HOW CAN WE DEVELOP A LARGER THAN LOCAL VISION?

Plymouth Plan topic paper
Sub Regional Growth
How can we develop a larger than local vision?

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What is this topic paper about?

How can we develop a larger than local vision?

This topic paper has been published as part of Plymouth Plan Connections. It is one of a series of topic papers that are being published to provide information and support the Council's ongoing discussions with local people and organisations about the future of the city.

This topic paper sets out an understanding of the current approach to growth within the individual authorities which comprise the Plymouth Housing Market Area and how they contribute to the sustainable growth of the area as whole. Each authority is at different stages in preparing new Local Plans for their areas. The topic paper provides information about progress on the respective plans and sets out an approach by which the HMA Partners can continue to work together to:

- consider the future development needs of the Plymouth Housing Market Area arising from forecast demographic and economic patterns of change, as evidenced by the joint 2013 Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment; and
- ensure that any required shared outcomes are identified.

All the local authorities in the HMA have been involved in extensive discussions throughout the development of their plans as part of our statutory duty to cooperate. These discussions will continue throughout the process of producing our plans. This topic paper is written by Plymouth City Council and sets out Plymouth’s perspective on the spatial implications of the duty to cooperate at this time and where it may need to be further developed. It sets out broadly how the City Council believes that a policy statement, or vision for the HMA might look, and what the key issues and questions may be.
Why are we developing a ‘Larger than Local’ Vision?

Plymouth City Council, West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council, Cornwall Council and the Dartmoor National Park Authority (the ‘Local Authorities’) are at various different stages in the production of their Local Plans. Devon County Council, who are also one of the authorities working to develop a ‘Larger than Local’ vision, are working with the Devon district authorities on their Local Plans and also are responsible for producing a Waste Local Plan and a Minerals Local Plan. Cornwall Council is close to finalising and submitting its plan to the Government, whereas Plymouth City Council is preparing the Plymouth Plan, which will be a single overarching strategic plan for the city. All of these plans, however, will need to set out how they relate to each other to set out a consistent strategy for the wider area – in other words they need to set out a common ‘Larger than Local’ vision. The Local Authorities have therefore been working together on understanding the evidence and ensuring the needs of each area are considered as part of developing such a vision. A major part of that work has been the joint production of a strategic housing market needs assessment for the different local authority areas to understand the levels of need and growth that may be required.

The overall aim of this and future work is to have a shared understanding of the ‘larger than local issues’ facing Plymouth and its neighbours and to ensure that we have carefully considered the implications of our various development strategies to ensure there is an integrated approach in place to address these. This approach will then be set out as a common statement within each of the Local Plans under preparation.
Issues Affecting the Area

Plymouth’s Principal Urban Area (source: Plymouth Core Strategy April 2007)

There are a wide variety of issues which affect the way in which Plymouth and the surrounding areas will change over the period up to 2031, and therefore the need for additional jobs, homes and other facilities. These include:

- where people work,
- what job opportunities are available,
- where people are choosing live,
- where people go for leisure and other activities;
- what people can afford,
- what our infrastructure can sustain; and
- what our environments can support.

Each individual Authority is considering the implications of these and other issues within their administrative boundaries, but must also consider how they impact on each other and identify how we can address these larger than local issues effectively. As part of this process, all five authorities included within the Plymouth HMA have engaged regularly in meaningful and productive discussions since 2012 to inform the preparation of new Local Plans. The
Authorities have sought to ensure that our local strategies for growth fit together to help address and better understand our larger than local issues. This cooperation is helping us to plan positively to manage sustainable patterns of growth and change across the HMA to 2031. Our Local Plans are also influenced by wider infrastructure projects and sub-regional strategies for economic growth, such as the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership’s Strategic Economic Plan and the Plymouth and South West Peninsula City Deal. Therefore these discussions have also involved Devon County Council and representatives from the relevant Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The work being progressed through the HMA Authorities will also be used to help inform both local and strategic infrastructure requirements and to ensure that future needs and requirements are met in an effective and efficient way.

