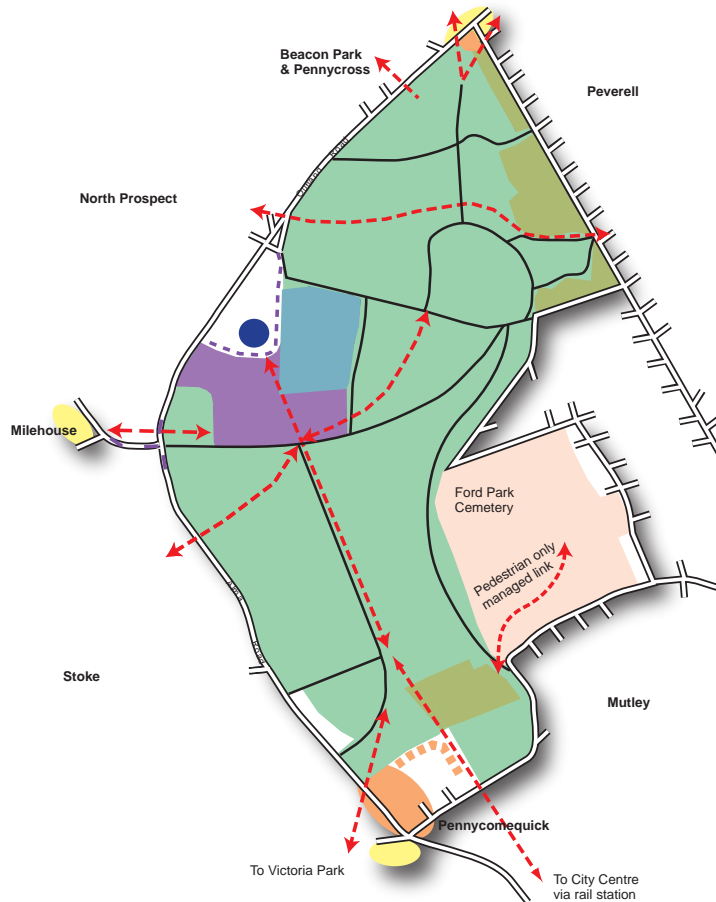
- 3.7** The delivery of the objectives will be measured using the following targets.

Indicator	Target
Area of improved Parkland	In the region of 76.5Ha
Delivery of the Life Centre	before 2012
Delivery of Home Park	before 2012
Housing	In the region of 123 units
Lifetime Homes	In the region of 24 units
Employment	In the region of 5,380sq m












Table 1 Central Park Development Targets

Central Park Vision Diagram

Central Park - Updated Vision Diagram



This diagram supersedes the Core Strategy Central Park Vision Diagram, by clarifying the boundary of the Life Centre, showing Plymouth Argyle's Home Park development, amending proposed new allotment site and reducing the amount of residential-led mixed use development.

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Plymouth Argyle's Home Park Development |  Local centres |
|  "LIFE CENTRE", Citywide & Regional facility of sporting recreation & leisure |  Improve connectivity |
|  Residential and mixed use developments repairing the relationship of Park to City |  Park enhancements |
|  New enhanced allotments |  Protect & enhance Ford Park cemetery |
|  Improved existing highway infrastructure |  Existing park routes |
|  Transport Interchange | |

4 New Indoor Sports and Leisure Facilities

Objective 1. to create landmark sports and leisure facilities of high quality design and innovative technology.

- 4.1** The delivery of exemplar regionally significant sports and leisure facilities is essential to the achievement of Plymouth's aspirational vision to be one of Europe's finest and most vibrant waterfront cities. The importance of this is also acknowledged in the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West.
- 4.2** The city has some significant health problems including high levels of childhood obesity and major health inequalities between wards, with the west of the city fairing worse than the east. The city performs below average nationally in terms of the populations participation in regular active recreation and leisure.
- 4.3** The existing facilities at the Mayflower Centre and Central Park Pools are outdated, in poor repair and need replacing. The development of new replacement facilities at Central Park would enable the closure of the pool and ice rink at the Pavilions to make way for the Millbay Boulevard. The Boulevard is key to the regeneration of Millbay as set out in the Millbay and Stonehouse Area Action Plan.



Existing Sports and Recreational Facilities

- 4.4** The current built core of the park comprising the Central Park Pools, the Mayflower Centre, Plymouth Argyle's Home Park, the main car park with the Park & Ride, the events field and surrounding landscape does not provide an attractive destination. This negative image is a result of the poor relationships between park buildings and spaces, where leisure and sporting activities are hidden behind solid walls and planting, where buildings do not link well together and related spaces are featureless. This can make the park feel unwelcoming and make negotiating and understanding the park difficult for visitors. For the park's main built core this has serious implications, as it fails to achieve a sense of arrival, provide visible activity or generate the civic focus and quality befitting of a premier park.

