

A Vision for Plymouth

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to accompany General Plan 1:5000

Contents

Opening statements

Introduction

Chapter 1

Principles of the Vision

- Form of the Public Realm
- Scale of Enclosure
- Movement through the Public Realm
- Memory of Place

Chapter 2

The Development Approach - Plymouth at the turn of the 21st Century

- The conditions
- The opportunity

Chapter 3

The MBM Vision for Plymouth

- Recovery of the Waterfront City
- Invigorating the Abercrombie Plan

Chapter 4

The Plan Elements

- Millbay
- The City Centre
- Sutton Harbour
- The Waterfront – the façade of the City
- Recovering the spine – Armada Way from the Hoe to the Station

Chapter 5

Recommendations for transformation

Introduction

This document outlines a vision for the future of Plymouth, developed by MBM Arquitectes and AZ Urban Studio over seven months of close involvement with the city and many of its citizens. It has benefited from a close relationship with officers of the City Council, ensuring a considered balance between visionary aspirations and deliverability.

The vision is not a fixed blueprint for the exact future of the city but rather a review of strengths and weaknesses, an assessment of direction, a pointer to opportunity, and an invitation to aspire. However, to ensure its deliverability as far as possible, the proposals have gone one stage further in expressing the vision with precision as it embraces the essential instrument of defining the form of these fragments of the city under study.

The vision is launched for discussion and consideration by all parties. It will be tested and analysed by the relevant authorities, and offered for consultation to the people of Plymouth in the future.

Why does Plymouth need a Vision ?

This study has emerged from a widely held view across the community of institutions and businesses in Plymouth that a sea change in thinking about the city should be explored to promote an overall development strategy that fully recognizes the potential of the city and its urban area.

This has been funded in the main by donations from local businesses and institutions, following concern among key stakeholders about the poor quality of the urban environment in and around the City Centre, and the lack of a clearly expressed strategic vision for the future.

The vision for Plymouth proposed here takes forward this challenge and proposes a future for the city that delivers the highest possible quality buildings and public spaces to attract and sustain the highest quality business, education, living, and recreation opportunities for citizens, investors, and visitors alike - matching Plymouth 2020's Vision and Goals statement.

The process of developing a vision involves capturing the essence of the city and using it to inform and shape the future.

- It is about discovering what works for Plymouth, and what is holding it back
- It is an opportunity to challenge perceptions and raise ambitions
- It invites citizens to engage and demand
- It elicits new routes to delivery and achievement
- It provides a direction and driver for future change
- It informs the ongoing development and revision of statutory plans

The vision presented here examines both the wider context of the city, as well as the local conditions, and proposes a development and public space strategy for repairing the very heart of the city centre, as a driver for the regeneration of Plymouth.

This report is broadly structured in five chapters. The first explores the principles that underpin the approach we have taken to the city, providing examples of how they have been successfully employed in other cities. Chapter two focuses in on the particularity of Plymouth, and presents a summarised analysis of the development opportunities and constraints that our vision both responds to, and emerges from. The third chapter describes the essence of our strategic vision for Plymouth, explored and explained in greater detail as elements of the plan in chapter four. Concluding, chapter five recalls the recommendations for each area and presents possible routes to realising the vision.

We believe that with support at all levels of public and private leadership, this vision is within reach of Plymouth over the next twenty years.

Chapter 1: Principles of the Vision

Recovering a lost tradition

In his nine penny book "Town Planning" published in 1940, Thomas Sharp begins by quoting D.H. Lawrence who described English towns as "a great scrabble of ugly pettiness over the face of land" and went on to write "The English are town birds through and through. Yet they don't know how to build a city, how to think of one, or how to live in one. They are all suburban, pseudo-cottages, and not one of them knows how to be truly urban. The English may be mentally and spiritually developed; but as citizens of splendid cities they are more ignominious than rabbits".

Thomas Sharp, born in 1901, once senior research officer at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, a Town Planner and author of many seminal books on Planning, writes that D.H. Lawrence was like many English people, mistaken. Thomas Sharp goes on to write that the English "once built towns which according to the standards of their times, were excellent instruments for the living of a good social life; which were altogether admirable essays in large-scale architectural composition."

The last phrase had been underlined because it sharply differs from the current practice of reliance on fragmentary proposals.

Written in 1939, Thomas Sharp goes on to lament this loss of confidence in current town planning, and although it is a long quotation of what was observed sixty-five years ago it remains the base of the principles that have guided this vision for Plymouth in 2003.

"Right up till a hundred years ago there was a remarkably strong and virile town tradition in England. That tradition was very different from the continental tradition. It was none the worse for that. But it is a curious thing that today not only the ordinary citizen, not only writers like Lawrence, but our professional men whose job it is to study and build towns, our architects and town-planners, are mostly unaware that such a tradition ever existed, and are content to belaud foreign towns and sign plaintively because we have never built in precisely the same way in England.

Towns have sometimes been described as the physical expression of a nation's civilization. The physical form of a town does in many ways reflect fairly accurately the social condition of the people who live in it, their mode of life, their cultural achievement, their economic status, the kind of government they possess. The town reflects those characteristics because it arises out of them. And it is, of course, precisely because of this that the English town tradition developed on its own individual lines.

Our fall from grace has been very deep during the last century. We are not very sensible, however, because of that, to forget that we once did, in fact, live and build in grace. It is, indeed, all the more necessary for us to remember. The English contribution to the art of building towns was once an original and a valuable one. It is important that this should be realised, for if we are ever again to build good towns we shall need to restore our lost confidence, and perhaps to re-establish something of the old traditions."

If the English town was, and is, characterised by being less dense than its continental counterpart, for its towns needed no defensive walls, then there was no traditional restraint in expanding into the countryside, first with the industrial revolution then with the social demand after the Great War. This expansion led to the loss of skills when, as a counter-action, density became an economic demand on the English town after the Second World War.

Sixty years ago, when James Paton Watson, the city engineer, and Patrick Abercrombie, the eminent town planner, came together to produce a 'Plan for Plymouth', they worked in heroic times. The blitz had destroyed both Devonport and the heart of the city itself. It was a brave gesture during the early days of the war to pave the way for the future. It was also during the heroic early days of town planning, a time for radical solutions to cure the ills of the nineteenth century with idealism of a healthy functional city. Each area to have its specific function: a place to dwell and sleep, a place for exercise and sport, a place for work, a place for culture, a place for the public administration and a place for commerce and shopping. Having separated these functions, or uses, the task was to provide transport between them and what better than the motorcar. However, the police, alarmed by accidents, wished to separate pedestrians from traffic. Traffic

engineers calculated for fast traffic in towns with wider roads, generous curves, hundreds of oddly shaped "traffic islands" and eventually dealing with the unrepentant pedestrian, installed fences and railings along the edges of the road. The street, as a meeting place, was forgotten.

Today attitudes to urban life has changed, there is more respect for the past, there is more concern for mixed use, and, in spite of the demand, more effort to discourage the expansion of the city into the countryside and protect the existing villages and towns from expansion as well. This implies searching, and finding empty pockets of land within the city and a reasonable increase in density. This shift in values towards avoiding social exclusion implies better connections and places where people can meet, even accidentally. As a consequence we need to find the right instruments to repair our urban environments and these are now being found in looking again at the quality of our public space.

The past of Plymouth gives us the key to the future, but it is a past that must be given an interpretation from our own times. The juxtaposition of different styles from different epochs is one of the delights of the village and town churches around the countryside, just as it is in almost any High Street. We must give our own culture today a chance. That culture is based on modernity, in other words the ability to question everything constructively and not accept things just because they are there; it is a question of attitudes not style.

The Form of the Public Realm

The street is the backbone of our society. For a society is not solely about individual freedom, it is about the freedom to associate with others and to enjoy the unexpected encounter. Such social encounters, planned or unplanned, allow an exchange of information that not only enriches our experience and knowledge, but provides a market place for cultural and commercial transactions. The street gives a recognisable form to public space where people can seek out their markets and, in the course of their search, acquire unexpected information -- be it a new product in a shop window or a chance meeting with a friend. This is obviously true in a small town and should be true in our larger towns and cities. Creating the spaces for people and for these encounters is what this Vision is all about.

Anthropological research has disclosed and reinforced the deep-rooted importance of the street to societies which is informative in considering the current crisis of this relationship. In the earliest settlements of Mesopotamia, the first streets connected individual patio dwellings, bounded by closely packed mud walls and provided a link to the cultivated land beyond. Thus the street was given a built form. Later, Greek and Roman cities with more stratified societies and prosperous merchant and administrative classes, the appearance of building façades became socially important as an expression of influence and wealth with consequences for the form of the street. In medieval times, the village street responded to the economy of agricultural labour by allowing each family a small plot of land for its own use, with the wider land beyond reserved for the feudal landlord. These needs created streets formed either by a connected row of houses with a kitchen garden behind and clearly expressed in the form of the Scottish Burgh or by a string of individual houses with strips of land beyond, as in the croft of Scotland or the Hufendorf of the German woodlands. The most civilized early street system was established in Alexandria (BC to 100AD) by the architect Dinocrates where an orthogonal grid provided the form to accommodate the cooperative and cosmopolitan ideas of Alexander himself.

The street is of great consequence; it is important to us and must be treated with respect. The way we look after our streets clearly demonstrates our level of commitment to civilized society.

In recent decades, a key reason for the decay in the quality of the public space and the street is a desire to extinguish conflict. Herein lies one of the great misunderstandings about the configuration of urban settlements. The street of the town and the city is alive if it involves conflict. It provides the moments of opportunity; it is the basis of tolerance, the major instrument of civilization. To remove conflict, and its opportunity for tolerance, is to strike a death blow to the vitality of the street.

Behind this idea of removing the inner conflict within the nature of our cities and our streets, lie two influential socio-urban theories. The first developed in the last century and its nefarious influence lingers with us today. It is founded on the belief that the city is evil and the country pure and good. It gave birth to the garden-city movement which tried honestly to cure the social ills of an exploited working-class

by introducing the country into the city. On the one hand, the movement has left a legacy of urban countryside in the form of parks and botanical gardens, but on the other, we have a suburban city form with streets that go nowhere, a regression from the vision of Patrick Abercrombie, who understood that one of the principal functions of the street is to connect. The loss of this connecting function has been extinguished to such an extent, that in the name of so-called traffic calming, our cities and neighbourhoods are become illegible. The resultant social disaster is as extreme as it is exclusive.

The second theory emerged during the summer of 1933 when several architects isolated themselves from the realities of everyday life by spending the long lazy August days on board the motor-yacht "Patris" somewhere between Marseilles and Athens.

From this voyage of contemplation emerged a document, forged into existence by Le Corbusier, known as the "Athens Charter". The articles which made an enormous impact on City Planning were those that defined its functions: articles 77 and 78. The first stated that "the keys to town planning are to be found in the four functions: housing, work, recreation (during leisure) and traffic". The second stated that "planning will determine the structure of each of the sectors assigned to the four key functions and will fix their respective locations within the whole". Thus was born the abstract concept of the functional city. Concept was transferred into legislation in the brave new world of reconstruction in Europe after the havoc of war.