In addition to the cooperation between the local authorities within the HMA, the Devon authorities and other Duty to Cooperate agencies have signed a Protocol which demonstrates a commitment to engaging in ongoing and effective dialogue as we develop and implement our Local Plans across the County.

**Evidence Base**

A joint Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (SHMNA) was published in July 2013 which has provided us with a shared evidence base on which to understand and plan for projected rates of housing growth over the next 15 years (to 2031). This work will be further developed as new data becomes available. More information on the findings of the SHMNA as they relate to Plymouth is set out in the Housing Need and Supply topic paper.

Other key pieces of evidence, notably Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and Employment Land Reviews, are being undertaken independently but the partner authorities have been engaged with each of these as part of the Duty to Cooperate requirements.
What's happening within individual authority areas?

Presenting a larger than local vision is something we are keen to do in order to show our consideration of the wider issues that affect us and to demonstrate how we are responding to these both as individual authorities and a collective group, each with the aim of developing a coordinated and complementary strategy for growth across the HMA. This vision would be set at a high level under which each Local Authority can clearly set out their own aspirations and tell the story of how these fit together and complement some wider aims and outcomes.

Working within the framework of the Duty to Cooperate is an important element of planning effectively for the wider area. Additionally, each Local Authority understands that they must also identify and evidence what they feel is an objectively assessed need for development in their individual areas. This more local strategy enables the individual authorities to set out and enable their own aspirations and needs to be met, whilst also clearly identifying how these strategies may impact on each other. The following section sets out the emerging approaches being explored by the individual Local Authorities and how these have been shaped to take account of the need to consider the growth strategy across the HMA as a whole.

Cornwall

To date, Cornwall Council has progressed its plan to a submission draft. The level of housing included within the most recent version of the plan was increased from earlier drafts on the basis of both the jointly produced SHMNA and concerns raised by other authorities within the HMA that if a level of housing lower than the demographic projection was provided it may have implications for adjoining areas.

Cornwall, in its submission draft, has allocated a level consistent with the advice in terms of demographic projections and believes this also includes a greater flex and capacity than is currently identified in the SHMNA. Cornwall’s Local Plan seeks to build upon the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership’s strategy for economic growth, focusing upon increasing productivity and income and quality of employment as the key objective.

In spatial terms the plan focuses strategic levels of growth in the main towns but also supports each settlement to have an ability to meet its own needs supporting Cornwall’s smaller and rural communities.

The submission draft was also directly amended responding to concerns raised by Plymouth City Council regarding the level of growth in Saltash. These concerns were due to the need to ensure the strategic role of the Tamar crossings was considered. This meant a reduction in levels of growth in Saltash which has been absorbed elsewhere in Cornwall to reduce pressure on that infrastructure. This highlighted the need for a coordinated approach in ensuring the sustainability of future growth proposals.
Plymouth

Plymouth adopted its Core Strategy in 2007, the first major English City to do so, and followed this with a set of Area Action Plans covering key areas of change. The City is pursuing a growth strategy, following the Vision for Plymouth which was prepared by MBM Arquitectes with AZ Studio in 2003 which underpinned the Core Strategy and which seeks to transform the city into ‘one of Europe’s finest most vibrant waterfront cities’. This vision aims to grow the city’s population to over 300,000 and is based upon a step change in the economy of the City, bringing in high quality jobs and leading to a better quality of life for all.

The City Council has commenced work on the Plymouth Plan, which not only reviews the Core Strategy and other LDF documents, but will also integrate all other Council strategies, such as the Local Transport Plan, the Local Economic Strategy and the Housing Plan, to create one strategic vision and plan for Plymouth. As is set out in the Strategic Overview topic paper, the Plymouth Plan will continue to be a strategy to deliver the City’s growth aspirations.