4.5 The AAP seeks to ensure that the new development of sports and leisure facilities:

1. Provide a strong, attractive destination that will be an enjoyable place for people to visit
2. Contribute significantly towards improvements in mental and physical well being of residents and the wider community
3. Provides an integrated citywide and regional facility for top class sporting, active recreational and leisure facilities at a cost that the Council and community can sustain, accommodating facilities that will provide opportunities for art, health and education.
4. Provide high quality integrated public spaces linking all aspects of the development to provide a strong sense of arrival re-establishing the original intent of the 1928 masterplan to form a Social Centre for the park interpreted to today's needs
5. Are built to a high quality in terms of architecture, engineering and landscape design
6. Provides complementary commercial sports and leisure elements, which will similarly be designed and built to the highest quality of design and innovation with coherence between all elements of the Life Centre
7. Uses the very latest technology and materials to ensure the buildings are energy efficient and sustainable.



Plymouth Argyle's Home Park

The Life Centre

Policy/Proposal CP 1

Proposal - The Life Centre

To develop integrated state-of-the-art leisure facilities in a single complex which are accessible and affordable, delivering economies of scale and a links with health, arts, education and with Plymouth Argyle's Home Park Development. Uses within the Life Centre may include:

- a. **Facilities for dry indoor sports such as those currently in the Mayflower Recreation Centre including multi-use sports hall, indoor bowls, fitness aerobics suite, dance, climbing, and facilities for martial arts**
- b. **A 50M swimming pool together with a diving and children's pool**
- c. **An ice rink of sufficient size for ice hockey**
- d. **Health facilities which could provide: consultation rooms for sports injury, healthy eating advice, exercise referral, cardiac rehabilitation, health education / well man clinics, sexual health and general health checks**

- e. **Café, healthy eating outlets, public toilets, sports and leisure retailing together with communal and social areas**
- f. **An Environment Centre which includes demonstration gardens, interpretation of the bio-diversity and landscape features of the park, including information relating to allotments and a work station for the Council's Parks Service and the retailing of horticultural and garden products including an external plant sales area.**
- g. **Employment uses in the form of Offices (providing in the region of 5,380 sq m)**
- h. **Storage facilities for events equipment.**

Development proposals should provide for:

1. **A highly visible, high quality landmark building clearly identifiable from surrounding highways and to people within the park as a focus for new recreational and leisure facilities**
2. **A high quality, distinctive, integrated and sustainable solution to all designs, whether architecture, engineering or landscape**
3. **Active frontages and elevations to link buildings with the wider park and their surroundings**
4. **The re-interpretation the original 1928 masterplan to provide a Social Centre for the park providing a high quality public realm offering a range of facilities, including public art, and the capability and flexibility to host a broad programme of events and performances**
5. **High quality, distinctive, durable and sustainable paved surfaces**
6. **The provision of new planting including tree planting to enhance the Social Centre and setting of new buildings**
7. **Innovative and distinctive solutions to the external lighting**
8. **Provision of high quality, distinctive and co-coordinated park furniture including seating, litter bins, signage and bollards etc**
9. **The replacement of existing junior sports pitches elsewhere in Central Park in the event the development effects this provision**
10. **An innovative and comprehensive plan for managing the transport and parking needs of the development, coordinated with the transport provisions of Proposals CP2 and CP3, including:**
 - i. **Measures to mitigate the transport impacts of the development**
 - ii. **A comprehensive Smart Choices programme, to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling as the preferred method of travel to the development, including Travel Plans for staff and visitors.**
 - iii. **On-site physical infrastructure to be in place to support sustainable transport choices, including safe walking and cycle links and secure cycle parking facilities**
 - iv. **Provision of car parking in accordance with the Council's Car Parking Strategy**
 - v. **On-site transport infrastructure to be designed as an integral part of the overall development.**
11. **The preparation of a Climate Change and Sustainability Statement which will demonstrate how progress will be made to achieving a zero carbon development.**

Any technical or financial impediments to such progress will need to be identified early by the developer, and they will be taken into account at the planning application stage.

12. Contributions to improving the wider park

This proposal also contributes towards achieving Objective 4 to create a safe and well-connected park with its surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre.

- 4.6** The delivery of the Life Centre is strategically important to the city as a whole and will make a significant contribution to the sports and leisure needs envisaged by Plymouth's population growth. Situated centrally near the junction of two major transport corridors which link the City Centre to the western and northern parts of the city and to the trunk road network via the A38; the Life Centre will be highly accessible by all transport modes from within and beyond the city. Public transport connections and services will be improved through the city's planned High Quality Public Transport (HQPT) system.
- 4.7** The principle of linking health with active leisure, healthy living programmes and education is widely recognised and has been developed through a partnership between with the Primary Care Trust (NHS), the University of Plymouth, the college of St Mark and St John, Plymouth Argyle Football Club and the Council.
- 4.8** The concept of a Life Centre located centrally within Plymouth and within the setting of Central Park is considered to have significant advantages, delivering improvements to the mental and physical well being of residents and the wider community. By providing the very best facilities to competition standards it would also achieve a regional appeal, bringing people to the city and a multitude of events within the Life Centre.
- 4.9** There continues to be a long-standing need to resolve the outdated facilities, poor quality and dysfunctional arrangement of buildings and spaces that comprise the built core of the park. Opportunities now exist to regenerate and provide an appropriate civic destination. In addition and more recently there is a need to accommodate facilities being displaced at Millbay in an accessible location.
- 4.10** The development of the Life Centre would result in the demolition of the existing Central Park Pools complex with the resulting land being restored back to open parkland.
- 4.11** The proposal may involve the potential for limited complementary commercial development to support the deliverability of the entire project. The Environment Centre will include horticultural and garden product retailing. The nature and scale will need to be consistent with the wider retail objectives of the Core Strategy, and this will be subject to appropriate impact testing.
- 4.12** The existing Solicitors and Vets site is an awkward finger of land which protrudes into the park and currently limits movement and views around the existing facilities. In order to create opportunities to make the best use of the space and so limit the footprint of the Life Centre, its servicing and car parking, the Solicitors and Vets site has been incorporated into the new development zone for the Life Centre. To facilitate this redevelopment opportunity new uses in the form of replacement and enhanced employment are incorporated into the Life Centre

