

## STATEMENT 3

### Central Park AAP Public Examination

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| <b>Document Number:</b>     | <b>CC CPAAP 03</b>   |
| <b>Title:</b>               | <b>Whether Polices/ Proposals CP5 and CP6 are consistent with the government guidance and the Core strategy in not providing for a proportion of affordable housing?</b> |
| <b>Examination Session:</b> | <b>04 June 2008</b>  |

### Issue to be Examined

1. The Inspector has identified the following issue to be examined:

**"Whether Policies/ Proposals CP5 and CP6 are consistent with the government guidance and the Core Strategy in not providing for a proportion of affordable housing?"**

### Summary of Key Points

2. The Council considers that the submitted Central Park Area Action Plan is sound. It does not believe that any of the comments made in the representations or statements regarding Proposals CP5-Peverell Park Road Outland Road Corner and CP6-Pennycomequick, summarised in the grey boxes below, bring into question the soundness of the AAP. The Council believes that these Proposals are consistent with the Government guidance and the Core Strategy in prioritising Planning Obligations, specifically in the case of the Central Park area, to help deliver improvements to the park and its facilities, rather than contributing to the overall city wide target for affordable housing.

### Detailed Points

Reasoned justification for the use of Planning Obligations from development within the AAP

3. Central Park is recognised by all as providing a unique opportunity for the citizens of Plymouth to access high quality recreational and leisure facilities. Within this context, it offers the city an ideal location for a new outstanding facility for sporting and recreational excellence, which, with improved high quality public transport facilities, can be made available to the city as a whole, as well as Plymouth's wider sub-regional communities.
4. Central Park, however, is a cherished environmental asset for all Plymothians, and therefore needs to be used wisely. In delivering these aspirations, this AAP has at its heart the protection and enhancement of the park's invaluable green spaces, as well as actively promoting real benefits for the health and quality of life of the city's population – in line with park's original and current intentions.
5. If this AAP is to be successful in delivering these aspirations, the guiding principle has to be about ensuring the highest quality of development and environmental improvement. This, amongst other matters, means ensuring there is adequate funding to achieve these aspirations without compromising such an important and special asset. It is about moving on from the pragmatic decisions of the post war years, which resulted in fundamental departures / compromises from the original designs for Central Park, and delivering a premier park worthy of the unique asset and opportunities that this area offers.

6. One important aspect of this plan is to repair the relationship between the Park and the City. Proposals CP5 and CP6 are included within the AAP with the express intention of improving these relationships. Peverell Park Road, Outland Road Corner and Pennycomequick are both currently characterised by unattractive park edges, weak access points, safety issues and poor environmental quality. These two proposals are specifically intended to address these deficiencies.
7. However, as part of Proposals CP5 and CP6, this AAP also requires any proceeds from these developments, from both Planning Obligations as well as the Council's positive management of its land assets, be used to enable essential access and public realm improvements to be made in these two locations, as well as help deliver improvements to the park and its facilities. As a consequence, paragraphs 7.10 and 7.21 indicate that Affordable Housing will not be sought by Policy/ Proposals CP5 and CP6.
8. The LDF Policy base for this is clearly set out in Plymouth's Adopted Core Strategy, as follows:

**Policy CS33** sets out the overall city wide requirements for Community Benefits / Planning Obligations. Paragraph 16.11 of the supporting text clearly highlights that:

"In implementing this policy and determining priorities for negotiating a planning obligation or agreement, the policy tests as contained in circular 05/2005 will be applied, and in doing so the Council will have regard to:

- Key strategic issues. In support of the vision, aims and objectives of the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy as articulated in the Council's Corporate Plan and the Core Strategy (including any strategically significant projects, such as the Life Centre at Central Park, and major transport initiatives."

**Policy CS15** sets out the overall housing provision – including a general requirement for at least 30% of dwellings on qualifying developments of 15 units or more to be affordable

**Central Park Vision Statement** amplifies these general city wide requirements in relation to the Central Park AAP area – highlighting in paragraph 5.60 that:

"The Council will also identify other significant opportunities, where sensitive development or environmental improvements could help support the enhancement of the park and linkages to surrounding areas."

And again in paragraph 5.62 which clearly expects that:

”The AAP will amplify this vision through a series of policies and proposals. It will also set out in more detail the anticipated framework for delivery of the vision. The Life Centre and improvements to the park are likely to be delivered with a combination of Lottery bids, transport funding and funding from enabling development and planning obligations. Other aspects of the vision will be delivered through private sector development.”

Paragraph 5.62 goes on to identify the top 3 priorities for S.106 contributions, as follows:

”- The delivery of the Life Centre and park improvements through a combination of public funding (e.g. Lottery), local and regional transport funding, S106 contributions from enabling development and the positive management of the Council’s land assets.  
- The delivery of other enabling development and improvements through the planning application process and S106 contributions and the positive management of the Council’s land assets.  
- Securing leisure contributions from developments across the city where appropriate.”

