
The purpose of this report is to set out the vision, objectives and proposals of the Central Park Area Action Plan and to assess these for the likely impact they will have on the six equality groups. Data collected from public consultations is used to inform this analysis and to identify the planning issues of most importance to equality groups. This report concludes that the Central Park Area Action Plan submission document will not have any negative impacts on any of the equalities groups and will have many positive impacts, in particular in relation to health and wellbeing. Where appropriate, changes to proposals in the Central Park Area Action Plan submission document are highlighted.

1. Background

1.1. Context

This document represents the final stage in preparing Plymouth City Council’s Central Park Area Action Plan. It has been produced for submission, and builds on an earlier preferred options document. This Area Action Plan submission document forms part of a portfolio of documents called the Local Development Framework (LDF). The central document in the LDF is the Core Strategy which provides a strategic planning framework for the city, guiding development to 2021 and beyond. The Core Strategy sets out Plymouth’s spatial vision – to turn Plymouth into ‘one of Europe’s finest, most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone’. Area Action Plans provide more specific detail on development opportunities within key areas of the city. This Central Park Area Action Plan submission document does not repeat the policies contained within the Core Strategy but the two plans should be read together to aid decision-making. The LDF Core Strategy has been prepared in line with national planning policy and is in general conformity with regional planning guidance (RPG10) and the Devon Structure Plan 2001 – 2016. The Core Strategy adopts the overall vision and aims of the City Strategy and of the Corporate Plan, and will support their implementation. The Central Park Area Action Plan is in conformity with the Core Strategy and thus with the City Strategy and Corporate Plan.

1.2. Aims and objectives

This document adopts a vision for Central Park to:

To create an outstanding venue of regional and national significance for active recreation, health, art, education, culture and the environment, which will provide state of the art facilities for the people of Plymouth and the sub-region of Devon and Cornwall.

The following objectives have been set:
1. To create a landmark regional Life Centre complex of high quality design and innovative technology.

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

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

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

5. To improve and strengthen the relationship between the park and surrounding city in a sustainable manner.

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

2. Data relating to equalities issues

Three specific consultations have been undertaken to identify the views of equality groups:

Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation

Consultation on the Preferred Options of the Core Strategy and the Area Action Plan preferred options document for Central Park included a consultation with hard to reach groups (in conjunction with the consultation for the Local Transport Plan) in addition to the general public consultation. This was carried out in August/September 2005. Presentations and workshops were held for:

- members of Black and ethnic minorities (contacted through FATA HE) – 4 attended
- disabled (contacted through the Guild of Voluntary Services) – 6 attended
- young people (contacted through the Plymouth Youth Parliament) – 4 attended
- elderly (contacted through old people’s organisations) – 9 attended. Plymouth Pride were contacted but declined the offer of a workshop. They requested copies of the reports instead.

The hard to reach consultation for the Core Strategy preferred options has been written up as a report.

Gender Audit

A Gender Audit of the Local Plan Review was carried out in 2001. The aim was to ‘gender proof’ the plan in order to ensure that all strategies, policies and proposals openly and actively take into account their effects on the respective situations of women and men, and where necessary use specific policies to promote equality. Preparation of the audit involved focus group discussions with women and men and consultations with planning staff.

The gender audit helped to identify gender issues arising from policies and was used to inform production of the First Deposit Local Plan Dec
2001. It also suggested how the plan could be monitored to ensure that it was addressing gender issues in its implementation.

**Community Planning Studies**

Community Planning Studies were undertaken in 1998 as part of the Local Plan review consultation programme to inform the development of a new planning strategy and policies. These studies involved holding stalls at fetes and fun days; a schools consultation exercise and community planning workshops. They covered the whole city to include over 6,500 residents. Hard to reach groups were contacted as follows:

- Race – contacted through the annual RESPECT Festival and by letter.
- Travellers – group contacted by letter.
- Faith groups – places of worship informed of events; Muslim and Jewish groups contacted by letter.
- Age – old people through the Senior Citizens Forum (presentation and workshop). Young people (at primary and secondary level) through the schools consultation exercise.
- Disability – workshop together with the Plymouth Guild of Voluntary Service.
- Gender – women’s groups contacted by letter.
- Sexual orientation – groups were contacted by letter.