Policy. The provision of employment uses in the form of offices is dependant upon the land comprising the existing Solicitors and Vets site (land outside the ownership of the Council) being brought into the development zone for the Life Centre and the existing buildings being demolished.

4.13 Climate Change and Sustainability Statements will be sought from developments as appropriate and would demonstrate how proposals will:

1. Target BREEAM good to excellent standards with a bespoke assessment
2. Be designed to be most energy efficient, incorporating the use of renewable energy and decentralised /low carbon energy systems. For instance there is an opportunity to provide a combined heat and power solution (CHP) here and to develop a shared power plant with Plymouth Argyle as part of their Home Park development
3. Make the most efficient use of water including gray water recycling technologies
4. Take up opportunities which positively favour bio-diversity such as green and brown roof technologies
5. Provide for sustainable urban drainage
6. Set out mechanisms which favour the use of local employment and services so reducing the need for transportation where possible
7. Provide sustainable waste solutions which address both the outcomes of the construction process and those relating to the operation of the development, such as minimising waste from the catering facilities related to this proposal.

(Text to be deleted on adoption.)

4.14 The Council has considered a series of alternatives options for developing the Life Centre including developing it based on improving and expanding the existing facilities at Central Park. The options for combining the new uses with the existing structure are limited and this would result in a fragmented composition rather than an integrated scheme missing opportunities to create a strong sense of arrival. Furthermore it would not deliver some of the key benefits that an integrated scheme would achieve such as economies of scale, energy efficiency, state of the art facilities and enhanced facilities management. Therefore this alternative has been rejected in development of this Plan.

4.15 Two further alternatives options were published with the Preferred Options Report which included residential development as an integral part of the Life Centre building and developing an extended residential proposal to front Outland Road. Neither option is considered appropriate. It would be challenging on this site to produce a housing scheme at this location that meets with the objectives of the Core Strategy to achieve a sustainable linked communities. In addition the option to develop an extended housing development would not have met the Council's desire to keep the development footprint to the minimum, retaining greenspace and protecting the setting of the park.

4.16 Both the Issues and Options and the Preferred Options consultation suggested providing the Life Centre on a range of alternative sites in the city. These sites have been reviewed, but none present a realistic, deliverable alternative with the consequence that they would prejudice the deliverability of developments currently proposed in Millbay for the Boulevard. Many of the sites would not provide a good strategic location as that available at Central Park for the city, such sites not being as central or accessible from established neighbourhoods, the highway network and transport corridors. Not developing the Life Centre at Central Park would fail to address the current issues which exist with the existing facilities and spaces and wouldn't deliver the step change in quality necessary to make Central Park a premier destination within the city.

Home Park

Policy/Proposal CP 2

Proposal - Home Park

To deliver major improvements to Home Park Stadium and support the extension of Plymouth Argyle Football Club's programmes of training and fitness within the community, engagement with the city's youth, through developing its southern stand for supporters, corporate clients and hospitality, and through complementary commercial development potentially including:

- a. **A leisure or sporting facility such as indoor tennis, specialist sports training, ten-pin bowling**
- b. **Conference and exhibition space**
- c. **A hotel**
- d. **Leisure and sports related retailing of an appropriate scale and nature consistent with the Core Strategy's retail objectives**
- e. **Refreshment retailing (Use Class A3) to provide a range of services and choice including Healthy Eating outlets.**

Development proposals should provide for:

1. **A high quality composition of buildings compatible in form and orientated well to the adjacent Life Centre.**
2. **A high quality, distinctive, integrated and sustainable solution to all designs, whether architecture, engineering or landscape**
3. **Active frontages and elevations to link buildings with the wider park and their surroundings**
4. **The re-interpretation the original 1928 masterplan to provide a Social Centre for the park providing a high quality public realm in relation to the Life Centre offering a range of facilities, including public art, and the capability and flexibility to host a broad programme of events and performances**
5. **High quality, distinctive, durable and sustainable paved surfaces**

