chapter 1

A Plan for Plymouth 2006 - 2021

By 2020 Plymouth will be one of Europe’s finest most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone.
A Plan for Plymouth 2006-21

Introduction

1.1 Plymouth has a special role in the South West region. It is the second largest city after Bristol. Together, they perform critical and complementary roles at opposite ends of the region. Bristol is at the core of the north of the region, providing connections to the West Midlands, South East and Wales. Plymouth’s role is to ‘become the economic hub of the far South-West’, meeting the needs of its sub-region, as well as providing links to Europe, by sea and air - contributing to both regional and national prosperity.

1.2 Plymouth’s superb natural setting shapes the city’s image and plays a major role in its development. Not only do these factors impact on the city’s development, but they also make it a very attractive and distinctive location for both residents and visitors alike.

1.3 While the quality of life that the city can offer is second to none, Plymouth does experience the problems common to many major urban areas. It has some significant pockets of deprivation, structural problems with the economy and much of the city’s fabric is tired and in need of investment. But the city is changing. There is a new confidence and effective partnership working that is delivering major investments which are transforming the city’s skyline.

1.4 Perhaps of all the major urban areas in the region, Plymouth has the greatest scope to continue to accommodate significant change in a sustainable way. Its form is such that substantial development opportunities can be identified within or very well related to the main urban area and its major transport routes.

1.5 The purpose of Plymouth’s Local Development Framework (LDF) is to take a long term view which supports Plymouth’s transformation into one of Europe’s finest waterfront cities, creating a sustainable city for the future where people choose to live because of its vitality and quality of life.

Plymouth’s Core Strategy

1.6 This document sets out a spatial planning framework for the long term development of the city, ensuring that investment decisions are not made in isolation, but are properly co-ordinated, with a focus on promoting the principles of sustainable development. It has been prepared taking into account the views of all sections of the community and stakeholders, as well as maintaining consistency with national and regional guidance. It also provides a spatial expression of the city’s Community Strategy (“Towards a Sustainable Community Strategy”), as well the city’s other key strategies.

1.7 The Core Strategy is a strategic document providing broad guidance on the scale and distribution of development and the provision of supporting infrastructure. It contains ‘higher level’ policies for delivering the spatial vision, guiding broad patterns of development and constraint. It also contains policies setting out the criteria to be taken into account by the Local Planning Authority in determining proposals for development and the use of land and buildings.

1.8 The Core Strategy will be supported by the following statutory Development Plan Documents (DPDs):

- Area Action Plans, providing a framework for developing areas of major change
- a Sustainable Neighbourhoods (Key Site Allocations) DPD, setting out area/site specific policies /proposals for areas outside the AAPs
- a topic based document providing guidance in relation to Waste management
- a Proposals Map for the city recording all the proposals that have been adopted
- in addition to this, further supporting Supplementary Planning Documents will be prepared to amplify key policies and proposals in these DPDs.

These documents, in combination, make up Plymouth’s Local Development Framework and when adopted will, together with the Regional Spatial Strategy, become the Statutory Development Plan for the city.

adopted 2007
Chapter 1

How to use this document

1.9 The Core Strategy must be read as a whole. All Policies, (with their Strategic Objectives and targets), are interrelated and must be read together to understand their combined effect upon a planning proposal. Unless otherwise stated, they apply across the whole plan area, and are designed to pro-actively encourage development that makes a positive contribution to Plymouth’s radical agenda for change.

1.10 The document has been structured to reflect the need for an integrated policy approach in terms of:

- Strategic Objectives, (with targets /indicators /milestones as a basis for measuring progress), which define the Council’s intentions, in spatial planning terms, in order to deliver the vision for Plymouth
- Area Visions, which will guide the preparation of Area Action Plans
- Policy statements, which will guide the Council’s consideration of development proposals.

Development proposals will be judged firstly in terms of policy compliance, but also for the contribution they make to delivering the plan’s strategic objectives and targets.