9. From this it can be seen that Affordable Housing is not identified as a priority in the case of Central Park. The reason for this is that housing development at Central Park is not about meeting the city’s housing need – it is purely and solely justified in relation to making improvements to the park – both in terms of repairing relationships between the park and the city, as well providing some enabling development to help deliver these improvements. The Core Strategy expectation for the development value from any enabling development to be prioritised into delivering improvements to the park and its facilities has been incorporated into the Central Park AAP Proposals CP5 & CP6.
10. In considering this position, it needs to be understood that the proposed level of housing provision has changed from the Preferred Options version of the AAP. The key point to understand here is that in response to the issues raised through the consultation process the number of dwellings has been significantly reduced from a maximum of 220 units, to this submission AAP which is now proposing a very limited development, in fact 123 units in total.
11. The consequence of reducing the total amount of development is that there will be far less available through both S106 and capital receipts from the sale of the land. The ability of the development to achieve the objectives identified above would therefore be seriously compromised if the development then also had to provide affordable housing. The Council has a duty in the plan to ensure that the whole package of

essential improvements is deliverable and so it needs to maximise the benefits to meet the priorities of this AAP, the highest priorities being the improvements to the park, enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and park facilities as outlined in the plan in Section 9 and figure 3 Community Benefits.

12. It should also be noted that while the submitted AAP has prioritised contributions from this enabling development to help deliver improvements to the park, the Alma Road development site, which has already been negotiated with Taylor Wimpey Homes, is already delivering 12 affordable units through S106 and supplementary negotiations.
13. The final points to understand are ones of timing and relationship to the Park of both Proposals CP5 Outland Road - Peverell Park Road Corner and CP6 Pennycomequick. These developments are required given the particular objectives of this Plan and the Core Strategy Area Vision "improving and strengthening the relationship between the park and the surrounding neighbourhood and the City Centre". The improvements to the park, enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and park facilities immediately adjacent to these developments are critically important to be achieved at the same time as the housing and mixed use proposals occur so that the maximum benefit is derived for the public.

### Consistency with Government Guidance and the Core Strategy

14. Government guidance on affordable housing is set out in PPS3. It states that Regional Spatial Strategies should set out the regional approach to addressing affordable housing needs, including the affordable housing target for the region and each housing market area. It also says that LDDs should set overall (ie plan wide) targets for the amount of affordable housing to be provided. (para 28-29.)
15. The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Policy H1 considers that the region should deliver at least 7,500 affordable homes from a total housing quota of 23,060 per annum regionally, in the period to 2026. It further states that at least 30% of housing across each local authority area and HMA should be affordable.
16. The relevant Local Development Document is the Adopted Core Strategy. The Core Strategy Policies that relate to this matter have already been discussed in paragraph 8 above. However, in terms of responding to the points made by attendees, the relevant parts of the Core Strategy relating to Affordable Housing are referenced below.
17. Paragraph 10.19 of the adopted Core Strategy highlights a general citywide need for at least a 30% affordable housing requirement on qualifying sites. This requirement is confirmed through Policy CS15 Overall Housing Provision. However, this general city wide

requirement also needs to be considered within the specific context set in the Core Strategy for the Central Park Area Action Plan.

18. Paragraph 5.59 of the adopted Core Strategy, (Central Park Vision Statement), highlights the strategic importance to the city of the Life Centre proposal and paragraph 5.60, requires the Council to "identify other significant opportunities, where sensitive development or environmental improvements could help support the enhancement of the Park and linkages to surrounding areas."
19. Also of relevance is paragraph 5.62, of the adopted Core Strategy, (Central Park Vision Statement), which requires the AAP to "set out in more detail the anticipated framework for delivery of the vision", that "The Life Centre.... are likely to be delivered with a combination of... funding from enabling development & planning obligations."
20. These points are further amplified in the bullet points to paragraph 5.62 of the adopted Core Strategy which identifies the top three priorities for S106 contributions, and states that the Life Centre and the park and other improvements will be delivered through a range of mechanisms including "enabling development and the positive management of the Council's land assets."
21. For the above reasons, the Council considers that Proposals CP5 and CP6 are a special case that take precedence, in the Central Park area, over the Core Strategy city wide requirement for affordable housing. They are not considered inconsistent with national, regional and the local Core Strategy policy - in that they are designed to address other city wide priorities, (i.e. the Life Centre & Central Park), and that because the numbers are so small, (i.e. a theoretical requirement for 37 Affordable Housing Units, of which 12 are being delivered at Alma Road), and do not therefore compromise the city's ability to meet its city-wide affordable housing targets. They are being presented in the AAP because this has enabled the issue to be fully debated in public.

### **Summary Conclusions**

22. In conclusion, the key points that need to be considered in relation to whether Proposals CP5 and CP6 are consistent with the government guidance and the Core Strategy in not providing for a proportion of affordable housing, are:
  - The Housing proposals put forward by CP5 & CP6 are not required as part of the city wide housing requirement. More than adequate provision is being made through the LDF's other AAPs and DPDs.
  - The Housing provision being made at Central Park is only justified in terms of helping to improve the relationship between the park and the rest of the city.
  - The Core Strategy provides for S106 and Planning Obligations to be used to help improve the park's environment and facilities

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- It should also be noted that this principle of waiving the Affordable Housing requirement in special circumstances has already been accepted by the Inspector – see Royal William Yard proposal in the adopted Millbay & Stonehouse AAP.