6. **The provision of new planting including tree planting to enhance the Social Centre and setting of new buildings**
7. **Innovative and distinctive solutions to the external lighting**
8. **Provision of high quality, distinctive and co-coordinated furniture including seating, litter bins, signage and bollards etc**
9. **The Preparation of a Climate Change and Sustainability Statement which will demonstrate how progress will be made to achieving a zero carbon development. Any technical or financial impediments to such progress will need to be identified early by the developer, and they will be taken into account at the planning application stage**
10. **An innovative and comprehensive plan for managing the transport and parking needs of the development, coordinated with the transport provisions of Proposals CP1 and CP3, including:**
 - i. **Measures to mitigate the transport impacts of the development**
 - ii. **A comprehensive Smart Choices programme, to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling as the preferred method of travel to the development, including Travel Plans for staff and visitors.**
 - iii. **On-site physical infrastructure to be in place to support sustainable transport choices, including safe walking and cycle links and secure cycle parking facilities**
 - iv. **Provision of car parking in accordance with the Council's Car Parking Strategy**
 - v. **On-site transport infrastructure to be designed as an integral part of the overall development.**
11. **Contributions to improving the wider park.**

This proposal also contributes towards achieving Objective 4 to create a safe and well-connected park with its surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre.

- 4.17** The completion of Plymouth Argyle's Home Park Stadium and its associated developments are fundamental components to achieve a high quality destination along with the Life Centre and transport improvements. Proposals for Home Park will provide new buildings with active frontages which will frame the new Social Centre and add valued activity to the park. The development will provide new accommodation and uses which will enable Plymouth Argyle to deliver their aspirations and provide important facilities and services for the public.
- 4.18** The land to the south of the current stand has been used as a private car park for the club's use accommodating players, staff and guest car parking with temporary buildings providing hospitality catering for match days and events. The proposal will deliver improvements to the quality of parking for users and incorporate new hospitality facilities into any new development. Opportunities to include complementary commercial uses on this land make it possible to integrate a mix of new uses with the existing and provide a building of quality.
- 4.19** Limited complementary sports and leisure retailing is considered appropriate as part of the mix of new uses for Home Park. The nature and scale of such uses will be tested against the retailing objectives of the Core Strategy through the planning application process.

- 4.20** Currently the land to the south of the grandstands are strongly enclosed by walls, fences and planting, and this land relates poorly with the surrounding parkland on three sides. It is important that any new development here relates well to both the park and the Life Centre proposal. This development will have an important role together with the Life Centre and environmental improvements to create a strong sense of arrival for the park and a quality destination befitting a premier location for the city.
- 4.21** Climate Change and Sustainability Statements will be sought from developments as appropriate and would demonstrate how proposals will:
1. Target BREEAM good to excellent standards with a bespoke assessment
 2. Be designed to be most energy efficient, incorporating the use of renewable energy and decentralised /low carbon energy systems. For instance there is an opportunity to provide a combined heat and power solution (CHP) here and to develop a shared power plant with the Life Centre
 3. Make the most efficient use of water including graywater recycling technologies
 4. Take up opportunities which positively favour bio-diversity, such as green and brown roof technologies
 5. Provide for sustainable urban drainage
 6. Set out mechanisms which favour the use of local employment and services so reducing the need for transportation where possible
 7. Provide sustainable waste solutions which address both the outcomes of the construction process and those relating to the operation of the development, such as minimising waste from the catering facilities related to this proposal.

Summary of Key Evidence

Document	Evidence
Our Cities Health (2005), Plymouth Teaching Primary Care Trust & Plymouth 2020 Partnership.	Sets out the state of health in Plymouth, its primary determinants and actions to combat ill health, identifies environmental conditions as a factor.
Active People Survey (2006), Sport England.	Identifies that Plymouth's population is under performing nationally in respect of its participation in sport and active recreation.
City of Plymouth Sports Plan 2020 (2001), Plymouth City Council	Identifies improvements to support involvement in sport and recreational activity for the city including Central Park
Plymouth Swimming Facilities Strategy (2004), Plymouth City Council.	Identifies the existing swimming facilities and needs relating to national standards, supports the provision of new increased swimming facilities at Central Park's Life Centre as a solution to the city's swimming needs.
Extended Phase One Habitat Survey of Central Park (2007), Andrew McCarthy Associates.	Identifies the significant bio-diversity qualities within Central Park highlighting the potential for protected species and evidence of habitats. Confirms broadly the lack of sensitivities surrounding the Life Centre development zone and Plymouth Argyle's Home Park Development.
Plymouth Sustainable Neighbourhood Assessments (2005) LDA - Citywide	Identifies shortfalls in sports and recreational provisions and the the need to address these by strategic facilities such as these proposals at Central Park