1.11 The document is illustrated throughout with diagrams. These include a range of policy and illustrative information that are intended to help clarify and inform various aspects of the strategy. These diagrams are included solely for illustrative purposes. However, the key policy elements of Plymouth’s spatial strategy are brought together, in diagrammatic format, in the Key Strategy Diagram in Section 2.

The Planning Policy Context.

1.12 The planning system requires that Development Plans are kept up to date, providing certainty for longer term planning and investment decisions. Plymouth’s Local Development Framework has to be in line with National policy (taking into account the European context), in general conformity with Regional Guidance (RPG10), consistent with the Devon Structure Plan and take account of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy.

1.13 European context: Plymouth is fairly remote from the more prosperous European capitals. However, it is located in two regional co-operation areas, (the Atlantic Arc and the North West Europe Area), where the emphasis is on overcoming the disadvantages of a peripheral location through improved access, inter-regional co-operation and better linkages to the ‘core capitals’. The influence of Europe is felt directly through a number of funding programmes which the city actively bids for.

1.14 National Context: The emphasis is on turning Britain’s towns and cities back into thriving centres of activity. There is also a need for accelerated housing provision to meet existing /anticipated needs, but within the context of developing sustainable communities. Key measures include a focus on sustainable development which makes the most efficient use of land, reduces the need to travel, gives priority to the use of previously developed land, and adopts a ‘plan, monitor, manage’ approach.

1.15 Regional Context (RPG10) 2001-16; Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) identifies Plymouth as one of 11 Principal Urban Areas (PUA) which offer the best opportunities for accommodating the majority of development in the most sustainable way. Plymouth is also identified as having potential to play a wider strategic role as a major regional service centre providing a focus for economic activity in the far South West. The Devon Structure Plan articulates the spatial housing distribution for RPG10.

1.16 Regional Context (draft RSS) 2006-26; The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, (currently at submission stage), sees Plymouth’s role as ‘becoming the economic hub of the far South-West’. It provides support for Plymouth’s urban renaissance
agenda by making provision, in the wider principal urban area, for higher levels of economic and housing growth - assuming a requirement for some 42,000 jobs and 31,500 dwellings. This level of development is considered important to enable the city to realise its potential and fulfil its regional and sub-regional roles.

The Sustainable Development Context.

1.17 This Core Strategy must also play a positive role in promoting sustainable development, as well as responding to Climate Change in particular. This is far more than a local issue. It is one of global significance.

1.18 The UK’s Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the Future, 2005, has defined the goal of sustainable development as being: “to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations”.

1.19 It identifies five principles and four key priorities in promoting sustainable development, namely:

The five principles:
- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly.

The four priorities:
- Sustainable production and consumption
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities.

1.20 This Core Strategy sets sustainable development at the heart of its planning agenda. Its vision is for sustainable growth that delivers a quality city with a sustainable economy and strong and healthy communities within environmental limits. Growth that moves towards carbon neutrality, reducing the city’s eco-footprint and helping to respond to the key drivers of climate change (energy use, waste and transport). Growth that has as its very foundation a series of sustainable linked communities. These concepts are woven throughout the Core Strategy, with key references as follows:

- Strategic Objective 1 places sustainable development at the heart of the Council’s growth agenda.
- Strategic Objectives 2 and 3 highlight the key role of building sustainable linked communities – a theme which is reiterated in the policies of this Plan
- Section 11 focuses specifically on environmental objectives and policies.
- Strategic Objectives 12, 13 and 14 set out sustainable approaches to mineral, waste and transport matters.
- Policy CS34 ensures that sustainability and climate change issues will be considered for individual planning applications.
- The Council also intends to pro-actively use Supplementary Planning Documents – in particular the Design SPD and Planning Obligations SPD – to provide further guidance on delivering sustainable communities and tackling climate change.
Provision to be made at Plymouth 2006-21

1.21 The provision being made through the Core Strategy is to accommodate very long term aspirations for sustainable growth, through a quality agenda, creating sufficient critical mass to support the range and quality of services needed.

1.22 This approach relies on the provision of high quality job opportunities and therefore needs to go hand in hand with the city’s economic strategy. Plymouth also needs to become the city of choice where people want to live. To achieve this, design excellence will be essential.