The City Council has published a range of topic papers and evidence base documents as part of the Plymouth Plan Connections engagement exercise during the summer of 2014. These documents set out the levels of housing and job growth which is necessary to meet the growth aims of the city. The papers also set out how the growth of the city will be carried through into elements of the transformation of Plymouth, such as its green infrastructure and waterfront, a strategy for the city centre which enhances its regional role, transport objectives to create a transport system which creates the conditions for growth, through to the implications of growth for health and wellbeing, education, arts and culture, and perhaps most importantly local communities. These papers and the evidence base are being published for comments via the Plymouth Plan portal.

In terms of the larger than local vision and what this means for the wider area surrounding the city, it seems clear that Plymouth will be planning for growth well in excess of the trend based, population growth estimates produced by the ONS. In order to grow to a population in excess of 300,000 people, the city will see the creation of approximately 18,000 new jobs over the period up to 2031, and will need to deliver in the order of 22,000 new homes. This growth in jobs will be delivered through a range of measures chiefly set out in the City Deal, the Local Economic Strategy 2014, the Heart of the South West Strategic Economic Plan, not to mention local measures such as the Plan for Jobs. Plymouth therefore sees the ‘Larger than Local’ vision as a crucial opportunity to set out how the city’s growth will be coordinated with the development aims of its neighbouring authorities. As set out later in this paper, it may be that some of Plymouth’s development needs will be met in areas adjoining the city but located within neighbouring authorities. The city’s growth will also create a regional service centre offering facilities and attractions for residents and businesses in the wider area. This will further develop the dynamic relationships which exist between Plymouth and its hinterland. There may also be the opportunities for neighbouring authorities to use the growth of the city to set out how the larger towns in their areas can pursue policies of sustainable growth, complementing the growth of the city, but aiming to create jobs to serve their own residents.
South Hams

South Hams is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the district. This will be in the form of a strategic plan for the whole of the district which will cover the period up to 2031 and is known as ‘Our Plan’.

A submission draft is due to be published for consultation in the winter. In the meantime, South Hams District Council will be carrying out a series of informal consultations to help progress the growth strategy for the area. Any options will need to be informed by evidence gathered through the Land Availability Assessment, and through work being undertaken on the potential for economic growth in the district to understand what could practically and realistically be delivered to boost the supply of housing. The Council needs to ensure that any proposed levels of growth are carefully considered within the context of the other policies within the NPPF in order to deliver a sustainable strategy for development.

West Devon

As with South Hams, West Devon is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the borough. This will be in the form of a strategic plan for the whole of the West Devon which will cover the period up to 2031 and is known as ‘Our Plan’

Dartmoor National Park Authority

Dartmoor have an adopted Core Strategy and adopted Development Management DPD, and these two documents comprise the Local Plan for the National Park. The Authority is at a very early stage in reviewing these documents, and is undertaking a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to inform this process. The National Park Authority is working closely with the City Council and the other neighbouring authorities to develop the ‘Larger than Local’ Vision.
What is our emerging vision?

The emerging vision takes into consideration both the opportunities and constraints that affect how much growth can be accommodated and where it can be most appropriately delivered in order to secure sustainable communities, prosperous economies and protected environments for the future. From the work undertaken to date, the emerging strategies of each Authority suggest the following vision. The key elements of this Larger than Local Vision are:

- Plymouth acts as the hub of the region, a growing city with an ambition to be one of Europe’s most vibrant waterfront cities, with an outstanding quality of life for everyone. This is an ambition founded on the need to grow the city’s economy and hence many of the early delivery mechanisms are focused on driving new jobs and establishing an infrastructure that supports business growth and improved productivity.

- The city’s economic growth will also create population growth, which in itself will support further economic growth as the city’s achieves a critical mass of population that sustains high quality services through the increase demand. In this way, Plymouth will place an enhanced role within its hinterland and the surrounding region, providing employment and services which sustain the wider economy and support the economic, social and environmental needs of the entire sub region.