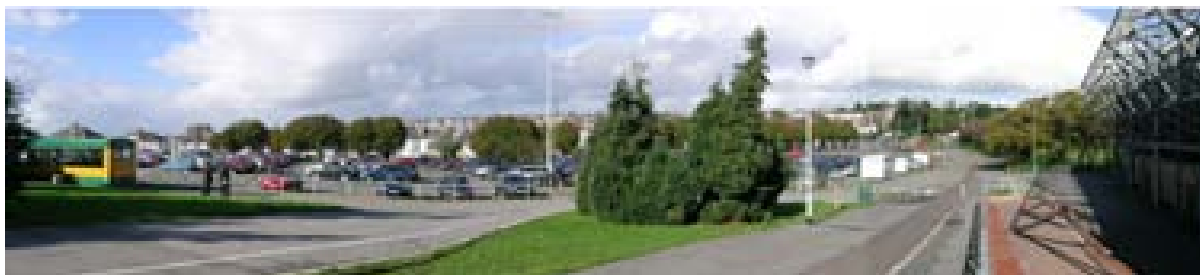
Document	Evidence
Central Park Life Centre, Outline Business Case (2005), Capita Symonds.	Identifies the need and objectives for new facilities from the projects partners and funders, sets out a business plan for the Life Centre, justifying the market demand including the need for commercial elements.
Destination Central Park, (2003), Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners and Jacobs Consultancy.	This strategic development brief sets out the need and opportunities for new indoor sports and leisure facilities including commercial aspects.
Central Park, A Historic Landscape Study (2002), Alan Baxter Associates.	Highlights the original intent of the 1928 masterplan designed by Thomas Mawson and in particular the design for the park's Social Centre, underlines the failings of the current composition
Central Park Action Plan (2000) and consultation, Plymouth City Council.	Indicated overwhelming support for the redevelopment of new indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities.
Community Planning Studies (2000), for Drake and Trelawny, Plymouth City Council.	Indicated the public's desire to see improvements to recreational and leisure facilities

Table 2 Key Evidence relating to Sport and Leisure

5 Transport Improvements

Objective 2. To provide high quality public and sustainable transport facilities serving the park and new facilities.

- 5.1** Central Park is located at a strategic point at the junction of two major transport corridors which link the City Centre to the western and northern parts of the city and the trunk road network via the A38. The park is highly accessible by car from within and beyond the city. Its central location also makes it potentially highly accessible from all parts of the city by public transport. However, current direct access to the park by public transport from some parts of the city (especially the north and east) is limited and will need to be improved through effective partnership working between the Council, bus operators and developers.
- 5.2** Existing bus services are provided by both the northern and western transport corridors. These are currently provided by bus stops on Outland Road, Alma Road and at the Milehouse junction and pass by the park. The only service to actually enter the site is the Park and Ride service operating from the George Junction which collects passengers from the Park and Ride at Central Park on route to and from the City Centre. To improve bus patronage, services need to arrive at the centre of any new development with dedicated high profile, modern clean and comfortable passenger facilities.
- 5.3** The existing large car park fronting Outland Road was provided as part of the original Mawson Plan for the Central Park. Today it is still used by park visitors, but it is also used as a Park and Ride facility for those visiting the City Centre, and by Plymouth Argyle supporters on match days.
- 5.4** The car park is relatively remote from the existing recreational buildings and the main entrance to Plymouth Argyle's Home Park Football Ground. It sits at a lower level than these facilities and is separated from them by dense hedgerows. Existing pedestrian links run along the margins of the car park and do not offer direct and clear access to the facilities beyond. The car park itself is a large expanse of featureless tarmac and is generally unattractive. These facts make the car park feel very separate from the facilities that they serve and for users there is little sense of arrival.



Existing Transport Provisions

The AAP seeks to:

1. Provide a high quality transport interchange integral to the design and development of the Life Centre. This attractive and comfortable facility for passengers will provide key information on transport services, the Life Centre and Central Park. It will encourage staff and visitors to travel by public transport and encourage bus operators to route more services via the park and Life Centre.
2. Improve the junctions with Outland Road allowing prioritised bus movement and improved pedestrian crossings, following transport modelling work.
3. Provide the minimum car-parking requirement for the Life Centre and Plymouth Argyle in a strong distinctive landscape setting with high quality, direct and easy to understand pedestrian routes linking all facilities together
4. Work in partnership with Plymouth Argyle to implement a robust travel plan to encourage and enable supporters to use public transport to attend matches wherever possible
5. Provide a strong sense of arrival with the new development bringing bus passengers directly to the heart of new facilities.

A Transport Interchange**Policy/Proposal CP 3****Proposal - A Transport Interchange**

To develop in conjunction with the Life Centre and Home Park proposals, an enhanced public transport interchange including:

- a. **Continuation of the Park & Ride Service on the planned HQPT network for the city**
- b. **Covered facilities for passenger waiting**
- c. **Key information on public transport, the Life Centre and Central Park**
- d. **New highway approach roads and minimum car parking relating to proposals**
- e. **Secure cycle storage**
- f. **Refreshment uses (Use Class A3) including Healthy eating outlets**
- g. **Improvements to the visual quality of the current parking areas.**

Development proposals should provide for:

1. **Solutions for the interchange building which use innovative technologies to create the most sustainable and energy efficient outcomes**
2. **Measures which retain and reuse surface water in line with best practices of sustainable urban drainage**
3. **Consistency in design between the interchange structure, Home Park and Life Centre buildings**
4. **High quality public realm including tree planting to create a distinctive setting for transport facilities**

5. **The provision of sustainable waste management programs for on site catering and in relation to the construction process seeking to achieve BREEAM excellent standards**
6. **A network of safe, well lit and accessible footpaths and cycleways linking the transport interchange, the Park, the Life Centre and Plymouth Argyle's Home Park Development.**

This proposal also supports Objective 5, to improve the range and quality of public facilities available to park users and Objective 4, to create a safe and well-connected park with its surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre.