The data collected from this exercise were written up as 21 Community Planning Studies (published in 2000), one for each ward in the city and one general study covering city-wide issues. Separate reports were produced for Drake and Trelawny communities. The issues raised were used to inform the development of the First Deposit Local Plan (published December 2001).

In addition to these consultations, a number of studies have been conducted looking at future options for Central Park, as detailed in the Central Park Area Action Plan submission document.

2.1. Gaps/inadequacies in the data

The Community Studies and the preferred options hard to reach consultations showed that contact by letter is not necessarily sufficient to engage with equalities groups, especially those that traditionally have had little engagement with the planning process. As a result, no specific consultation was carried out with faith or sexual orientation groups, and many of the hard to reach workshops were poorly attended. Other means of communication will be needed in future in order to build all groups’ capacity to engage. Future consultations will be guided by the Statement of Community Involvement.

2.2. Issues raised by the consultations

The following general issues of concern to equalities groups throughout the city have been identified:

- Lack of affordable and special needs housing.
- Difficulty in travelling to work and accessing services.
- Lack of accessible streets and buildings.
• Need for socially inclusive neighbourhoods with a range of facilities and amenities.
• Safety concerns – fear of crime but also road safety and personal safety.
• Need for opportunities to learn and to work.

The Community Planning Studies for Drake and Trelawny identified the following issues of concern for equalities groups in relation to Central Park:

• Concerns over safety hazards to children while playing in Central Park (broken glass etc).
• The need for an adventure park.
• General safety concerns and the desire to have more park wardens.

In addition, wider concerns about the need for affordable housing – especially for families – and road safety were raised.

Issues addressed in this Area Action Plan submission document include:

• The need to integrate the proposals for the Life Centre within the existing parkland landscape.
• The poor relationship of existing buildings and facilities with the park.
• Degraded sense of place within the park.
• The poor quality of private and public transport facilities.
• The difficulty people have in accessing the park from surrounding neighbourhoods and the City Centre because of busy highways.
• Poor relationship between the park and surrounding neighbourhoods.
• Lack of public facilities within the park.

The public consultation of the Central Park Area Action Plan preferred options raised the following concerns –

• Support for improvements to the park and to sports facilities but concern over any loss of green space from development – both the Life Centre and residential.
• Concern over any proposed loss of allotments.
• Support for improvement to footpaths and for improved park facilities.
• Concern over the proposed closure of the park and ride and any loss of parking at Peverell Park Road.
• Concern over traffic congestion that might arise as a result of the redevelopment of Milehouse Junction and the bus depot.

A special consultation was carried out with young people who expressed support for improved play and sports facilities and expressed concern over safety and the need for park wardens or other security.

3. Key findings

In order to assess whether the Area Action Plan submission document addresses these issues, the objectives and the proposals have been mapped against the issues of most concern to equalities groups, and the results are shown in Tables 1 and 2.
Table 1 – Objectives against equality issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Housing needs</th>
<th>Travel</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Inclusivity</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Economy</th>
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Table 2 – Proposals against equality issues

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<th>Preferred Option</th>
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<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Inclusivity</th>
<th>Safety</th>
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<td>CP1 (Life Centre)</td>
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<td>CP3 (A Transport Interchange)</td>
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<td>CP4 (Park enhancements)</td>
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<td>CP5 (Peverell Park Rd, Outland Rd Corner)</td>
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<td>CP6 (Pennycomequick)</td>
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<td>CP7 (Improved facilities)</td>
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These tables show that the Central Park Area Action Plan submission document addresses all of the equality issues. The issues are addressed in the submission document in the following ways:

- Housing needs are addressed by the proposals for new housing development at Peverell Park Road/Outland Road Corner and Pennycomequick. The proposals include a requirement for Lifetime Homes but not for affordable housing. This reflects the special character of this Central Park Area Action Plan and the priority to enhance the park.
- Travel concerns are addressed by proposals that will both reduce the need to travel by car by focusing facilities within the Life Centre and improving access to the park for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The submission document responds to public concerns by proposing to retain the park and ride service.
- Accessibility concerns are addressed by proposals to improve access to the park and the condition of paths and facilities which will enable people with physical disabilities and carers with young children to visit the park.
- Inclusivity concerns are addressed with the proposed Life Centre facilities as well as proposed improvements to local facilities at Peverell.
which will provide improved facilities and services to the local population and to visitors to the park.

- Safety concerns are addressed by proposed improvements to the condition of paths and lighting in the park, the greater vibrancy that will be created by the proposals in this Area Action Plan submission document and improved natural surveillance through better design of buildings and spaces.
- Economy concerns are addressed by proposals for new employment in the Life Centre and other park facilities.

In order that the full benefits are realised, it is important that new developments are well designed to maximise natural surveillance and accessibility benefits, as required by the LDF Core Strategy.

The impacts have also been assessed by equality group:

3.1. Race

It is considered that the Central Park Area Action Plan submission document will have a positive impact by promoting equality of opportunity. The Central Park Area Action Plan, in conformity with the Core Strategy, will promote a better quality of life for all users of the park – including better social inclusion, accessibility and safety. It will also promote health and wellbeing, reduce the need to travel by car and improve the range and quality of facilities, services and amenities. New employment opportunities will be provided.

It is considered that this Area Action Plan submission document will have no adverse impacts on promoting good race relations or eliminating unlawful discrimination.

3.2. Faith and belief

It is considered that this Area Action Plan submission document will have no adverse impacts on faith/belief groups.

3.3. Disability

It is considered that this Area Action Plan submission document will have a positive impact on the quality of life of all people with a disability. Research has shown that high quality green space brings many health and wellbeing benefits to users, including physical, mental and social benefits. The Central Park Area Action Plan, in conformity with the Core Strategy, will promote a better quality of life for all users of the park – including better social inclusion, accessibility and safety. It will also promote health and wellbeing, reduce the need to travel by car and improve the range and quality of facilities, services and amenities. New employment opportunities will be provided. The new housing will include Lifetime Homes.

3.4. Gender

It is considered that this Area Action Plan submission document will have positive impacts on the quality of life of both men and women, particularly for men and women who care for dependent children or elderly/disabled people. In particular, this plan, in conformity with the Core Strategy, will
promote a better quality of life for all users of the park – including better social inclusion, accessibility and safety. It will also promote health and wellbeing, reduce the need to travel by car and improve the range and quality of facilities, services and amenities. New employment opportunities will also be provided.

3.5. Sexual orientation

It is considered that this Area Action Plan submission document will have no adverse impacts on any of the sexual orientation groups.

3.6. Age

Young people

It is considered that this Area Action Plan submission document will have a positive impact on young people’s quality of life. The Central Park Area Action Plan, in conformity with the Core Strategy, will promote a better quality of life for all users of the park – including better social inclusion, accessibility and safety. It will also promote health and wellbeing, reduce the need to travel by car and improve the range and quality of facilities, services and amenities. The new housing will include Lifetime Homes.

Older People

It is considered that this Area Action Plan submission document will have a positive impact on older people’s quality of life. The Central Park Area Action Plan, in conformity with the Core Strategy, will promote a better quality of life for all users of the park – including better social inclusion, accessibility and safety. It will also promote health and wellbeing, reduce the need to travel by car and improve the range and quality of facilities, services and amenities. The new housing will include Lifetime Homes.

4. Recommendations

This Equality Impact Assessment has identified that this Area Action Plan submission document for Central Park will have positive impacts on the quality of life of race groups, people with a disability, men and women, young people and older people. It is considered that there will be no adverse impacts on any of the equalities groups.