Devonport Area Action Plan

Issues & Options

This document has been produced by the City Council as a part of the first stage in preparing Plymouth’s new Local Development Framework (LDF).

Plymouth is experiencing a period of significant change. There is a real expectation of improving the quality of people’s lives in a way that truly reflects the aspirations of local communities. Significant developments are already underway to deliver key elements of this vision. Further major opportunities are coming forward. We need your help to evolve a Development Framework to manage these changes effectively.

In order to shape the content of this new development framework, we would like to know:-

- What sort of Plymouth do you want to see in the future?
  The answers to this question will shape the ‘Core Strategy’ document which outlines how the city will evolve over the next ten or more years.

- What changes, if any, need to be made in your area to help improve it?
  The answers to this question will shape the ‘Devonport Area Action Plan’ which will show in detail how significant changes in this area will re-create Devonport as an essential part of Plymouth’s urban renaissance agenda.
This document is intended to generate discussion about the issues and opportunities in the Devonport area. It is not intended to be site specific, but rather to try and identify the more important strategic issues which will help to shape the way Devonport develops in the future.

The timetable for producing the Devonport Area Action Plan is as follows:

- detailed policies and proposals will be generated as a result of this consultation, which in turn will be consulted on in June/July 2005,

- this will lead to the submission of the Devonport Area Action Plan to the Secretary of State by the end of 2005.

In the case of Devonport we are fortunate that the New Deal for Communities initiative and Devonport Regeneration Company (DRC) has and continues to work extensively with the local community and other partners to develop a consensus on how this area should change. This is witnessed by the publication of the Draft Devonport Development Framework which has undergone much public consultation. With this foundation we can now translate community aspirations into the statutory plans. This is important because it provides planning certainty for potential investors to enable development to proceed.

**We need your views to help us shape the Area Action Plan for Devonport.**
Devonport

Devonport lies to the west of the city centre on the River Tamar. It originally developed as a neighbourhood to serve the Royal Naval Dockyard in the early 18th Century, and its economy has remained heavily dependent on the Dockyard ever since. Recent changes in defence policy, however, have seen substantial job losses in the defence sector which has given rise to unemployment and associated social and environmental problems.

Issues and opportunities

There are a number of issues facing the area in terms of how to achieve a sustainable community where everyone has access to high quality services, housing and job opportunities. These include:-

- How to reduce inequalities between Devonport and the rest of the city?
- How to improve standards of health, and healthy living?
- How to improve levels of educational achievement?
- How to increase job opportunities, reduce unemployment, and raise incomes?
- How to create greater tenure choice and affordable housing; reducing the dependence upon rented housing?
- How to achieve a more balanced age structure?
- How to improve the quality of the built environment, building on the historic assets including the conservation area?
• How to improve community facilities and access to services?

• How to accommodate new retail uses, and its effect on the existing Local Centre?

• How to improve pedestrian movement and overcome barriers such as the MoD storage enclave in the heart of Devonport, and the A374 which runs through the area?

In order to address these issues, DRC has worked extensively with the local community and other partners to prepare a draft Devonport Development Framework (DDF). This document recognises the need for a comprehensive approach to the area, providing the foundations for an integrated regeneration programme to meet local needs. (Devonport Development Framework: draft report for consultation, Matrix Partnership, December 2003).

The DDF seeks to build on the area’s strengths and opportunities, including:-

• The waterfront location and an arc of green spaces (Devonport Park, The Brickfields and Mount Wise);

• A rich heritage based on the area’s historic naval associations;

• A strong community identity;

• Proximity to the city centre;

• Availability of two large development sites, namely the Storage Enclave in the heart of Devonport, and Mount Wise on the waterfront;

• A range of other smaller opportunity sites where new development, environmental improvements or building refurbishment can take place in support of the area’s regeneration.
Vision

In terms of addressing these issues, the vision, (taken from the DDF), is -
“The re-creation of Devonport as a distinct place in modern Plymouth; a vibrant self-
sustaining community; a place of real quality, variety and interest, the pride of residents,
attractive to visitors and a model of 21st Century living, working and playing”.