- 5.5 The provision of a high quality transport interchange is critical to the success of the Life Centre and the Council's strategy for an improved park promoting the use of public transport. This facility needs to be prominent and at the centre of the new development giving passengers a strong sense of arrival and priority to this important destination.
- 5.6 The transport interchange should be multifunctional promoting sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling with secure, comfortable and attractive facilities and key information about arrivals, departures and information concerning the Life Centre and Central Park.
- 5.7 Additional car parking will be necessary to meet the needs of the new indoor sports and recreational facilities and its environmental qualities are going to be very important to the overall development. This is particularly so as the car park is the first thing people see on the main approach to the new destination and strong landscape techniques will need to be employed to reduce the impact of parking and enhance the main approaches.

(Text to be deleted on adoption.)

- 5.8 Two alternatives were published with the Preferred Options consultation. One alternative was not to provide a transport interchange with the redevelopment of the parks facilities. This alternative would not meet the expectations of the Council's strategy to deliver a high quality public transport system at this important location serving either existing and future recreational and leisure facilities and so has been rejected. The other alternative was to retain the existing Park and Ride facility at Central Park following the provision of the anticipated Western Park and Ride facility at Saltash. This alternative has been accepted by the Council and this car parking provision will continue at Central Park to meet the transport needs of the city.
- 5.9 Other suggestions put forward by the public at Preferred Options stage include relocating the transport interchange to sites other than at Central Park including the Milehouse Bus Depot, the Milehouse Road Junction and at Plymouth Rail Station. These suggestions have all been rejected as they would not promote better bus patronage in connection with the improved facilities at Central Park.

Summary of Key Evidence

Document	Evidence
Local Transport Plan II, (2006 -2011) Plymouth City Council	Sets out the strategic objective to implement a sequential change in bus service towards a citywide High Quality Public Transport system and to integrate services with other transport modes through improved and new interchanges at key locations such as at Central Park.
Plymouth Sports Plan 2020, (2001) Plymouth City Council	Highlights the need for improved transport infrastructure and improvements to public transport facilities at Central Park in association with improved recreational facilities.
Plymouth Sustainable Neighbourhood Assessments (2005) LDA - Peverell	Identifies the need to improve bus facilities in relation to the proposed new Life Centre.
Central Park Action Plan (2000) and consultation, Plymouth City Council	Identifies the need to improve pedestrian connections and improve the environmental qualities of the existing car park.

Table 3 Key Evidence relating to Transport Improvements

6 Park Enhancements

Improved Landscape and Biodiversity

Objective 3. To create a park with desirable, high quality, vibrant spaces that can be used by the whole Plymouth community whilst also enhancing its value as an important wildlife corridor.



Landscape and biodiversity in the park

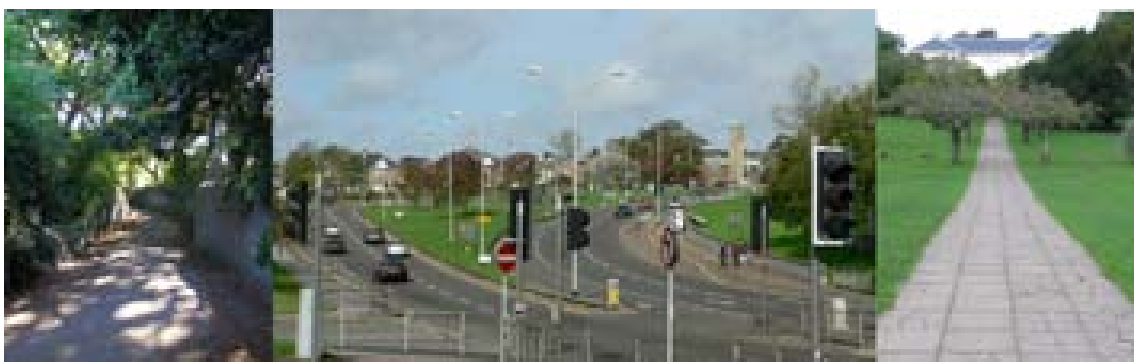
6.1 Central Park has a rich and varied landscape which provides a range of environments for the public to enjoy. However it is a landscape that needs to be managed and developed if it is to maintain its interest and value for the city, long term. The park has many open spaces which relate poorly to the landscape around them. In many areas the park exists as a series of fragmented spaces unrelated to buildings, footpath routes, views and other key elements of the park. This can make the park feel unwelcoming and make negotiating and understanding the park difficult for visitors. The Council is also aware of the need to appreciate the ecological sensitivities of the park for the city and to reflect these in the development of the AAP. It needs to put in place holistic programmes of improvement to enrich the park's habitats as appropriate. The AAP seeks to:

1. Apply high quality, sustainable and distinctive design solutions, inclusive of everyone, relating well to the buildings, spaces, routes and uses that surround them, be well resourced and where appropriate promote bio-diversity
2. Protect, enhance and interpret key views, features and habitats
3. Develop sensitive proposals and appropriate management regimes, which favour the most sustainable outcomes, promoting bio-diversity and improvement to the landscape of the park.