The pernicious influence of the Athens Charter is that it slipped conveniently into the pockets of easy investment -- both public and private. The single-purpose building could be built and isolated from the difficulties of adjusting to the street or next-door neighbour, making design easy for the architect and engineer, construction easy for the builder and investment simpler for the financier. The functional city, constructed in a ring around the historic core of every European city needed a separate functional solution for traffic. Streets were forgotten and replaced with a classification of traffic routes under the exclusive control of specialised engineers responding to the new consumer society that became obsessed with the progressive icon of Western society -- the individual car. When not in use, cars need storage and so the car park made its appearance in the city.

What an aberration - a park full of cars! The Americanism, "the parking lot" is uglier, but much more accurate. It is time to change traffic routes back into streets and car parks back into public spaces.

It is now generally accepted that the functional city is a fallacy, yet highly infectious intellectual viruses remain to destroy the fabric of the street. The most virulent is the virus of segregation which classifies streets into grades of traffic resulting in the most absurd junctions and guard rails in the city to control speed. Alternatively streets are designated as pedestrian zones with no vehicles at all. The city responds to these stresses by mutation in much the same way as a living organism. Segregated pedestrian only streets mutate into deserted and unfriendly pedestrian precincts with closed and shuttered shops at night and empty properties above. Conversely, the restaurants and pubs along the streets that permit cars, buses and taxis, gather life. Such scenes of schizophrenia can be found across Europe from Cardiff to Cologne.

People must be given priority in the city and there is a time and a place for the pedestrians to take over, provided two conditions are observed. The first is that pedestrian-only space should not be over extensive, as in the historical centre of Krakow in Poland. Instead it should act as an urban oasis like Cathedral Square in Barcelona - thronged with people at the intersection of intensively used buildings and streets. Secondly, a street with traffic should always be within sight, thereby giving comfort and safety.

The Scale of Enclosure

The streets that we know and recognise are not just two dimensional plans, they are also the buildings that define the space and create the place. Every building forms part of the city to which it belongs. There are those buildings which together form a context, which belong to the majority, but there are also buildings that contrast to the context, like punctuation in a text, that allows one to pause and adjust one's perception of the city in a different scale - a public building, a school, a hospital, or just a different style according to the cultural values of the period when it was built. The character of the street is also determined by its topography, if it is straight or curved, also its width and the relation of the buildings to the street, some with front gardens some without.

The more central urban streets are rich in their morphology, or complexity of form. In Paris, or Oslo, there are the small courtyards that lead off the street that give more depth to the building line and increase the business or living activities. In London and Edinburgh we have the Mews that now allow the essential backyard activities that serve the major businesses and residential population. Then there are the larger central courts, like the Hofes in Vienna, which contain community parks with even schools placed there - a feature found also in the Dutch cities.

However, the corridor street is the more usual configuration of the urban character. Commerce is usually clustered where the medieval trade routes merge to form a market place, or where a deliberately designed square has been created, or where two streets run close to each other, like say Southside Street and the Quay Road in the Barbican, where the stimulus of a short step to find alternative offers creates a dynamic relation.

The advent of the lift now allows us to increase the activity (and economy) of the street with tall buildings. If these are related together they contribute to the scale of the enclosure provided they are linked to the corridor street nearer the ground. They need not to be oppressive since they can create another kind of beauty, as in New York or Sydney; they give a welcome metropolitan scale to the city. This is essentially different to the isolated towers of the 50's and 60's or to the free-for-all claustrophobic constructions in the City of London where the streets have lost their social role.

Therefore a fundamental objective in creating new urban structures and in renovating and improving old ones is to combine a discreet evolution of traditional elements with radically new architectural models. This objective is easily understood but difficult to bring about and nowadays the theory and practice of the most demanding kind of urban development revolves around this difficulty.

Movement through the Public Realm

One of the essential functions of the street is to provide a way of going from one place to another. For this reason places of destination are usually gathered alongside or related to the street system. The street therefore also becomes a place to be in and in many ways the identity of the street is determined by the people who belong there. It is a shared space. Shared between the people who

belong there with those who pass through, on their way to somewhere else. This sharing obviously creates conflictive interests which have to be accommodated in the design and use of this space. The social balance that the street demands can easily breakdown when one function dominates excessively the other functions. Too often, with the increase of the use of cars, traffic considerations have upset this balance by being too radical in either subjecting the pedestrian to vehicles or subjecting vehicles to the pedestrian. The fear, and reality, of road accidents, has too often led to drastic precautions that have destroyed the original functions of the street. Cities have been plagued by urban motorways, pedestrian over and under passes, on one hand, and a maze of streets that lead nowhere or full of strange forms to ensure slow driving, on the other hand. The public realm of the street system of our neighbourhoods and districts has become a place of stress for citizens whether they be on foot or are driving a vehicle. This is because each is demanding the same territory. The curious thing is that the pedestrian and the driver is usually the same person assuming a different role.

The answer is to accept that the city is conflictive by the reason of it being alive to the opportunities it offers. Both competing and alternative demands makes the urban life the powerhouse of our civilizations. It provides not only the information that is sought but also the casual encounter of information that is not expected: the delight of discovery.

To enable all these activities to function a recognisable structure of the street system is fundamental. The perception of where one is and how to reach another part of the city needs the use of an understandable punctuation at convenient intervals. A pedestrian needs this within a maximum of 500 m, and a vehicle roughly every 1,500 m.

Kevin Lynch in his book "The image of the city" (1960) makes a strong case for the careful design (deliberate or accidental) to orientate movement through the city:

"A street is perceived, in fact as a thing that goes towards something. The path should support this perceptually by strong termini, and by a gradient or a directorial differentiation, so that it is given a sense of progression, and the opposite directions are unlike. A common gradient is that of ground slope, and one is regularly instructed to go "up" or "down" the street, but there are

many others... Perhaps one can proceed by "keeping the park on the left", or by moving "toward the golden dome".

Seventy years before Lynch, Camillo Sitte understood the city as a series of perspectives, preferably enclosed spaces linked together. "For him the character of a town or a city lay in the public spaces that it could provide for its citizens, and its beauty lay in their rhythmic interrelationships." (George Collins).

This Vision which we have prepared for Plymouth is not just three-dimensional but bears in mind the fourth dimension of moving through a sequence of spaces, each contained by the form of its surrounding buildings, both those that are already there and those that will be designed (hopefully with the care and knowledge that they form part of the city) by other hands. Even so, the city will have to live with its past, present and future errors, but then that is part of human nature.

Memory of Place

There is a fifth dimension to every city: the collective memory of place. This is poignantly evident in Penelope Lively's novel "City of the Mind" when the novel's hero drives down a London street and seeing a blackened brick wall vividly imagines the blazing houses under incandescent clouds in the blitz and the fire warden exhausted, hydrants running dry in the street. Now rebuilt and occupied by later generations the footsteps of his childhood remind him how short our lives are compared to that of the city and its streets.

Memory of place does not mean rebuilding the past, but drawing on its memory to rediscover the paths and footsteps of past generations, guided by topography and the weather which traced the early structure of the city. It also means that in renewing the city for the present and the future we must create places that will strike new memories for the next generations.

In order to do this we should understand the words of Aristotle, who summarizes all rules of city planning in observing that a city must be so designed as to make its people at once secure and happy. This quotation by Camillo Sitte allows him to dwell on the city as a work of art.

“In order to realize this, city planning should not be merely a technical matter, but should in the truest and most elevated sense be an artistic enterprise... It is only in our mathematical century (he was writing in Vienna 1889) that the process of enlarging and laying out cities has become an almost purely technical concern. Therefore it seems important to remind ourselves once again that this attitude solves only one aspect of the problem, and that the other, the artistic aspect, is of at least equal importance.”

One could dismiss Sitte as a romantic and worse being picturesque, but his plea for considering the city as a work of art is repeated by critics and commentators every now and again. Kevin Lynch writing from Massachusetts in 1959 writes “A good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security. He can establish an harmonious relationship between himself and the outside world. This is the obverse of the fear that comes with disorientation; it means that the sweet sense of home is strongest when home is not only familiar but distinctive as well.”

Our Vision for Plymouth is also based on the belief that the city is a work of art of generations with each one handing the baton onto the next. It is also an essay in large-scale composition.

Chapter 2 Development Approach

Plymouth at the turn of the 21st Century - the context to which the vision responds

The conditions

'After all, there's the sea, and green hillsides, and shops, and amusements; but there could've been so much more'

Ian Nairn, 1967

Urban history / form

When Plymouth was settled by fishermen in the 11th Century, they inhabited the area now known as the Barbican for its sheltered position - a small natural inlet tucked away from prevailing westerly winds by the raised land of the Hoe. This physical asset of location - the deep, sheltered Sound, and the accompanying rivermouths of the Tamar and Plym - provided the opportunity for the maritime and military-led growth through the following centuries.

The significance of the waterfront in the process of urbanisation fuelled pockets of growth at the points where access to deep water was favourable for ships, slipping and shipbuilding and repairing in adjacent berths, resulting in the tripartite development of Devonport, Stonehouse, and Plymouth. Whilst the three towns were largely independent, and contained their own living, working, and retail areas, the rapid pace of economic growth in the eighteenth century drove expansion inland at such pace that by 1914 the towns were officially agglomerated into one urban area - Plymouth. This unusual process of inward growth and development produced an urban form that physically linked the new heart of the city back to its waterfront origins. Both the connection of the urban form and the localised sustainability of centres are clear in plans showing the pre-war city.

Following widespread destruction of the central core of Plymouth during the war, the Beaux Arts plan on which the reconstruction of the city was based reversed much of this historical relationship, focusing on the two new axes of Royal Parade and Armada Way, and the system of vehicle circulation around the core. The mono-functional use of the reconstruction and the subsequent resistance for change

endemic in the institutional investment realities of commercial landlords contributes another level to the physical isolation, ensuring that the activity of the city centre is focussed on the realm of retail to the detriment of any other uses or activity.

Plymouth has turned its back on history, it could be said that in the process it has lost the human scale of connection between its heart and limbs. Our vision seeks to correct this fundamental constraint.

Population

The City of Plymouth currently has a population of 240,000 (Census, 2001), 10,500 less than recorded in 1991. Remarkably, the population has grown relatively little since the beginning of the twentieth century, when the figure was 211,000.

It is fair to report that the income levels of the population are poorer than neighbouring Exeter, this is due to both the time distance from London (3hours by train rather than 2hrs for Exeter) and the historical reliance on the shipbuilding and repairs industry dominated by the military client base. Exeter has benefited from a more diverse economy built upon the service sector.

As a regional centre Plymouth also supports a wider travel to work area, bringing the total to approximately 350,000. From a retail perspective the catchment area is reported as almost 500,000. Movement in from rural areas also drives the move of businesses to out of town locations, seen as more accessible by car than entering the city centre.

Within the city, the distribution of the population across the wards of the city varies greatly, with one of the lowest population densities (27 p/ha) found in Sutton ward, covering much of the city centre. In the areas immediately surrounding the city centre, much higher densities of up to 70 p/ha can be seen in the wards of Mount Gould, Drake, and Stoke.