1.23 The strategy anticipates a population growth from 246,100 in 2005 to an eventual population of some 300,000 to 350,000. To accommodate both this long-term growth, as well as provide flexibility to manage change in the interim, the strategy sets out a detailed approach to development for the next fifteen years, but also indicates how development could be accommodated in the longer term to 2026 and beyond.

1.24 Achieving this level of growth is seen as a long term iterative process. The strategy assumes that as Plymouth becomes a better place to live it will lead to the retention and attraction of people, which in turn will further support Plymouth’s improvement as an achievable cycle. As to when this growth will be achieved, the strategy assumes that, providing certain interventions are successful, the population of the principal urban area could increase to some 300,000 by 2026.

1.25 However, it is also recognised that this level of growth is dependant on a range of factors, for example the state of the national and global economy. In practice, it is accepted that the level of change is likely to be somewhere between the following two ranges. Progress towards achieving the aspirational high end of this range will need to be addressed through a ‘plan, monitor, manage’ approach. Table 1 sets out what this could mean for the TTWA. Comparable figures are provided for the city at 2001, although it is assumed that the majority of the potential growth will take place at the Plymouth principal urban area.

1.26 In terms of the spatial distribution of this level of change, the priority is to promote sustainable forms of development using the demand for new homes, jobs and services in a way that acts as a positive catalyst for change. Key to this will be directing development to the city centre and waterfront regeneration areas. But alongside this, there is a need to ensure an appropriate range, mix and type of development. This will be achieved by also directing a proportion of the growth to the significant opportunity sites on Plymouth’s Eastern and Northern Corridors, as well as the rest of the city. It also needs to be recognised that this level of growth should be delivered in a way that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites.

Table 1. - Derivation of potential dwelling numbers from the economic growth ranges for the Plymouth Travel to Work Area (TTWA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plymouth TTWA</th>
<th>Plymouth City</th>
<th>TTWA</th>
<th>The growth range that will need to be accommodated in the TTWA by 2021 and beyond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth</td>
<td>240,720</td>
<td>342,960</td>
<td>355,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households</td>
<td>102,540</td>
<td>144,170</td>
<td>155,970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategic Objective 1
Delivering Plymouth’s Strategic Role

To deliver a vision for Plymouth’s strategic role within the South West Region that will:

1. Be set firmly within the context of delivering ‘Urban Renaissance’ and Sustainable Communities, promoting an appropriate form of development that delivers sustainable linked communities by promoting an overall planned pattern of development and constraint that:
   - Works towards carbon neutrality by minimising energy consumption, providing for renewable energy, reducing the need to travel and providing for a range of quality sustainable transport alternatives.
   - Safeguards natural resources through limiting the use of greenfield sites, avoiding harming features of acknowledged importance and seeking new opportunities for enriching the city’s biodiversity.

2. Provide the means whereby Plymouth can realise its potential to accommodate higher rates of growth within the plan period and beyond, enabling the city to fulfil its potential as ‘the economic hub of the far South-West’, contributing to National, Regional and sub-regional prosperity.

3. Make provision for the period 2006-21, by allowing for the longer term higher growth levels of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, in a way that supports the city’s urban renaissance agenda.

4. Support the longer term growth of Plymouth, to create a city with over 300,000 people. In recognition of the fact that this aspiration can only realistically be achieved beyond the time period of this plan, the approach will be to:
   - Take a proactive approach to implementation by leading in the creation of appropriate delivery and partnership vehicles to enable a step change in the quality, intensity and pace of development within the city.
   - Use a Plan, Monitor and Manage approach to respond to changes in these anticipated levels of growth.

Key Sources:

- Regional Planning Guidance for the South West 2002-16 GOSW
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-26 - The South West Regional Assembly
- Devon Structure Plan 2001-16 - Devon County, Plymouth City and Torbay Councils, Dartmoor National Park
- Plymouth Sustainable Growth Study (2003) - Llewelyn Davies
- Plymouth, South West Devon and South East Cornwall Sustainable Growth Distribution Study (2005) - Baker Associates