A Well Connected Park

Objective 4. To create a safe and well-connected park with its surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre.

- 6.2** The original 1928 masterplan for the park had an extensive network of footpaths. Parts of this network were never built, particularly in the north and south. Some of the existing routes are poorly located, with limited visibility and bounded by strong vegetation, which for some people represent uncomfortable and potentially unsafe environments. There are few prominent quality park entrances that provide a sense of arrival befitting a premier city facility.
- 6.3** Exclusive uses of land such as the Council's Park's Depot, Plymouth Argyle's training pitches, the cricket field, allotments, the parks challenging topography and strong planting have made parts of the park difficult to access and understand. The busy highway system that rings the park, particularly the A386 Outland and Alma Roads and the large Milehouse Road junction, have created some serious physical and psychological barriers between the park and surrounding communities.



Challenges for Existing Routes in the Park

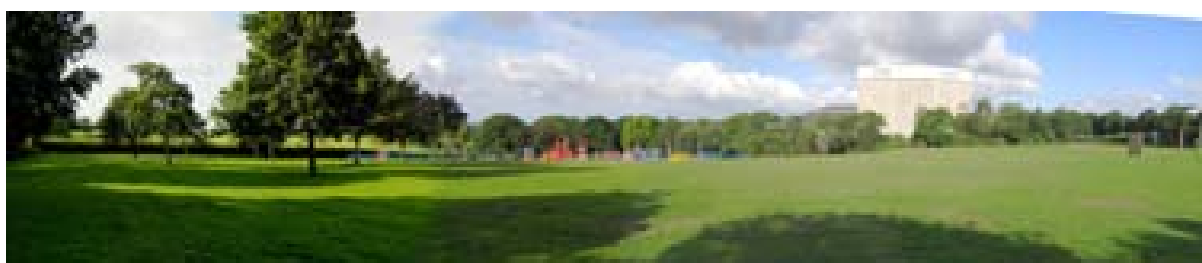
- 6.4** The nature of Plymouth's topography is such that the City Centre is separated from the park by a steep valley, within which lies the city's rail station and main line. These factors create a challenge for the city to find a way to bridge this divide and join the two, as suggested in the Vision for Plymouth, 2003.
- 6.5** The Council supports this concept in principle and will seek solutions to the deliverability of a safe and attractive route. This would encourage more residents to walk or cycle between neighbourhoods, the City Centre destinations, Plymouth's rail station and the Life Centre rather than use a motor vehicle. The resulting benefits of this for the health and well being of Plymouth people could be very significant.
- 6.6** The AAP seeks to:
- Apply, safe, sustainable design principles to solutions which are inclusive of all peoples, providing routes that relate well to buildings, streets and spaces
 - Complete the primary routes of the unfinished footpath system within the park to link places and facilities, providing alternative routes to supplement existing ones where appropriate and properly connect the surrounding neighbourhoods in an easily understandable manner
 - Develop a network of cycleways linking the park, the Life Centre, its transport interchange, surrounding neighbourhoods, the City Centre and principal highways

- d. Provide a series of distinctive, high quality, prominent park entrances that provide a sense of arrival befitting a premier city facility
- e. Improve the physical condition of existing routes.

A Park with Improved Facilities

Objective 5. To improve the range and quality of public facilities available to park users.

- 6.7** Central Park has few facilities that support and enhance the public's enjoyment of its landscape and in some parts there is a distinct lack of activity. Whilst the park has a small number of ancillary buildings apart from the existing sports and recreational facilities and at Pounds House, these include gatehouses, sports changing rooms, public toilets and shelters. Most of these are in poor condition and some are vacant. This is woefully inadequate for a such a large premier city park and this combined with its worn infrastructure delivers a neglected impression for most people.
- 6.8** Central Park has many underused spaces and some substandard playing pitches which could with investment be brought into use making the most of its recreational potential as was the park's original intent.



Existing Children's Play in the Park

- 6.9** The park has a large central children's play area with a good range of equipment which has proved very popular and requires constant maintenance to meet demands. It also has a small children's playground at Peverell which is in need of investment.
- 6.10** The park hosts a number of regular and unique events throughout the year which includes various circus performances, summer fair and fun fair. Proposals for the Life Centre, its new access and car parking are likely to impact on the current venues for these attractions though it may be possible to accommodate them within the development zone shown for the Life Centre in this plan. However in the instance that this is not possible and the AAP needs to make special allowance for a new venue and this is shown on the park's open space framework diagram.
- 6.11** The AAP seeks to improve the range and quality of park facilities, providing information points, public toilets, cafes, interpretation and signage and encourage the reuse of vacant buildings as appropriate. In particular the Council will work with existing users of Pounds House to encourage more public use of its ground floor and external terrace.

- 6.12** Some of the open spaces in the park are used as sports pitches and statutory playing fields for use by organised teams, clubs and local schools. These will be retained and enhanced.