Over the past decade, the South West region has experienced significant in-migration of economically active people looking for greater quality of life, as well

as those of retirement age. Conversely, the region is a net exporter of 16-24 year olds, losing much of its youth investment to other parts of the country. This process has been particularly marked in Plymouth, where 20-24 and 25-29 year old categories have declined 31% and 35% respectively between 1991 and 2001. The decline of the youth population highlights wider concerns that Plymouth is not performing the role of an economically sustainable city.

In essence it seems to fall way short of its potential offer for lifestyle, workplace and urban attractor that this uniquely positioned and naturally endowed waterside City should be able to provide to a waiting population. In an age of electronic communication changes in work patterns have reduced the need for every day commuting. This permits new migrants to the City to retain a work connection with London and South East. The quality of life and natural environment that the City offers provides the opportunity for new waves of population migration increasing substantially its urban population over the next twenty years. The pressure for space and the cost of living is such in the South East that estimates of 100,000 additional population over the next 20 years do not seem to be unreasonable.

Creating a City with a population of 300 - 350,000 is an aspiration of our vision.

Transport

The city is located on the border of the Devon and Cornwall peninsular, it is served by the dual carriageway A38 connecting to the M5 at Exeter and onwards to, Bristol, Birmingham, South Wales and London. Despite the distance the city is clearly connected both to the north, the south east and the south west. These strategic routes set journey time connections to Bristol of 1.5 - 2 hours, London 3 - 4 hours.

The airport at Plymouth provides hub connection to London but limited service to Europe. The existing airport located within the city is constrained by the length of the runway.

Through the duration of this study we have in public meetings reinforced the importance of an airport connection into Europe to enable the city to take its place in the hierarchy of European cities that we consider to be the macro-urban structure around which the economic framework of Europe will increasingly function.

The centre of the city is the magnet for bus and coach services that serve both outlying suburbs of the city and towns throughout Devon and Cornwall. This service reinforces the importance of the city as a centre for health, education, retailing and leisure. The tradition of public transport with the existing population of the city provides a relatively high ridership. Proposals included within the plan have incorporated fixed link public transport routes from the station down to the Hoe on a north-south shuttle and east west from the East End through the City Centre to Devonport should be further developed into a strategic fixed link system.

To support the strategy of reducing car dependence within the centre of the city the development of quality bus services leading to introduction of a framework of fixed link tram / light rail is an essential infrastructure investment. This supports the vision objectives of reinforcement of the city centre and development of its capacity for both residential and business accommodation, and the infrastructure will permit the new areas of development at Millbay, Devonport and Royal William Yard to flourish. Without such investment the city will continue to rely on the private car, and bear the associated impacts on quality of life, public space, and poor pedestrian movement.

Property

In line with national trends, the residential property market in Plymouth has consistently surged in recent years. Significantly, recent developments in the waterfront areas of the city have reached record values for Plymouth, and demonstrate the appetite at the higher end of the market for quality and contemporary urban living. The development of Royal William Yard by Urban Splash epitomises such opportunity and providing this nature of accommodation is essential to the process of attracting business investment.

Conversely, the nature of the post-war reconstruction of the city centre as a predominantly retail estate has largely precluded opportunities for living within the very heart. The impact of this historic zoning is clearly evident in the empty and quiet city streets outside of shopping hours, devoid of any leisure or service functions. The proximity of the University has influenced the residential conversion of a small number of buildings within the Abercrombie footprint, but there is still much capacity unused within the upper floors of many retail units. The Draft Local Plan addresses this issue with provision for mixed use development on three major sites, but the key task is to find a typology of development and public space that generates quality and desirable living space sufficient to challenge perceptions and meet demand.

It is unfortunate that the mindset of both developers and City has tended to permit development to take place to the lowest common denominator of quality. This has perpetuated a run down feel to the city centre and reinforced the view that this secondary accommodation for students or for budget hotels is the only option for the estate. The point is further exacerbated by the development of awarding winning buildings in fringe locations.

Retail

Within the post-war city centre Plymouth contains around 1.4 million sq ft of retail floorspace much of which is within pedestrianised areas. This volume of retail space secures Plymouth's position as a sub-regional shopping centre, and many major stores are represented including Dingles (House of Fraser), Derrys, Marks & Spencer and Debenhams. The prime retail area is centred around New George Street, although quality decreases notably moving north. Although vacancy rates are reasonably low, it is clearly evident that space within the retail core of the city is under utilised, and this is confirmed in the Urban Capacity Study.

One of the key impacts of the volume of retail floorspace has been large scale provision of car parking in the city centre. The perceived isolation of the city centre from the surrounding areas of the city appears to fuel the reliance on private vehicles.

Office

Plymouth provides a major role as a service centre for the far South West region, with more than 70% of employment in the service sector (Census of Employment, 2001) - financial services, health, public admin, and education are the largest sub-sectors. Recent strengths in the bio-medical and research and development markets have been attributed to Plymouth's quality of life offer, and will be crucial to sustaining future growth.

Office provision is largely in the area immediately surrounding the city centre shopping precinct, although recent commercial development has focused on the out of town business park locations. In town, rental levels have increased over the last 18 months from £8 ft² to £10 ft², whilst out of town rents are higher at around £12 ft². Providing the right conditions and opportunities for occupiers to choose the city centre rather than out of town locations will be a key hurdle to overcome in the process of regenerating the heart of the city. Ongoing discussions with major employers such as the Department for Work and Pensions looking to occupy 80,000 ft² adjacent to the Civic Centre are positive in this regard, although attention should also be given to attracting smaller businesses to occupy components of mixed use developments.

Leisure - tourism

Plymouth currently acts as a destination for mostly short-stay tourists, often attracted to the city as an excursion from longer stay trips in the region. The tourist offer in Plymouth is based on heritage and history, shopping, leisure attractions such as the National Marine Aquarium, and opportunities to visit peripheral sites such as Mount Edgecumbe Country Park. The National Marine Aquarium attracts the largest visitor numbers in the city, with 425,000 visitors in 2002.

Current trends in the tourism industry towards greater demands for quality short-term breaks with increasing emphasis on the natural environment place Plymouth in a strong position to improve and market its credentials as an outstandingly well

situated city. Realising this opportunity through the development of the waterfront is placed at the heart of the MBM strategy.

The opportunity

In our opinion there is a direct correlation between the possibilities that the historic form of the City Centre has created and a programme of intensification. This intensification will incorporate the wider range of uses to include residential uses within the City Centre.

The redevelopment in the 50's and 60's from the 1943 plan of reconstruction was carried out following the traditional leasing structure for town centres. This structure retained the City Council as freeholder who granted building leases to developers who in turn constructed and let the accommodation on rack rents. These investments were subsequently sold to institutions. These passive investing institutions remain as investors in receipt of the rental income. From the CB Hillier Parker review of the City Centre in 2000 these head lessors number approx 13.

The single City Council retained ownership of this 90 acre, (36 hectare) site at the heart of the City has the key component to permit its transformation.

We have identified this heartland site of 36 hectares at the centre of the City, laid out on an exemplary grid, with buildings 50 years old, occupied predominantly for shopping / retail with a handful of investors controlling its future as a 'strength for the city' and a key opportunity for renewal.

Plymouth has the huge advantages of its waterfront location, which other cities, Liverpool, Newcastle, Barcelona, Genoa and London Docklands have all exploited by supporting inward investment and taking advantage of their unique environments generated by their respective waterfronts. Plymouth has proved this to an extent with the waterfront developments at Sutton Harbour, the Royal William Yard development and other developments on the Hoe.

The catchment area to the east back into Devon and to the west into Cornwall consists of small settlements where demand for housing far outstrips supply, which has pushed up prices. The environmental constraints and limited capacities of these small settlements ensures that supply is constrained and prices continue to escalate.

The demand in these areas with expanding population of locals, weekenders, and retired folk all point to the potential for the urban City Centre to grow. It needs to be developed with a style and imagination that is missing from the current approach. Plymouth, as a principal urban area of the region, must positively capture this demand and thrive upon it.

Our vision looks forward 20 years and the development assumptions follow that timeframe.

We see the City Centre as a parallel with the regeneration that has taken place in northern cities such as, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle and Leeds where 20 years ago the city centres were deserted with large derelict warehouses awaiting refurbishment - now these areas have been rejuvenated with mixed use schemes of inner city loft living, bars, studios and galleries. They have remarkably rekindled an excitement of living at their hearts

With the City of Plymouth a similar opportunity exists, but in this case the requirement is more for redevelopment at densities that support the urban context. This calls for imagination and a quality of architecture and place making that can capture the imagination of the population migrating inwards to live in the city centre.

We see an opportunity for dense development of mid rise and occasional towers positioned within the Abercrombie grid. It is an opportunity unique to the UK's historic cities for high rise living, looking out across the city to the waterfront, taking the benefit of the topography over the natural valleys that lead down to the Barbican and out through to Millbay. We see this as an opportunity to create a 'Mini Manhattan' of the south West consisting of residential towers, mixed use, retail, restaurants and bars, and offices.

Lifting spirits, raising expectation and demanding the best of architecture, design and development, ensuring that imagination and vision respect and respond to the opportunity and potential that is offered by this unique waterside city will ensure that within the term of the 20 year vision it fulfils its place within the European cities of equal size.

Chapter 3 - The MBM Vision

Chapter 3.1 Plymouth is an outstanding waterfront city

One could say without doubt that Plymouth has one of most enviable locations of any city in the world. The views across the waters of the Sound and the rolling green hills to both the east and west of the city provide a setting of outstanding natural beauty. Rarely does a city and its citizens have the opportunity to establish a close and intimate relationship with the surrounding high quality landscape.

The waterfront has long been the leading element of this landscape - it could be described as the frontage to the landscape and façade to the City. It has provided for the industrial and military economy that fuelled the growth of the city, and has more recently transformed much of this heritage into a major tourist offer. Demand for leisure facilities continues to grow as the reliance of industry on the water wanes - the busy calendar of water-based events and demand for moorings in the city's marinas exemplifies this. In marketing terms, the waterfront is Plymouth's 'USP' - its unique selling point. The evidence of high value, premium residential sales within the urban area has to date concentrated on the waterfront. It also plays a significant role in the economy of the sub-region, maintaining activities from operational ports to marine science research.

The city waterfront is currently defined by a number of attractions - buildings, events, spaces that each draw and recreate their own activity. In areas where such attractions cluster, as at Sutton Harbour, the product is a lively and dynamic mixed use 'quarter', which becomes a recognisable and self-sustainable piece of the city. Other 'pieces' of the waterfront present their own story - the recent development of Royal William Yard, the refurbishment of Tinside Pool, the Mount Batten Centre, the Theatre Royal Workshops - yet the picture is somehow not complete, and there is no one element that holds the waterfront together. The challenge at the city scale, and therefore the challenge for this vision, is to look beyond the 'quarter' and propose a spatial strategy through which the existing fragments and the future opportunities of the whole waterfront can achieve a *critical mass that both defines and drives the vitality of the city centre.*

We envisage the waterfront of Plymouth as an 'arc' - a curved spine of activity loosely flowing east-west and drawing the influence of the water back into the city. As the leading structural element of the city, it is on this that we can base our repair of the city form. Our vision for this form is guided by three underlying principles - movement, attraction and relationship.

