

### **The impact of the transport proposals on the King George V Playing Fields**

- 1.1 It is acknowledged that there is a tremendous emotional investment both personally and as a community with regards to King George V Playing Fields (KGV) and that the open space provides a valuable resource for the local community.
- 1.2 It is worth however, stepping back and looking objectively at the existing (baseline) situation on KGV and the surrounding area.
  1. The northern edge of Elburton can be characterised as a low quality and a low sensitivity landscape containing un-planned derelict & poorly maintained greenhouses and buildings.
  2. There has been repeated ad-hoc, piecemeal and incoherent residential development along this edge which has created an urban fringe characteristic.
  3. There are 4 rugby pitches, 3 of which are not on the best orientation for sport (according to the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) guidelines) and a changing pavilion.
  4. The southern pitch has a tendency to be waterlogged (according to Plymouth Sports Forum),
  5. There is limited natural surveillance of the entire area, including the pitches and the children's play area, from surrounding properties.
  6. There is an existing car park which is used significantly by dog walkers. This creates a conflict between dog walkers and the use of the pitches for sport that represents a considerable health risk from Toxocariasis which has been recognised as such by the NPFA as a serious concern. This is also noted by Plymouth City Council (PCC), South Hams District Council (SHDC) and Devon County Council (DCC) "*parks services personnel are of the opinion that dog fouling on this playing field is amongst the worst of all parks/open spaces in Plymouth*"<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.3 If the area was left, the future baseline situation would potentially get worse. The pressures for further un-planned and piecemeal development would be strong and a further sense of dereliction would prevail reducing the quality and value of the immediate area.
- 1.4 The North Plymstock AAP proposals are aimed at addressing these important issues. The proposals have been subject to detail liaison and agreement with PCC, SHDC, DCC and Sport England including agreement in principle with the National Playing Fields Association and Plymouth Sports Forum. The AAP provides an opportunity to:
  1. Develop a more coherent edge to Elburton with improved facilities for KGV.
  2. Provide an increased area of sports pitches for KGV with additional compensatory pitches that would be orientated in accordance with

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<sup>1</sup> Reference - Sherford & North Plymstock Area Action Plans - Joint Session Issue B - Response by Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, Devon County Council.

NPFA guidelines within the Sports Hub. The Sports Hub will include a 25m swimming pool and associated facilities. This facility offers the opportunity of creating not only match pitches but training and fitness facilities to support local clubs (including Elburton Villa Football Club and Plympton Victoria Rugby Club).

3. Link KGV into an integrated, high quality "sports hub" for both existing and proposed community uses.
  4. Separate out dog walking and informal recreation from the formal sports provisions to avoid health and safety issues.
  5. Provide a linear park in the gap between communities which provides both formal and informal pedestrian and cycle links down to the Sherford Valley and Community Park to the east and ultimately Saltram to the west.
  6. Create the potential for better surveillance on the wider area including KGV.
  7. Certainty of edge development removing the open ended spectre of unplanned incremental development and coalescence.
  8. Establishing a clear and attractive area of transition between two distinct communities with joint access to the facilities and amenities provided.
- 1.5 Whilst the transport proposals will obviously have an effect on the open space, mitigation measures have been carefully considered in order to provide an overall improvement to the existing situation and the relevant sports bodies are supportive of the proposals.
- 1.6 Indicative proposals have been produced to assist in the process of determining the mitigation proposals and include the following<sup>2</sup>:
1. A compensatory new senior rugby pitch within the sport hub which would be in the best orientation for playing
  2. Two senior rugby pitches and one junior rugby pitch to the north of the proposed road, with approximately 20m between the edge of carriageway and playing surface. A ball stop fence and significant additional mature tree planting will also reinforce the edge condition.
  3. A new changing facility would be provided to the north of the proposed road, next to the pitches with parking facilities.
  4. A dedicated park for informal recreation and dog walking would be provided to the south of the road, with parking and new play facilities that are better overlooked from surrounding properties.
  5. Additional pedestrian and cycle routes would link the KGV area into the proposed sports hub and wider informal recreation facilities associated with Sherford.
- 1.7 In view of the opportunity and the commitment to enhancement, it is Red Tree's opinion that the North Plymstock AAP, as submitted, is sound.
- 1.8 Red Tree fully supports the response to these opportunities expressed in the AAP but has also recognised and responded to the public concern about the proposed alignment of the road through KGV. The submitted Red Tree Planning Application therefore has proposed a minor amendment to the AAP High Quality Public Transport (HQPT) and Main Street road alignment to

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<sup>2</sup> These proposals as drawn in September 2006 are shown on the enclosed plans. Please note that these are different to the plans included in the planning application, which shows a route north of KGV.

avoid the KGV area, whilst still providing the benefits of an integrated and higher quality sports facility and a more coherent, robust and ultimately better quality edge to Elburton.

- 1.9 Red Tree has supported the AAP and more particularly agrees that the route of the Main Street north of Elburton is the appropriate alignment. Red Tree recognise the sensitivity of public opinion but also consider that the current status of the area in which the playing fields sit, represents a tremendous opportunity to create a combined linear park and integrated sports hub which will act both as a connector to the wider sports and recreational network but also provide a clear and rational divide between two distinct communities, whilst maintaining the structural relationship between them, most particularly in terms of walkable access to wide ranging community facilities. Red Tree therefore does not object to the proposals but fully supports their strategic ambition.
- 1.10 The Red Tree Planning Application is a detailed response to the strategic objective expressed in the AAP; it includes the detailed design of the Main Street/HQPT road link, proposing a route which demonstrates that the link can be delivered with no impact upon the physical structure of the KGV playing fields. The route sits beyond the northern boundary of the playing fields, within a re-structured bund on the southern edge of Hazeldene Quarry. Additional planting can be used to strengthen the structure of existing trees to screen the road from the south.
- 1.11 The amended route responds to the principal concern of local residents to protect the existing use of the playing fields and provides an incidental benefit of immediate and straight forward deliverability of the route.
- 1.12 Red Tree considers that the planning application route, as a detailed response to the AAP, is within the scope of reasonable variance and as such does not constitute a significant alteration to the route contemplated by the AAP.