An Enhanced Park

Policy/Proposal CP 4

Proposal - Park Enhancements

To deliver a comprehensive range of environmental improvements to Central Park in accordance with a Masterplan that will be prepared in consultation with local communities and users of the park. Measures will include:

1. Improvements to the landscape of the park, including its planting, its avenues, hedgerows and woodlands
2. Enhancements of key views
3. Provision of new park furniture
4. Sensitive enhancement to the bio-diversity of the park protecting and improving existing habitats and creating new habitats such as grasslands, hedgerows, woodlands and wetland habitats
5. The development of sensitive and appropriate management regimes, which favour the most sustainable outcomes for improved bio-diversity
6. Providing a network of safe, direct, convenient and understandable pedestrian routes and cycleways linking the park and its facilities to the surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre
7. Improvements to the surfaces of existing routes addressing long standing land drainage problems and sensitive measures to improve the street lighting of the primary routes
8. Providing series of distinctive, high quality, prominent park entrances that provide a sense of arrival befitting a premier city facility
9. A system of distinctive and clear signage, and park interpretation explaining the park's history, wildlife and key views
10. The provision of a few well placed facilities which support the public's enjoyment of the park, including providing new and encouraging the use of existing buildings such as at Pounds House. New facilities would be limited and would combine uses such as cafes, public toilets, with new sports changing facilities
11. The provision of a new events field utilising and maintaining greenspace, providing appropriate access and being well serviced.
12. Improvements to allotments including providing new as shown on the Proposals Map and improving the existing facilities as required such as new irrigation and boundary treatments
13. Rationalising the Parks Depot on its current site to provide a more accessible Parks Service to the public

14. **The safeguarding of statutory playing fields for formal sports and educational purposes and the provision of new sports pitches and improvement to existing playing surfaces as required**
15. **Improved children's play facilities and opportunities in accordance with the Plymouth Play Strategy**

This proposal contributes to achieving Objective 3; To create a park with desirable, high quality, vibrant spaces that can be used by the whole Plymouth community whilst also enhancing its value as an important wildlife corridor. Objective 4; To create a safe and well-connected park with its surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre and Objective 5; to improve the range and quality of public facilities available to park users.

- 6.13** Whilst Central Park has many intensively managed sports fields its varied and sometimes challenging topography means that it has retained significant areas of natural landscape including woodlands, hedgerows and meadows. This landscape includes a steep woodland valley to the east of the park which acts as a good wildlife corridor providing sanctuary to many local species of wildlife. The fact that most of the park was once farmland is still evident by the many former field boundaries that still remain. However many of these hedgerows are now in need of management and repair. The park also includes several important avenues of trees, not all of which are complete. Some are not good specimens. Some block the view that they should be promoting. Others need attention to make them safe, control their growth or improve the qualities of the avenues.
- 6.14** The park has a network of footpaths, but this is not comprehensive and it fails to link the key areas of the park in a logical manner. The condition of existing footpath network is often poor and in some locations issues such as land drainage and surfacing make some routes difficult to negotiate. There are significant health benefits to be realised by providing a network of easily understandable and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists in Central Park. Particularly routes that link the neighbourhoods to one another and the park to the city.
- 6.15** There is an opportunity to provide an educational route linking Central Park to Ford Park Cemetery in a managed way interpreting the Cemetery's social history and working closely with the Ford Park Cemetery Trust.
- 6.16** It is important that the park provides facilities and a supportive presence, which makes the public use of the park a pleasant and engaging experience. Facilities that generate a presence and provide appropriate activities within the park's various spaces will be supported, so long as they are provided in a sensitive manner, protecting and enhancing its landscape and bio-diversity qualities.
- 6.17** There are a number of key locations where cafes, public toilets, and sports changing rooms could be provided in an integrated way so as to minimise their impact. Such locations are shown on the Open Space Framework Diagram and include:
- Land adjacent to the existing baseball field and sports pitches providing replacement sports changing rooms, a cafe and public toilets.

- Adjacent the existing main children's playground providing a cafe, and public toilets to support this popular facility.
- Adjacent to Barn Park Pond where an enlarged waterbody would provide an attraction which can be supported by a cafe, new sports changing rooms, and replacement public toilets.

6.18 There is a significant extent of allotment plots on Central Park. These are located to the east of the park at Peverell and to the south at Pennycomequick. The use of allotments is important to the park and the city as they provide valued activity, support healthy living and encourage acquired horticultural skills. In relation to AAP Proposal CP5 at Peverell, six allotment plots are the subject of change and are being displaced. Within the AAP these will be re-provided at Swarthmore Allotments at Pennycomequick to the west of current plots. Here in the region of fifteen new allotments can be created, providing a potential net increase of nine new plots overall within the AAP. New allotments will be provided with well-considered and appropriate watering facilities, access, security measures and boundary treatments.

6.19 It is important that a holistic approach is taken to improve the general fabric of the park in a sensitive manner, and these improvements would enrich the Central Park and raise its profile befitting of a premier city destination.

(Text to be deleted on adoption.)

6.20 The Preferred Options consultation suggested an alternative which considered that the Council should do nothing and leave the park as it is. The Council has rejected this option and considers that the proposal is important to create a quality destination at Central Park befitting a premier city location. The environmental improvements are necessary to responsibly manage the park enriching it for future generations to enjoy.

6.21 There were many suggestions for other improvements to park facilities and routes and these will be considered when the Council develops a detailed Masterplan for the park.