Movement - a waterfront of motion

The waterfront is historically a place of movement and transport - from the departure of the Mayflower in 1620, to the current ferry operations serving mainland Europe, Plymouth embodies the atmosphere of both embarking on adventure and of destination and arrival. For many European visitors, Plymouth's waterfront may be the first and last piece of Great Britain that they see.

This strategic gateway function of the waterfront must be enhanced through the provision of improved port infrastructure as part of the development process at Millbay. Providing the facilities to support cruise ships and the vital input they can bring to the local economy needs to be balanced with the meeting the demand of high-value residential properties on the waterside. Locating such facilities at Millbay could provide a vital energy to the area, and help balance activity with the established and successful Sutton Harbour.

But movement is not simply about arriving and departing on long journeys - it is more often a journey from home to work, from work to shop and eat or drink, or a trip for recreational or social arrangements. Many such trips could be accommodated by an improved water transport service, and would not only potentially reduce road-based movement, but would also provide a vital passenger base to a water service also targeting tourist requirements. We have taken recommendations from the Marine Transport Study and developed them into potential landing points for a new and improved water transport service.

The waterfront should also be a promenade for pleasure and delight where people can simply walk or cycle between events and attractions, and this requires commitment to the public realm. From the strategic South West Coast Path to local connections such as from the Hoe to Millbay, the form of development and the definition of the public space are crucial to enabling and encouraging people to enjoy the city on foot.

Attraction - a waterfront where all citizens can find their place

If Plymouth is to succeed in drawing its own citizens and others from further afield to experience and enjoy the waterfront, then there must be sufficient activities and attractions to satisfy the urban explorer.

Many successful attractions exist on the waterfront - the National Marine Aquarium is Plymouth's top attraction, with nearly half a million visitors in 2002. Our vision is to develop this tourist offer - we propose two major opportunities - but also to consider with equal importance the smaller scale attractions - events, spaces, viewing points, moments, which define the unique character of Plymouth.

We see much of the opportunity for an improved tourist offer between Millbay and Sutton Harbour, and for this reason we have made recommendations for the Hoe Foreshore. The process of regenerating Millbay will not only create a series of vibrant places, but crucially for the city will provide a new dynamic between the two harbours, placing new emphasis and demand on the area between them, and completing the urban 'circuit'.

For those who wish to venture further afield to Royal William Yard, Devonport, or Mount Edgecumbe the water transport system in itself should prove an attraction.

Relationship - a waterfront that respects the city beyond

As the premium location in the city, the waterfront has a responsibility to take the lead in the process of change. Attracting new residents, businesses, and tourists requires the supply of quality buildings and spaces.

But the waterfront, and the premium for living, working, and playing that it holds belongs to the civic realm, not the private. For the waterfront to feed a positive impact back into the city requires attention to the form of the streets and buildings, and the nature of the uses contained within them. In historic locations such as Plymouth, this relationship or inclusion can often be found in the urban forms that were generated from a different set of cultural, social, and economic values, and it is to these lost forms that we can look for guidance.

In summary the City of Plymouth benefits from an extraordinary waterside setting that competes with other waterside cities throughout the UK and Europe. These competing Cities have used their setting and their architecture to establish their credibility on a world stage - Genoa the European City of Culture 2004 - Liverpool the European City of Culture 2008 - it is for Plymouth to build upon the MBM vision to establish itself rightly within the same firmament.

Chapter 3.2 - Invigorating the Abercrombie Plan

Many people may find it strange that others think that the city centre lacks an urban atmosphere. On most afternoons, and especially a Thursday or a Saturday on a fine day, it presents a lively crowd of shoppers strolling from side to side and street to street. In some places so full that one can hardly move. So what does it mean "an urban atmosphere" and why is it wanted?

The answer is simple. The plan by Watson and Abercrombie was not carried through as planned with multi-storey buildings giving an appropriate enclosure to the wide streets (they now appear very suburban) which would help to give proper weather protection and provide upper floors for other uses. The blocks of buildings are too long; Watson and Abercrombie planned more frequent North South links to make it easier to go from one street to another. The interior of the blocks were for service access to the shops but with gardens. In other words an urban atmosphere means variety. That classic popular song of the 60s "Downtown" sung by Petula Clark celebrates the many opportunities to meet people and discover things by going downtown. A city the size of Plymouth deserves a downtown for everyone, not just one age group. And that is what this vision is about for the city centre - to make it a real downtown, and not just a successful open air shopping centre. It needs a 24 hour life (with residents) for restaurants, pubs, specialised shops, choice of entertainment and culture and places for quietness but enough activity - with buses, taxis, cars, etc - to make it feel safe.

Watson and Abercrombie's plan for the city centre is, to use a rather hackneyed phrase, the "jewel of the crown" of modern English town planning. It must be conserved, not as a fossil but rather alive to the present circumstances and shift in cultural values. In other words, we must identify its soft or weak parts, where we can act, and re-adjust to balance the poles of attraction where people will want to go. The significance of this opportunity should not be constrained by protectionist policies - it is the nature of the grid structure that must be respected and responded to through the densification of the plots, and the recovery of permeability.

The Vision - Downtown

A released city centre - Plymouth city centre is freed from its triangular traffic collar, allowing the economic, social and cultural energies to circulate through the body of the city. Western Approach, Cobourg Street, Charles Street, and Royal Parade become 'Avenues' with central pedestrian or green strips, and pedestrian crossings at surface level. Car parking facilities are removed from the centre of the city blocks, and re-focused on the edges, where existing facilities are underused.

A connected city centre - Redevelopment of large sites around the edge of the city centre allows new buildings and spaces to recover lost relationships with surrounding neighbourhoods. Movement across the city centre is improved, with cars and pedestrians sharing the horizontal streets at all but the busiest shopping hours. The original purpose of Armada Way - a grand vista linking the train station to the Hoe - is recovered through a simplified landscape design, with movement enhanced by the introduction of a public transport link.

A diversified city centre - Comprehensive redevelopment of the blocks either side of Cornwall Street provides a new focus - a 'living street' of intensity defined by a series of tall buildings, with lanes of living, working, leisure and retail space to the north and south. The finer grain of building provides increased retail frontage on a human scale, with flexibility for office and residential accommodation above.

A defined city centre - Above all, the city centre is no longer defined by its isolation and retail use - it is defined by its varied architecture that exploits the rigidity of the grid - its tall buildings with upper floors providing stunning views of the city and water - its grand gateways from both water and land - its weekend tourists who come to enjoy the waterfront walks and the rich history and culture.

Chapter 4 The Plan Elements

4.1 Millbay

Millbay has been identified in our study as representative of one of the greatest opportunities for the future transformation and thus a key contributor to the future success of Plymouth. We have analysed the complex interactions between port operation requirements and the adjacent presence of the military, and proposals for strategic-level mixed used development.

We have proposed an infrastructure and development strategy that will both transform Millbay and also generate a new magnet of urban regeneration supporting the economic development of the south western corner of the city centre. In the context of our Plymouth strategy, Millbay represents the lost relationship between the city core and its waterfront. Millbay is therefore important for the very nature of the opportunity it presents, the locus for change that it offers.

Our approach to Millbay has been informed by the Area Regeneration Strategy completed by Lacey Hickie Caley Architects, and is sensitive to the proposals outlined in the Plymouth City Council Draft Local Plan.

Our summarised analysis of the physical form, and the various interests in the area are as follows:

1. Whilst acknowledging the critical role of the port facility for the economy of the city and region, the location of the access road - wrapping itself around the inner basin - precludes a meaningful relationship between Millbay, the area in transition immediately north, and beyond to Union Street. Millbay itself is a strategic opportunity, but its success should be measured on the wider influence that it can impact upon the city.
2. The constraint imposed by the military occupation of land on the west side of the harbour currently prevents any development, and also complicates the issue of access to the grain silos. In the process of producing a long term vision for the area, we believe it is necessary to challenge this position, and consider future uses for this land in relationship to the more immediate task.

3. Optimising the ability for east Millbay to become a new neighbourhood rather than an enclave will require meaningful connections and interactions with existing, established neighbourhoods. In physical terms, this reinforces the need to integrate the new development form with the area of West Hoe and beyond, and with Union Street to the north.
4. Creating an environment to sustain commercial elements of mixed use development will require careful consideration of the nature of the public space.
5. To capture the opportunity for the City, the regeneration of Millbay must respect and relate to the City, and not solely to the opportunity for waterfront development.

The proposal

Access & traffic

In the pursuit of more economic use of the high value land adjacent to the inner basin, and the realisation of improved connections between Millbay and the areas of great potential to the north, we propose a new vehicle entrance to the port area. This route, located along the existing Battery Street axis and passing underneath Millbay Road, will consolidate vehicle access to the port and marine industry on the west side of the harbour. Whilst the detailed engineering and traffic implications of this intervention will need examining in detail, we see the concept of this route solving four fundamental problems:

1. The connection of the inner basin with the areas to the north
2. The need to maximise development opportunity on the waterfront sites
3. The need to provide traffic *options* that relieve pressure on the north-east connecting route to the city
4. The need to provide for a public transport corridor that can feed through the heart of Millbay

The Connection to the City

As described above there is a dialectic relationship between Millbay and the City Centre, a result of geography and industrial history, that has now been largely eroded. We see the repair of Millbay and the repair of the City Centre as two interrelated processes that require the direct creation of a link that is both legible, and multi-modal.

Primarily, we seek to achieve this through the creation of a boulevard along the axis of the existing Bath Street, replacing the Pavilions. To retain an essential element of character in the area we envisage a number of the finer existing buildings on the north-west façade to remain incorporated within the development. Forming the opposite façade is a three or four storey building, with the potential to accommodate taller forms within it to mark the procession down to the harbour, and also provide residences with appropriate water views. The boulevard should prove attractive for retail, leisure, and business space on the lower floors, with significant residential opportunity above. To the south of the boulevard, we see potential for the development of an urban business park typology - effectively a two or three storey form at the rear of the boulevard. Balanced between the cultural provisions of Derry's Cross, and the mixed use Millbay waterfront quarter, this site may have potential to attract office development in the future.

The second connection to the City Centre is achieved through the recovery of the historic route of Millbay Road, incorporated in the redevelopment of Derry's Cross. This route, marked by views of the Civic Centre and the Clock Tower, will inform the relationship between the proposed office development, the two existing hotels, and the City Centre beyond. This route may be achievable in advance of the Bath Street boulevard, and will therefore serve as an interim strategic connection with Millbay.

Besides these connections to the City Centre two strong major links to Union Street are proposed. The Battery Street for direct access to the port slipping under Millbay Road mentioned above, and Phoenix Street by the Old Palace Theatre which would be more pedestrian friendly.

The inner basin

We have incorporated within our design the proposal for a marine industry facility (approx 4,000m²) adjacent to the port area of the inner basin, to both enliven the basin with vessel activity, and act as a visual 'buffer' to the port operation. In determining the detailed design and height of this building, consideration must be given to views from the public space at the heart of the eastern side of the harbour to the peninsula, Royal William Yard, and Mount Edgecumbe beyond.