The key aims of this vision can be achieved through an integrated approach which seeks
to re-establish Devonport as a thriving neighbourhood within Plymouth, supported by
compact, mixed use development bringing vitality back to the heart of the community.
Investment in housing, employment, health, education, recreation and retail will all
contribute to improving the quality of life in this area.
Options to deliver this vision

**Opportunities arising from the release of the MoD Storage Enclave**

The release of this site provides an opportunity to put a commercial heart back into Devonport, to increase investment and prosperity, helping to deliver a more balanced community. A new district centre could be focused on the storage enclave, including a small-medium sized supermarket, improved health and community facilities/services, as well as employment and residential uses. An option might also be to encourage an education use in this central location so as to better serve the surrounding community.

**Opportunities arising from the release of the Mount Wise**

The Mount Wise site provides a unique opportunity for mixed use development capitalising on its built heritage, open spaces and waterfront location, offering views across to the rest of the city. It requires a partnership approach to deliver this ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunity for the people of Devonport.

The site forms a major gateway to Devonport from the waterfront. A key principle should be to increase public access and enjoyment of the site, and to sensitively restore and convert Admiralty House and Mount Wise House – possibly linking this area into the existing Conservation Area around Ker Street / Fore Street. Retention of the existing sports pitches for wider public use is an essential requirement of any future use of this site. There may also be an opportunity to encourage a community education facility onto this site, so that it would be centrally located to serve the wider needs of Devonport, Millbay and Stonehouse, taking advantage of the campus style facilities.

**Improve transport links**

The A374 currently runs along Chapel Street, effectively severing the residential community and making the Brickfields less accessible. One option is to re-route heavy traffic along Kings Road and Fore Street before rejoining Park Avenue. This would leave Chapel Street, (which could be made more pedestrian friendly), to serve local needs, but still bring passing trade to support the new centre.

**Provide high quality housing**

The housing stock and mix of housing types can be improved by a combination of redevelopment, refurbishment and new development.
In order to meet the Government's ‘decent homes’ standard for all Council homes, Plymouth City Council are currently considering different options. This will include transferring some housing stock to Registered Social Landlords, and disposing of some landholdings for mixed use development.

In addition to improvements to the existing housing stock, the redevelopment of the Storage Enclave and Mount Wise sites for mixed use will create significant opportunities for further provision of mixed tenure housing, as well as increasing the overall numbers of housing in Devonport.

**Provide a healthy and safe environment**

In order to reduce crime and fear of crime, new developments must be designed to provide a safe and attractive environment. This includes –

- Encouraging pedestrians and cyclists to use streets and footpaths
- Promoting natural surveillance by ensuring that buildings overlook streets and recreation areas
- Promoting ‘neighbourliness’ through the design and layout of new development.

The recreational and environmental benefits of Devonport’s open spaces will be enhanced. Improvements are planned for Devonport Park and the Brickfields (where major investment in a new sports hall, stadium athletics facilities and sports pitches is in progress). Mount Wise will be opened up for public access. These green spaces can provide for city-wide as well as district functions. In addition, the waterfront area can be enhanced for recreation.

**Develop job opportunities**

To diversify the local economy and create jobs and investment sites and premises. These will be made available for existing and new Devonport businesses that will provide a range of employment opportunities. Opportunities will also be provided for incubator units and social enterprises. As well as supporting existing employment sectors, new sectors such as leisure, entertainment and tourism can be encouraged, while employment in retail can be expanded. There may well be opportunities to develop further Community Economic Development Trusts and Community Interest Companies to support initiatives to raise skills and ensure developments provide construction skill opportunities.
**The Vision** - The re-creation of Devonport as a distinct place in modern Plymouth; a vibrant self-sustaining community; a place of real quality, variety and interest, the pride of residents, attractive to visitors and a model of 21st Century living, working and playing.
The M.O.D. Storage Enclave,- Issues and Options

The Release of part of the MoD Storage Enclave will result in a substantial investment in Devonport, and the opportunity to create a new centre for this community.

It paves the way for the provision of new housing, shopping, community, open space, and business uses. The benefits of this redevelopment will not just be restricted to the area to be developed, but will be felt across the whole of Devonport, and beyond.

A key element of any development will be to restore north – south links through the area that were severed when the site was taken over by the MoD. By restoring something along the lines of the historic street pattern, Devonport once again can become a united neighbourhood.