Feeding down from the upper level of Millbay Road, we have suggested a typology of 'finger' blocks that echo the traditional slipways and pier structures of dockside installations, and provide a new visual and physical connection with the Union Street area. These "fingers" or piers are envisaged to contain 'loft' type accommodation over 2 / 3 storeys lifted above the quay and Inner basin on stilts with an undercarriage at quay level for commerce, restaurants, etc. and preserving views of the harbour and Drake's Island from the development behind.

At the intersection of the new boulevard and the inner basin we have shown a public space of city-wide significance, defined sufficiently by quality surrounding buildings with active ground floor uses. It is not for this stage of study to propose designs for such a space, but we feel it will be important to preserve elements of the industrial heritage within the materials and form of the public space design.

The Inner basin, provided with a lock to retain the high water level, could provide a marina with an additional canal through the Glasgow Wharf leading to the triangular piece of water by the East Quay for 250 moorings. This would provide an attractive and active activity to the series of public spaces along the Quays.

The northern development

Beyond Millbay Road to the North, we propose a series of U-shaped buildings fronted to the south by a major area of landscaping. These would accommodate residential dwellings with communal gardens and swimming pools facing the strip of pocket public parks and views across the Sound.

Based on proposals by a local community group with a keen interest for music, we support the old Palace Theatre (now known as The Academy) in Union Street be developed to house a large auditorium. On the north side of Sawrey Street studios and workshops could accommodate facilities for teaching and practicing, recording, etc. Immediately south of the Palace Theatre and forming part of the U-shaped urban buildings there could be a smaller concert hall with a public space facing the harbour for outside events.

The east side & the piers

Representing the core residential element of Millbay, we propose a series of blocks arranged loosely perpendicular to the water, allowing excellent connections to the existing neighbourhood of West Hoe, and providing the stimulus for future redevelopment of the TA site. These blocks are shaped to afford wide distribution and variety of views, and would incorporate the sectional change in level, rising from perhaps four floors above podium level, to two storeys at the Hoe Road façade. Substantial parking would be accommodated under the podium of the development, making use again of the height differential, and could be accessed from West Hoe Road. At ground level on the waterside, these buildings would accommodate bars and restaurants, with outdoor seating areas on the dockside similar to the Olympic Port in Barcelona.

The shallow and tidal nature of the mid-basin led to suggestions that it could be infilled to provide more development space, but we see the supply of marina space as crucial to the image and success of the development. We have proposed a retaining wall and a system of locks, which could provide an adequate depth to allow medium size craft into the marina. The inner pier should provide public access, and could house leisure facilities such as a sailing club, or other marine related uses. This is particularly important given the use of Trinity Pier serving as a terminal for cruise ships, and therefore remaining largely private in function.

Moving seaward, we suggest restraint and strict limitation on the development of Millbay pier, and proposed development on the eastern end, preserving views from the wider Millbay area to the sea.

The western side

On the western headland of Millbay, we envisage the opportunity to make use of the famous grain silos as the basis for an international conference centre, which would be built alongside and above the existing structure. Spectacular views of Drake's Island and the Sound would make it one of Britain's most prestigious conference venues. Nearby and on the Eastern King Point a five-star hotel set in landscaped grounds would complement the conference centre. Clearly, this will not be achievable until such time as the military have no requirement for the site.

The development process and impact - recommendations

The proposal requires the construction of the infrastructure necessary to support the development framework. The proposed mechanism of delivery on the scale of the ambition would be through a series of site and development partnerships. The infrastructure would generate the access down Bath Street, relieve port traffic, and improve the setting to the dock -in all creating a clear connection to the city centre and the setting for inward development. The cost of the acquisition and infrastructure works would be partially funded from the development opportunities of sites within the Millbay area.

The proposed development partnerships can only come about when the development agency has invested in the infrastructure and regenerated the public realm which both configures the roads, public spaces, car parks, and identifies the sites and defines the quality and capacity of the individual building blocks that make up the proposed masterplan. Viability in current conditions generate high values and high demand for residential accommodation. The development vision is based upon a mixed use form of development to include restaurants, bars and shopping as well as car parking and office accommodation.

From our analysis of the office market in Plymouth we consider that Millbay provides the 'lifestyle' opportunities that could help foster office for creative businesses, and to some extent an alternative to the office parks at the edge of town and suitable addition to the office stock in the City Centre. In reviewing the success of Sutton Harbour it is clear that very little office accommodation has been created. The vision in terms of the long term sustainability of the Millbay area recognizes the necessity of providing a full range of use and in particular a critical mass of business space to ensure that the redeveloped area can provide employment opportunities for the long term regeneration of the area.

The mechanism of the delivery of the commercial space integrated as it is in the overall development envelopes proposed could take the form of a revenue / capital split in the development outputs.

To give an example of this approach looking at the east side development where uses are predominantly residential together with the public space at the south eastern corner of the dock. Where these uses are more commercial the

development theory would be to use development partners to construct the infrastructure of the whole, with cost contribution from the public sector to fund the infrastructure, capital returns from the completed residential sales funding the construction of the entire mixed use development, with the public sector retaining the income producing / commercial elements and encouraging through subsidized rents the gradual occupation of the commercial elements.

The strategy is founded upon creating supply in front of demand for the commercial supply, funded from the demand for the residential accommodation. Once commercial space has been supplied in attractive and well designed buildings with flexible space sub-divisions marketing the area they encourage the growth of office occupiers.

The MBM vision will be best delivered through a consistent mixed use strategy, the development of a critical early core, generating a sense of place and setting down the blueprint for further future development matched to the demand profile that will become a reality following the success of the first stage.

It is worthy to note that the launch of Royal William Yard generated demand in visitors to the site of some 3,000 applicants in the first launch weekend underwriting to some extent the demand for high quality residential accommodation within the City.

SWRDA, EP and the City Council are in the process of commissioning an Action Plan which will develop a 'clear and optimal framework' for development of Millbay. To assist that process we recommend that consultants consider the following issues that need further work to take forward the MBM vision to the next stage:

1. Identify additional land holding and ownership and identify costs and constraints associated with it for periphery and linking areas encompassed within the vision
2. Identify the development plots and decide on the phasing of their development.
3. Review the delivery approach outlined within the vision and estimate costs of infrastructure works, and associated car parking, and commercial accommodation in a first phase.

4. Prepare outline proposals for development of parcels that accord with the principles of the MBM vision
5. Estimate the market sales generated by elements of the development
6. Determine the public sector funding requirement needed to allow the private sector partners to deliver the first phase.

The City Centre

'The east limb of the ring road is planned to pass eastward of Old Town Street ... forming a "cut-off" from Historic Plymouth'

Plan for Plymouth, p.71

'Time has judged the concept itself to have been far from perfect, so beguiling on the coloured plans but so disappointing on the ground. ... Why do the buildings themselves, save along Royal Parade, seem too thinly spread and too small in scale to create a sense of true urbanism?' (*Urban Panel Review Paper, March 2002*)

We have discussed at length in chapter 2 the unique strengths and weaknesses of the Abercrombie plan. It is a reassuring start to the process of change to have this constraint recognised in the Local Plan, and potential solutions explored further through the City Centre Urban Design Framework. Our approach meshes carefully with these two key documents, as it is both strategic in its assessment of the role of the central area as an essential component of the City, and it is spatial and local in its recommendations for shaping new forms and spaces to address recognised problems.

Our work in the City Centre takes its brief largely from the City-Centre Urban Design Concept Plan and Urban Design Principles within the Local Plan, and presents a development and public realm strategy to explore the realisation of the concepts. The vision for the City Centre focuses on connecting with the adjacent areas, its key policies are:

1. Repairing and remaking connections with all the surrounding areas
2. Reducing the impact on pedestrians and users of the City Centre of the ring road
3. Improving movement within the central area and through to the adjacent areas
4. Positive creation of a mix of land uses within the City Centre to create a more vibrant and sustainable centre

The heart of the City - an exploration of intensity

The transition in quality of the built environment is clearly visible as one moves south through the City Centre. As commented upon in the above quote, whereas Royal Parade succeeds in delivering the high quality architecture and environment envisaged in Abercrombie's plan, much of the area to the north is of low quality, and of a density, use and form that fails to provide a sense of urbanity.

Taking the two large blocks allocated for comprehensive redevelopment between Mayflower Street and New George Street (west side), we propose a fundamental reworking of the building morphology within, and respecting, the historic grid. The form of the Abercrombie super block with its perimeter development of shopping and its service yard to the rear is transformed with a series of north-south routes running between New George Street, Mayflower Street and Cornwall Street. These routes are based upon a grid dimension of 20 metres for the development and 10 metres for the width of the road. The building frontages are arranged in alternative strips providing a route for servicing, car parking, rear entrances to upper parts and mews-style offices / studios, alternated with extension of the shopping frontage through to the cross streets. This subdivision will both increase footfall and zone 'A' frontages.

The form of the development being based upon four-storey terrace on frontages of approx 10 metres will provide flexible elements of accommodation, robust enough to sustain changes in demand and programme - we envisage residential on the upper floors, with retail and business functions on the lower floors. This is a new grain of development for the City Centre that aims to provide a level of intricacy and freedom of movement that has been lost in the realisation of Abercrombie's plan.

Defining this new city neighbourhood and exploiting the opportunity for intensity, a series of tall buildings are suggested to be located along Cornwall Street. Primarily residential, these would provide stunning views across the city to the sea in the distance. Where poor quality buildings exist on the eastern side of Armada Way, it is proposed to consider the extension of this model, providing a 'living strip' of mixed use activity from Frankfurt Gate on the west, through to the University on the east.

At the northern end of Armada Way we have suggested, for consideration, the establishment of two cultural buildings that will mark the entrance to the city, working alongside the proposal for the cultural quarter around the University on North Hill.

The edges of the City Centre

The two southern corners of the City Centre precinct, as the gateways from both east and west and the key connecting points with the waterfront, require specific attention to their form.

Derry's Cross

At Derry's Cross, recent developments have reinforced the function of this area as a culture and leisure focus, yet it remains largely impermeable from the south, and has a poor relationship with Millbay, and the older hotels marking Millbay Road. Re-establishing the historic route of Millbay Road, we propose completing the open block to the north with parking located within the central area. The site opposite provides an opportunity for a contemporary office building, which could incorporate parking at sub-basement level making use of the change in levels across the site. Emerging proposals for the development of the Civic Centre car park site contribute to this vision of Derry's Cross as a lively area for working, leisure, and culture.

Defining the heart of this western end of Royal Parade we propose a civic square, marking the significance of the interface between Union St and the City Centre, and the new neighbourhood of Millbay to the south, and providing adequate space for possible LRT and bus interchange. Proposals for the redevelopment of Colin Campbell Court are emerging as we produce this document, and should respond to the challenge of addressing the ring road in a more urban manner whilst improving the permeability of the block to the east.

Bretonside

Bretonside, on the south-eastern edge of the City Centre, presents a poorer urban environment, directly hindering the relationship with Sutton Harbour. Also at this key entrance point to the City, we find Charles Cross Church, the memorial to those citizens who died in the blitz, now abandoned and downgraded to the realm of the highway.

Re-routing the A374 to release Charles Cross Church and providing a pedestrian link to it - effectively offering it back to the people of Plymouth - are the first steps towards recovering a sense of place in this lost location. One hopes that emerging transport systems such as Light Rapid Transit can redress the current imbalance of private vehicle usage and make the creation of more pedestrian space, for the people, a reality.

The current commercial interest in the redevelopment of Bretonside is welcomed. Our plan for this area reduces traffic along Exeter Street to two lanes, converting this elevated structure into a public place which would filter down into the Barbican alongside rows of stepped buildings, perpendicular to Exeter Street.

We envisage the operation of the coach station to re-locate to a new integrated transport hub at the railway station. It is important that decision on this element in the plan is given some priority to ensure the emerging Bretonside proposals use the additional development opportunity to contribute to the costs of this re location.

The form of our proposals for the Bretonside site ensure cohesion and legibility between the University area, the proposed P&O shopping mall, and the bustling activity of Sutton Harbour and the Barbican. In the long term, the eventual removal of the rather ill-considered Staples building would create a broad sloping square of civic scale, providing an appropriate setting and approach for both Charles Church, and the Barbican.

This is one of the key arcs of connection that form the basic tenet of the plan, that is the link from the University / cultural quarter, south through the new Drakes Circus development and south down through Bretonside to the Sutton Harbour and the Barbican.

The University

On the north-eastern boundary of the City Centre lies the University of Plymouth, where, once again, we discover the legacy of Abercrombie's plan has left a problematic relationship between two fundamental pieces of city. The combination of the scale and form of the highway arrangement, and the downgrading of the pedestrian to subways loses much of the potential for the energy of the University activity to influence and animate the city. It is also not just the University that connects with the city at this point, but rather the neighbourhoods of Mutley and beyond.

Our proposal here delivers two basic principles, which take forward ideas presented to us in the previous study by Llewellyn Davies, and the work currently underway to produce a University Development Framework.

Firstly, the connection between the two halves of the campus, bisected by the unnecessarily barriered highway of North Hill, should be improved. We believe that the reduction of the width of North Hill and the removal of the central pedestrian barriers should be a priority for further detailed study. Existing strong facades on both sides of North Hill, coupled with the fine Sherwell Church and Portland Square building provide the opportunity for a new public space focused on North Hill, providing a heart to the University, and a catalyst to drive further interaction between the realms of public and institution. The proposed redevelopment of the Rowe Street site by the University is an important first stage of realising this vision, and must consciously contribute to its shaping.

Secondly, we must improve the connection of the University with the City Centre. The concept that is applied here is to rationalise the design of the current road, to present a human scale street that will support pedestrian movement as well as vehicular. Our premise here is re-allocation - a boulevard style street with a central pedestrian walkway that enables people to cross at points they choose, and stroll, run, rest in the central area provided. This is a 30mph road, not a motorway, and two lanes of traffic travelling in one direction is safer to cross than two lanes of opposing traffic.

We have applied this principle to the Western Approach road also, in pursuit of the same goals. If the City Centre is to succeed as a destination for more than shopping

- a place to live, work, and play, then the perception and physical reality of the 'Retail Island' must be eroded.

Capacity

The vision has identified land parcels allocated for transformation in draft planning reports and others identified by ourselves as 'soft sites'. These are sites that could be capable of redevelopment at higher densities. The vision reflects upon this analysis and provides a strategic approach to appropriate blocks of development across the city centre and adjacent areas. They are shown on the accompanying plans coloured maroon. The development envelope has been assessed in relation to these footprint areas and approximation of building heights and suitable proportion of uses. It is important to note that the capacities have not been based upon ownership information and thus have assumed that site assembly would be undertaken to fit the urban design principles outlined in the vision.

Implementation Recommendations

The city centre benefits from a series of development initiatives that are in progress - Drakes Circus, Bretonside - developments that are nearing completion - the Travelodge at Derry's Cross, student housing on Royal Parade and at Cobourg Street, and sites that have been assembled with emerging development proposals at Colin Campbell Court and the Civic Centre car park.

Our concern in looking at the implementation is to manage a step change in the expectation for the City Centre.

The vision lays out that the key move for the regeneration of Plymouth is to reinvigorate the City Centre - it is the single most important element in transforming the sense of the place. It is the need for the quality offer to apply equally to retail, leisure, bars, restaurants, office and residential.

In our analysis we have found strong division of function with the management of the City Centre. We feel that this condition has hampered an integrated process of regenerating the core. This division of function between highways, landlord, planning, urban design, bus operator, licensing authority and car park operator have encouraged independent territories to act in competition with each other.

We would point out that there is a danger that a continuation of this approach could leave the City Centre 'forever languishing in the mire of the mediocre'.

The vision has posed a new and altogether braver future, one which belongs to the heritage of this proud waterside city.

New methodologies of partnership structures now exist within the regeneration industry, that align private sector and public sector interests, that respect the views of the community, that provide a new infrastructure of both transport and public space, that generate new possibilities of development use and form and that set new standards of design excellence. Our recommendation will focus on possible options to investigate these integrated development vehicles further.

It is clear that following the vision public and political opinion is needed to support and drive the City forward to meet the aspiration of the plan.

Chapter 4.3 Sutton Harbour

Historically Sutton Harbour is Plymouth's fishing harbour, which is still commercially very active, with its new market providing fresh fish to many of the small restaurants around the harbour, as well as exports to the rest of the country. This authentic activity is the harbour's greatest charm, besides giving work to related workshops and warehouses. It is obvious that any development must be subsidiary to this historic and ongoing activity - it is the civilian equivalent to the naval bases in Devonport and Cattewater.

Marine commerce remains active up the river Plym and helps sustain an important industrial and work area to the East of Sutton Harbour.

The old town neighbourhood of the Barbican beneath the shadow of the military Citadel, retains its medieval charm having escaped damage from the war and postwar development, and today is Plymouth's main centre of attraction for citizens and tourists alike. The new lock has allowed an impressive marina to be installed in the Pool and there is now an ongoing demand for new accommodation around the harbour itself.

The economic vitality of Sutton Harbour provides one of the key opportunities to carefully encourage a metastasis spreading out from the success of the actual quays.

There are three areas around Sutton Harbour that need careful architectural composition in order to avoid spoiling the attraction of the harbour edge - an edge threatened with the danger of creating an exclusive front wall of high buildings that will not allow views to the harbour and preventing a perception that the areas behind also belong to it. The three areas: (1) The East Quays, (2) the link to the City Centre via the Charles Church memorial and Bretonside, and (3) finally the wharfs leading up to Fisher's Nose to the south, are the spot-lights of our strategic approach and vision.

Although the Sutton Harbour Company has been, and still will be, the main economic driver, its property lines should not be the ultimate determining factor in the future street and building layout. The opportunity is to build upon the success

of the Sutton Harbour model to inform the development of a sustainable surrounding neighbourhood.

Our approach has been informed by the early studies of the architects Form Design Group and has developed in coordination with the Interim Planning Statements and Concept Plan prepared by the Sutton Partnership this year for the Local Development Framework.

The proposal

a) The East Quays

The proposals follow main spine routes identified by the Local Development Framework (LDF), Sutton Road leading into Commercial Road, and the Barbican Approach. The additional grid system of streets also coincided with our own proposals with only one or two differences. To this spine structure a third has been added in our proposal which is a tree-lined pedestrian Broadwalk that runs southwards from the west side of Beaumont House to the quay of Marrowbone Slip and on to China House. This provides a real and perceptive link to Beaumont Park and the neighbours above close to the University residential areas.

The quay along Marrowbone Slip, facing west and the afternoon sun, sheltered from the east winds, should be at least 30 m deep with a double row of trees in front of the buildings. This would allow open terraces for the restaurants and bars in the summer and for the rest of the year glazed winter rooms extending into this space. The design could also absorb a certain amount of temporary car-parking. The heights of the buildings should not be more than six floors with a recessed penthouse.

The existing Marrowbone Slip would be filled in to create this new quay. The two buildings facing this quay form part of two city blocks, one large one small, containing community gardens. The larger one has two bridge-buildings (for offices) over Sutton Road. This will have the important effect of reducing Sutton Road as a perceptive barrier in the new neighbourhood.

To the north of this larger city block is a broad street 30 m wide with a wide pavement on the north side to capture the sun. This broad street leads eastwards

to St John's church which will be seen from Sutton Wharf on the west side of the Pool. It is envisaged that this broad street will act as a High Street with local shops, banks, etc for the new neighbourhood. The area between Clove Place and Barbican approach could be cleared for a future primary school.

Coxside Creek, which contains the main body of fishing vessels, next to the fish market, is the terminal point of the Barbican approach. It is here that significant buildings should be situated. So, two 18 floor high towers are proposed each with an extended triangular ground floor base that follows the access street parallel to Sutton Road. These towers will give a metropolitan scale to Sutton Harbour on the East Side and form a visual landmark from the Barbican approach. These two towers, for offices, dwellings, hotel, etc, will be sufficient to establish an active meeting place by the quays together with the fish market and Aquarium nearby.

In front of the Barbican Leisure Park, with its cinemas and bowling alley, and between Gashouse Lane and Commercial Road a lineal park on an earth wall could protect the development to the west from the service façade of the Leisure Park.

The nearby East End, which is being intelligently renovated and restored on the eastern side of Cattedown Road, can be linked to Sutton Harbour by extending St John's Road to bridge over Gydnia Way to connect with Mainstone Avenue. The bridge would have to rise gently higher over the Sunken Gydnia Way to make this possible. St John's Road, it should be remembered, will now be linked to the new "square" or High Street in Sutton Harbour.

The total built area could be in the region of 150,000 m² the equivalent of 15,000 dwellings or work areas. On-street parking would be supplemented by underground parking for residents.

b) Link to the City Centre

The link to the city centre is focused on two adjoining areas: the Bretonside bus station and Charles Church, both of which are discussed in the City Centre chapter of this report.

Critically, it is recommended that the future development should provide several pedestrian routes between Exeter Street and Bretonside to create the perception

of a large public square containing several buildings at least six floors high related to Essex Street. It would be appreciated if an additional visual link be established between Buckwell Street and the Spire of Charles Church.

Charles Church has already been referred to previously but the importance of the restoration of its setting and impact must be underlined, not only as a memorial but as an essential knuckle in the proposed articulated link between the Barbican - Sutton Harbour and the City Centre. This implies the difficult task of recovering the Staples and Bingo building recently built. Sometimes the removal of one single building can do more for the "happiness" of the city than 50 new ones. This is a challenging aspiration that will require a step-change in market conditions to drive the transformation, or the long term redundancy of the structure. Observing how the will of the city and its citizens have achieved similar objectives in other cities it is to be hoped that within the time span of this vision this objective will be achieved. The new tree-lined and sloping public square would provide an ideal place for a sheltered open market, an activity attractive to both the Barbican - Sutton Harbour and the City Centre itself.

Fisher's Nose

The basis of this proposal is inspired in the way previous buildings cuddled around the slipways and wharfs right up against the water.