The Draft Devonport Development Framework addresses the development opportunities that could be realised by the release of the site. These include;- 

**Housing**

The majority of the site will be redeveloped for housing. This will provide affordable housing, but perhaps just as importantly in Devonport’s case, it will enable more owner occupied and shared ownership properties to be built, which will help to deliver a more balanced community. In addition, development of more houses will help to redress the overdependence on flats, and provide a better choice of property types than that which exists at present.

New housing is also the key to wider regeneration proposals. It allows the demolition and redevelopment of other sites to take place, as it enables families to be re-housed in the community whilst the existing sites are being redeveloped. It is envisaged that the majority of the residential development would take place in the centre of the site, away from the traffic on Chapel Street to the east, and away from any potential disturbance from South Yard to the west.
Employment

In order to help to deliver a sustainable development, and to improve the economy, local employment provision is an essential component of any proposal. Some mixed use development, involving employment in the form of offices or live work units and residential, might be appropriate on parts of the site, (e.g. along Chapel Street), whereas more industrial type employment uses could be located along the new boundary with South Yard, where it could act as a visual buffer.

Retail

The area is presently underprovided for in terms of food shopping. This will be exacerbated by the increase in population that development will bring. The enclave provides the potential site for a new supermarket. The best location for such a use would be along Chapel Street, close to its junction with Fore Street. This could be the centre of the re-vitalised neighbourhood, and act as a focus for other retail uses, community services and activities. The relationship of a new retail centre with other retail uses in the area, (especially Marlborough Street) will need careful consideration.

Open Space

In this otherwise heavily developed area, it will be important to provide some amenity and play areas. These should be in the heart of the development, and overlooked by residential properties. Such urban green spaces can provide an oasis of quiet in which to sit and watch the world, somewhere to meet friends and have a chat, and somewhere to give children an area to play in safety.
Linkages

A safe and convenient network of roads and footpaths are always important in any development, but especially here in an area that has been split in two by the MoD wall for so many years. It is important at the outset to ensure that a safe and convenient road and footpath network is safeguarded.

Site Layout

The layout as shown is not intended to prescribe the amount, disposition or type of development that is being suggested, or that would be acceptable.

It is merely intended to illustrate the principles of the development of the site as is set out above.

*Your thoughts on any of the above issues, or on any other matter relating to the development of the site, would be welcomed.*
Land Uses

- Mixed uses - principally residential
- Mixed uses - principally employment
- District centre
- Proposed public open space
Key matters for consideration:

The communities work and the DDF has led to the following key proposals being embodied into this Issues /Options consultation:

- The major opportunities provided by the Storage Enclave and Mount Wise are seen as providing the key opportunity to put a new heart into Devonport and provide the impetus for its regeneration.

- The proposal for a new centre based around a supermarket on Chapel Street, (possibly located at the junction of Chapel Street and Fore Street), with supporting retail uses and health facilities along Chapel Street.

- Enabling a different role for Marlborough Street focussed around encouraging residential and office uses to replace retail uses – which would be more appropriately located in Chapel Street. This proposal would need the active cooperation between local businesses and partners in order to manage the impact of change in a way that supports traders and ensures delivery of the new centre.

- Conversion of the market hall for a range of uses.

- Improvements to the communications links to reduce the effects of through traffic along the A374, as well as improve the linkages within the area.

- The redevelopment of the remainder of the MoD Storage Enclave and MoD Mount Wise as substantial mixed use developments to support a new centre - including office, workshops, civic, community, education, health, storage, live work units and new housing of high quality and mixed tenure.

- The development of a number of small sites to accommodate a mixture of uses – including offices, workshops, community, live work and new homes.
We would like your views on these matters:

1) Is this the right vision for Devonport?
2) What do you think are the priorities for meeting community needs, leading to the successful regeneration of this area?
3) Are there other options to address these issues?
We need to know what you think

The statutory consultation period to respond is 7th March - 18th April 2005.

All comments must be received within this period and can be sent to:

**Strategic Planning Manager**

Planning & Regeneration
Plymouth City Council
Civic Centre
Plymouth
PL1 2EW

or

by fax: 01752 304294
by email: ldf@plymouth.gov.uk

Further copies of the leaflet and response forms are available from:

www.plymouth.gov.uk/ldf
The Civic Centre (Planning Section)
Local Libraries

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