On the Commercial Wharf, creating a ramped entrance from the north, we could situate the proposed Marine investigation laboratories, housing different institutions, with exhibition areas for the visiting public. Sufficient space has been left for the ferry services.

Behind, and between Lamhay Hill and Madeira Road, the existing car-park should be replaced by terraced housing stepping down the hillside with residential car parking below. Around the slipway a building configuration similar to the former constructions could house a hotel.

On the car-park at Fisher's Nose a square block, with a court open to the water with steps, built to the scale of Plymouth's military constructions could contribute to a fine architectural monument to the entrance to Sutton Harbour. It is envisaged that it would house private dwellings.

On-street car parking could be increased along Madeira Road beyond Fisher's Nose with a slight widening to allow car parking perpendicular to the traffic flow, which of course would have to be a one-way circulation westwards.

Chapter 4.4 The Waterfront - the façade of the City

We have discussed in this report the strategic importance of the key waterfront development sites - Millbay, and Sutton Harbour - and the critical issue of the ability of their development impact to influence areas further inland, particularly through improved physical connection with the city centre.

In light of this strategic influence, capacity, and activity generated by both Millbay and Sutton Harbour, we envisage the Hoe fulfilling a new pivotal role as both a connecting element, and an attractive destination in its own right.

We therefore propose four concepts for the Hoe Foreshore, strengthening this coastal edge and reinforcing the image of the existing route along Madeira Road and Hoe Road. Our proposals also aim to stimulate movement and secure rest and protection along the route.

Access

The Hoe, through its very nature as a geographical feature, presents access difficulties to both vehicles and pedestrians. From our observations, despite its central location the Hoe Foreshore receives many visitors by private vehicle. As an amenity popular with many of the older citizens of Plymouth parking provision is vital.

The first consideration would be to study the section of the road, to investigate the possibility of allowing car parking facing the sea. This would not only allow more people to have access to the Hoe but also allow viewing of the Sound from the car on wet and windy days.

A new focus

The second consideration is to establish two major attractions, one cultural the other scientific: 1) Remodelling the Dome by extending it with a 1,500 m² triangular gallery above for temporary exhibitions. This could be dedicated to Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Plymouth citizen that founded the Royal Academy in London; 2) Establishing a Pavilion dedicated to say Marine Discovery and Investigation with a suitable exhibition area and conference centre in the hollow of West Park. The roof of this Pavilion should be landscaped to merge into the Hoe.

A new façade for the city

The third consideration is to improve the image and definition of the Hoe in the evening and at night. At present, its isolation from the pulse of the city at night gives the area an unsafe and unwelcoming feeling. We would like to see a lighting strategy developed for the length of the Hoe Foreshore, visible from the surrounding hillsides, marking this historic place as an evening and events destination for all. It may be possible to redesign the footpath extend it so that its surface would light up as one walked along it, or on other occasions be lit up completely to form a ribbon of light. The natural curves of the coastline would ensure that the lighting could be seen from all directions.

The fourth consideration would be to construct projecting piers (or half a bridge as Joyce would have it) with their decks at road level with restaurants or cafés hung underneath providing splendid views over the Sound. Some could be popular fast food places others a more sophisticated slow food venue. A wealth of historic structures exist embedded in the coastline, and these must, as with Tinside Pool, be given a chance to flourish once more. But needs and aspirations have moved on since these elements were constructed, and we therefore raise the question of how a contemporary intervention could look ?

Chapter 4.5 Recovering the spine - Armada way from the Hoe to the Station

'The plan has two predominant axes - the one north and south being dominated by the Hoe on the south and by a large traffic circus in Cobourg Street in the north, which will form the main approach to the station and a focal point for city traffic. Thus, anyone entering the city from the railway or from the main bus station will get a magnificent impression of the expanse of business and civic centres and, at the same time, the Hoe beyond.' (A Plan for Plymouth, 1943 p.70)

Armada Way is 45m wide and 1400m long, running from the station to the Hoe. Both ends are about 30m above sea level, and the route dips down to cross Royal Parade at about 10m above sea level. Abercrombie's vision was for it to be a mainly pedestrian space, but incorporating traffic lanes running north-south.

The realisation of the proposal is somewhat disappointing as the complex topography ironically raises North Cross roundabout as the perceived termination of the axis, leaving the station lost in the distance, marked only by an off-centre office building. Furthermore, as the route passes through the shopping centre, the legacy of various local interventions coupled with the introduction of low level vegetation has obscured the very generous scale and identity of this majestic sweep through the townscape.

As a structuring element of the city, Armada Way is responsible for the connection and movement from the station to the waterfront, and indeed beyond the station to the north into Central Park.

Firstly, our proposal defines a new form for the station - a tall structure, glazed to the north and south, providing a marker for the transport interchange, and an invitation to the rolling townscape beyond. Access to the platforms would be provided from above, along with public access to the park area to the north. The forecourt area of the station retains the level of North Road, and is provided with a suitably urban feel by the introduction of a tall building on the east side, framing both station approach and the views of the station itself. Provision is also made for space to accommodate a coach and bus interchange, allowing seamless transfer to onward journeys.

North Cross roundabout is a difficult knot to untie in traffic terms, yet most agree that it is a poor use of land and a terrible pedestrian experience and gateway to the city. In principle, the approach is to engage and encroach upon the fragmented space here, rather than retreating with defensive anti-urban forms. Our plan proposes that Armada way must continue, at grade, across the roundabout for both pedestrians and possible public transport. Car parking may be possible underneath this 'deck', although accessing it may prove difficult. Water features have been suggested on the east and west sides of the roundabout, for the purpose of part-shielding the noise and view of the surrounding traffic to those in the centre. To the west of North Cross, we have indicated a new building form as a long term vision for densification in response to the development of the transport hub - this form is envisaged as employment based and of an appropriate scale to respond to, and address, the context.

The sheer length and strategic function of Armada way raises the question of an improved system of movement along its course. We feel it is important to retain the route as predominantly pedestrian, and propose that a new cohesive landscape strategy is developed, with an emphasis on clarity and flow, as opposed to the current obstructions. Regular lines of trees should be introduced to mark the formality and scale of the axis, with the ability to provide other items of street furniture as required to define and animate individual areas. We propose that the central area is kept clear of all obstructions, to allow for events, processions, markets etc., and advocate the preservation of a 6m lane on the eastern side for a future transport system. Where more carefully considered existing landscaping is found, such as between Royal Parade and Notte Street, this must be essentially retained within any new proposals.

A proposal exists for a new food pavilion to be located in Armada Way at the junction of New George Street and Cornwall Street, with a competition winning design by a respected architecture practice. Whilst our strategy for the city centre is based on diversification of the range of services available, we do not support the principle of disturbing this principle axis in a fragmentary way. The demand to provide this accommodation should be refocused into the process of redeveloping the adjacent city blocks.

Where Armada Way meets Royal Parade we again encounter the legacy of out-of-date thinking, with pedestrians channelled below one of the finest streets in Plymouth. Providing a generous surface level crossing at this point should be a priority for the city, and would be a symbolic first stage to express a new attitude to the relationship of pedestrians and vehicles in the City Centre.

Rising with the gradient of the Hoe we have suggested that a water feature, as originally envisaged by Abercrombie, be commissioned that will entice pedestrians to the water beyond, and also balance the water feature at North Cross.

At the termination of this axis we find the Dome, tucked away shyly over the lip of the Hoe. Our proposal here is to extend the influence of this rather lost building with a gallery extension that must both mark the termination of the axis, and retain views out to the water from the Hoe.

Chapter 5 - Recommendations for transformation

City wide vision - connecting the elements and joining up the Strategic Opportunity Areas

The report has identified our vision for the regeneration of the City - it is a vision that sets out a future for Plymouth that is built upon its waterfront setting, its heritage and its capacity for consolidation and expansion. The Plymouth Urban Area (PUA) has significant capacity for regeneration and intensification, the neighbourhoods have been fully identified and outlined in the report, and we have studied and proposed strategic visions for the identified Strategic Opportunity Areas in the Plymouth local plan.

A fundamental principle in the implementation of our vision is to promote regeneration and provide mechanisms to connect these strategic opportunity areas to each other and across the city.

The implementation strategy is used to harness the existing private sector development activity in the City and to facilitate partnership arrangements with public sector agencies that ensure that these connections are made for the benefit of the entire City. It is a flexible and deliverable strategy that uses the MBM vision as a base to demonstrate an overall structure of the regenerated City. It builds upon private and public project partnerships to facilitate each part of these strategies.

Within the central area of Plymouth the vision has accommodated existing development initiatives and has sought to ensure in the delivery process that they are aligned with its principles. This approach provides 'early win' opportunities for the vision giving credibility to the wider community. Later stages will require wider community and public sector funding support to be facilitated.

Population and economic Growth

In the body of the report we have outlined the existing population statistics for both the urban and the travel to work catchment area. We have suggested that over the duration of the vision for the next twenty years it is reasonable to expect that the PUA could develop to an urban population of 300 - 350,000. We believe that there is redevelopment capacity within the urban area is available to permit this expansion.

The vision is built upon sites that support the wider urban design aspiration. These sites have all been identified for potential future development by local plans and local stakeholders. The total development footprint of the plan is circa 950,000 sq metres of new floor space which would consist of a mix of uses, of which we would expect 8 - 8,500 to be residential units.

Statistics from the National Land Use Database in 2003 confirm that the Plymouth Urban Area has 129 hectares of previously developed vacant land and buildings, and 26 hectares of derelict land and buildings which support to an extent the capacity being suggested in the vision. This is the highest 'brownfield' capacity in the region.

In describing the vision we have identified opportunities for densification in the City Centre by changes in the form of the buildings sitting within the Abercrombie urban grid. The regeneration of redundant port and naval areas has created further development opportunities which include Sutton Harbour, Royal William Yard, Devonport, and Millbay and more to come over time. This momentum of re-use of naval land within the PUA provides a good supply of land into Plymouth which in turn provides capacity for population growth and economic expansion, which has already largely been taken into account by the Plymouth Urban Capacity Study.

In reviewing the economy it is clear that Plymouth is a sub regional shopping centre and provides a major role as an employment centre for the region with 70% being in the service sector. It also has a major university located in the north of the city centre with its 20,000 FTE student population and ancillary specialities.

The key to the development of the economy in our opinion is for the City to develop its attractiveness for work, living and play. This vision demonstrates how Plymouth in its extraordinary setting should attract businesses and residents migrating to the south-west for the benefit of the superior lifestyle opportunities. However most of the household growth need for Plymouth is generated from within the existing population and therefore the vision needs to also respond to the needs of those living in Plymouth now. The improvement and regeneration of the city centre has to be the magnet for this movement, and growth of population will assist in the positioning of Plymouth in the wider context of the regional city within Europe.

Competing urban centres within Europe are severely constrained by their historic environment, limited building stock and constrained surrounding landscape, which all limit their potential for growth. Further New Town development with its wider impact on Greenfield incursion is unsustainable in both public opinion and government policy. The reworking of the Plymouth urban area and the opportunities for its expansion on brownfield land is, therefore, a distinct advantage.

This land opportunity, the waterside setting and the vision represent the springboard for the economic and physical regeneration of the city.

City management - who does it now - what are its strengths and weaknesses ?

In developing an implementation strategy for the city vision we have looked at the various management structures in place and examined their ability to lead.

The city operates through the local private and public institutions and their managements. These include Plymouth City Council, SWRDA, The Sutton Harbour Company, Plymouth University, The Defence Forces. These bodies together usefully provide the key landholdings in the City. The ownership of the City Centre estate in the hands of the City Council, the ownership of Millbay in the hands of SWRDA and English Partnerships, the ownership of the North Hill area in the hands of the University. Thus when looking at the implementation strategy for the plan it is reassuring that these key public and private sector partners are in a position to unlock the land base to the vision.

We have become aware in our study of traditional historic divisions between different elements within the city. The implementation strategy will need to address this issue and find processes and structures that join these disparate parts together to make the wider transformation of the city possible. The 2020 partnership during the period of this study has provided such community wide involvement. We consider it essential for the implementation of the vision to be a success that a similar body is established to lead the project forward in an open way that builds on the support and good faith of this city wide community.

Implementation underlying the vision - Initiatives underway

The proposed vision as we have outlined has been informed by the development initiatives that are underway - thus the first stages of the implementation will include the Rowe Street development by the University, and the Drakes Circus redevelopment by P & O developments. Despite arriving on the scene late in the negotiations over both of these developments, we have been able to embody key principles and influence on both of these initiatives. For the University building we have been able to assist in both the preparation of the urban design brief for the campus and for the selection of architects to the project. For the Drakes Circus development we support the investment in City Centre shopping that reinforces the economic heart of the city, and provides for 24 hour permeability from north to south across through the Abercrombie grid.

Both of these developments on the eastern axis of the city centre will in our opinion assist the realization of the proposed redevelopment of the block between Mayflower Street and Cornwall Street as the effect of Drakes Circus fans out across the city centre.

The development of Bretonside, Colin Campbell Court and the Ballard Centre area are at various stages but can and should reflect the key principles of permeability and design that lie at the root of the vision.

Critical to the delivery of the vision will be the development of Millbay. The report and the plans prepared by MBM focus proposals that have been the subject of initial discussion with key parties. This development needs to maintain a

relationship with the vision. The implementation of this project needs to take account of the infrastructure connections along Bath Street, redevelopment of the Pavillions and the construction of Battery Street providing alternative access to the port traffic. The possibility of cross funding between residential development and the commercial elements of the scheme has been outlined in chapter 4.

The proposed Sutton Harbour development extends the successful regeneration to the east of the Harbour. This is a partnership of interests between the Sutton Harbour Company and Plymouth City Council.

In our opinion the key element that will assist the implementation of the plan is the reinforcement of the Waterfront. Whilst other cities and towns in the south-west enjoy their beaches, Plymouth is a waterfront city in the tradition of Liverpool, Glasgow or Genoa. In the regeneration of these comparator cities the process of change has focussed on the recovery of the waterfront. This has usually been the remaking of port areas and the opening up of access. With Plymouth the plan demonstrates the opening of the waterfront by the development of Millbay to the west and the Barbican to the east, using the Hoe as the connector between the two, and the improvements of Armada Way linking the Hoe through to the city centre. There will, however, remain a need to support the development of port activity and other marine related commercial activity whilst seeking to realise the vision of opening up the waterfront for the people of Plymouth.

**Key players - the drivers for development in the city - agencies and institutions
- the market and the City Council**

In the process of the study we have led a series of stakeholder seminar sessions which have identified some of the key players in the City. In addition to these sessions we have conducted meetings with individual participants. These have included groups representing the City Centre Partnership, Associated British Ports, Sutton Harbour, the University, and the P & O developments. We have met in a separate session groups of local architects and their local developers and investors to understand the finer grain aspects of development in the city, the residential schemes, the student housing schemes and other aspects of new development initiatives. In further sessions we have met representatives of Plymouth City Council (PCC), the Regional Development Agency (SWERDA) and Government Office

for the South West (GOSW). In addition we have met with key representatives of the resident community, the business community and the arts community. In the support team from Plymouth 2020 and PCC to the study we have discussed forward plan policies which have included planning, highways, transport and urban design, special policy and emerging policy guidance. We made interim presentations of our plan early in the summer to keep the wider community informed of our approach.

In this series of information gathering, initial debate and analysis sessions we have learnt that the City has an active development market for urban residential development, predominantly on waterside or water view sites. This includes the recently completed Royal William Yard, new developments at Sutton Harbour, and new residential schemes around the Hoe. It also has an active market for retail, expressed in the Drakes Circus retail development by P&O, and mixed use expressed through the Bretonside development by Henry Boot.

Further development activity in the city centre includes new buildings for the university, a recently completed new hotel, new student housing, and developments at Colin Campbell Court and the Ballards Centre. In all of these developments we have observed an active development process where design and development briefs have been generated by PCC from their urban design framework and these have been used to guide and ensure quality development on these sites.

The formation of the City Centre Partnership has paved the way for the city centre to be included as a 'business improvement district' pathfinder project. This local leadership and initiative is exemplary.

We have seen leadership of local projects well established, the University is generating high quality architecture and urban design proposals reflecting their aspiration for their campus and the creation of the cultural quarter alongside. The recently completed science and teaching facility by Fielden Clegg and Bradley is of very high quality, and their current architectural competition for the Rowe Street arts facility continues this investment in architecture. This leadership is also exemplary.

The leadership of Sutton Harbour by the Sutton Harbour Company, working in partnership with Plymouth City Council, has demonstrated a long term commitment to a regeneration process emerging from the transformation of the old harbour and its fishing fleet. The creation of marinas, the half tide basin, the aquarium and the waterside apartments, restaurants and bars with the associated enhancement of the public realm and sense of place is a major success story for the city that we have taken as a starting point for the vision and the city wide regeneration. Adding and developing linkage from this successful quarter of the city back to the city centre and along the waterfront to Millbay are key elements of our vision.

The vision has been prepared on the intelligence and knowledge of these existing development projects, which have formed a foundation to the plan and a starting point for its range and scope taking the city on and through the next twenty years. The individual project leadership that has driven these exemplar and pioneering projects forward needs to be replicated at the centre of this vision to lead and maintain the momentum that will drive through these individual projects with the city wide perspective.

Whilst to date individual leaders have focussed on specific projects, and benefited from good relations with the City Council to support these initiatives, the vision needs the step change in thinking and leadership that engages with the challenge of the regeneration and development of the entire city centre and its relevant Strategic Opportunity Areas to drive forward the aspiration of the vision presented in this report.

We have described in this report the process by which the vision was developed and the 'reality check' that has been taken throughout the study period that has ensured that the vision has organically grown out of the city of Plymouth and out of the reality of its development potential. In following that methodology we have produced a plan that is designed to meet the current condition and to provide the link between these pioneering developments raising the aspiration for the city into the wider more encompassing vision of this great waterside city of Plymouth taking its place within the firmament of regional centres within the UK and Europe.

It is an exciting challenge which needs both the imaginative leadership and tailor made delivery vehicles to drive this vision into reality.

Vehicles and methods of delivery - comparators from elsewhere

The implementation of the vision needs leadership across the constituencies of the city. The approach must be one of partnership between all of the different interests in the city that we have identified in this report.

The work of the 2020 Partnership in promoting and supporting the study, in generating involvement from across all the elements of the city, in acting as a local strategic partner, is a blueprint for the partnership approach that needs to be at the centre of any suitable delivery vehicle.

The partnership vehicle must fulfil a wider administrative role - it will need to receive commitment from the partners to the realisation of the plan and agreement between public sector and private sector partners to work together in delivering the plan. It needs to become a legal entity, one that can hold property, enter into contracts, and operate at arms length to the local authority. The partners to this implementation vehicle need to agree to concede powers and responsibility and transfer land into the legal entity for it to begin its work.

Examples of such delivery vehicles are outlined below 3 current formats - the Urban Regeneration Company (URC), the Millennium Community (MC) and the Strategic Joint Venture (SJV).

Firstly the URC, whilst not the only method of carrying forward the vision, is both a powerful and flexible tool that is tailored to local conditions and circumstances. The role of a URC is to realise the latent development and economic opportunities of an area in a comprehensive way and to raise investor confidence to the point where its physical regeneration becomes self-sustaining

Quoting from the Amion consulting report to DTLR in 2001 on Urban Regeneration companies (URCs):

'URC's are a mechanism that is principally focused on one aspect of the problems facing an area - its physical and associated economic regeneration URC's need to create a favourable climate into which the private sector will commit investment programmes for renewal'.

The following criteria are used to evaluate this support:

- 1. Full commitment and involvement by the key partners*
- 2. A close and effective working relationship with the local authority*
- 3. Getting the local strategy right and communicating it widely*
- 4. Appointing a highly effective Chair, Board, Chief Executive and Executive team. The Board should comprise key decision makers and influential individuals*
- 5. Developing a prioritised programme with clear implementation arrangements*
- 6. Effectively involving and engaging stakeholders*
- 7. Influencing the investment decisions of partners, other public sector organisations and importantly private sector investors*
- 8. Integrating with other initiatives and establishing a clear agreement on roles and responsibilities*
- 9. Establishing a positive momentum, through early high profile projects that are successfully delivered, and maintaining the momentum*
- 10. High quality standards in terms of design and architecture*

The second vehicle is the Millennium Communities, an initiative being led by English Partnerships. The recent announcement of the appointment of Urban Splash as lead developers for the New Islington project in East Manchester is a further example of this programme which started with the Millennium Village at Greenwich, Allerton Bywater outside Leeds, and has announced a further Millennium Community at Hastings. The programme is administered by English Partnerships and these have been based upon quite defined pockets of 'brownfield' land which can be clearly defined as a development opportunity, but one in which the public sector needs to take a lead to promote the investment by the private sector alongside. They are seen as opportunities for private sector entrepreneurial effort married to public sector land holdings. These communities are a competitive allocation and EP would need to be consulted to check the possibility for the inclusion of Plymouth into their approved MC's.

The third model is a 'Strategic Joint Venture' initiative where English Partnerships aim to bring together their own skills and expertise with local authorities and RDA's all to focus on the local delivery of development strategies that provide

'sustainable urban regeneration' and 'makes the best use of surplus land and buildings'.

Other vehicles include Urban Development Corporation's UDC's, and other local partnership arrangements. Clearly, it is essential that English Partnerships are now consulted to give their advice on suitable delivery vehicles for this project as it fulfils the terms of their remit from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) namely of 'unlocking the potential of public sector property'

In addition to the advice of English Partnerships this overall report should now be consulted upon widely in particular with the key agencies operating within the city to seek an agreement in principle to work in partnership to deliver this vision across the area of the city as defined. The will to work together in a spirit of co-operation with an agreement on leadership and on asset transfer to a new vehicle is the first and most important step down the road to the realization of the plan. The final shape of the vehicle that delivers the plan will properly remain the subject of future investigation and debate that is for the future. The purpose of this study has been to set an aspiration for the future shape of the City and encourage commitment and debate on it by all its participants public and private alike. The vision of the future is set before you - it is encouraging, challenging and deliverable.