- As the city’s population grows, and to make that growth sustainable, there is a need to ensure that the city represents a high quality and attractive place for investors and new residents. It should therefore be a quality growth agenda which creates attractive communities, with facilities to support all segments of society, access to greenspaces and recreation, as well as to the water. The city’s communities should have access to high quality education, transport, health and cultural facilities, as well as a range of employment opportunities.

- Therefore the city’s growth should not be at the expense of the quality of places and attractions which deliver the Quality City.

In Cornwall, South Hams and West Devon, the local authorities are pursuing strategies to promote the sustainable growth of towns which operate as sustainable communities in their own right, helping to reduce the need for travel to Plymouth and the level of dependency that some communities have on the city. For example, Cornwall’s Local Plan and economic strategy seeks to support economic vitality in South East Cornwall. While growth of a strategic scale is focused upon the main towns, development of an appropriate scale will be required to support the sustainability of smaller rural communities.

Notwithstanding this overall spatial approach, there is also an acknowledgement of Plymouth’s strategic role in supporting the wider well-being of the region, through its provision of regional and strategic facilities and opportunities that cannot be provided at a local level and through the market that it provides to rural businesses. It will be important therefore for all Local Plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development within their areas which are set within a clear understanding of the relationships and roles of the various settlements in the sub-region, including Plymouth’s role as a higher order centre.
Question 1
What role should Plymouth play in Devon and Cornwall?

Question 2
How can Plymouth’s growth be managed in such a way that it benefits the wider hinterland?

Question 3
What change should take place in Plymouth and its hinterland to support making Plymouth a more successful city which provides the jobs and services people need?
Key Issues and Alternatives for the Larger Than Local Vision

The Plymouth Plan Housing Need and Supply topic paper sets out that in order to achieve higher economic growth which will drive the transformation of Plymouth, the city will need to accommodate an additional 18,000 new jobs and 22,000 new homes. The Housing Need and Supply topic paper sets out alternatives as to how this need will be met – either through maximising opportunities for development within the city boundaries or by pursuing a ‘Quality City’ agenda which would accommodate development but also seek to provide and protect greenspace, open space, employment facilities and other assets which will combine to create a high quality built environment.

Under the Quality City alternative, around 15,000 new homes can be accommodated within the city boundaries by 2031 (this figure, which is informed by the Plymouth Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, will be tested further as the Council completes its Land Availability Assessment during 2015). This leaves a potential shortfall of 7000 new homes to be found, and under the Duty to Cooperate the City Council is discussing with its neighbouring authorities where this shortfall may be found.

One approach to meeting this need could be to investigate whether Saltash in Cornwall could accommodate some of the city’s growth, given that the town already has a number of functional and transport links to Plymouth. The ability of Saltash to accommodate any of Plymouth’s housing needs is, however, limited due to the obvious physical barrier presented by the River Tamar, and by the capacity constraint imposed by the Tamar Bridge. It therefore seems impractical to expect that any expansion of Saltash could serve Plymouth’s needs, as reflected in Plymouth’s representation to the Cornwall Local Plan supporting the lower option of growth proposed by Cornwall Council for the Saltash area.

A second alternative is therefore to explore a planning framework for the Urban Fringe. This area is within South Hams but immediately adjoins the city, and a number of communities straddle the boundary, seeming to be part of Plymouth but actually falling under the jurisdiction of South Hams. Plymouth City Council believes that a joint approach to the planning of this area could involve:

- Setting a principle that development taking place in the Plymouth urban fringe will be predominantly meeting Plymouth’s needs, given that most of the communities in this area already function as part of the city,
- Setting out that Sherford new settlement, which has permission for 5,500 new dwellings is meeting Plymouth’s needs,
- Searching for further locations in the urban fringe to accommodate the additional 1,500 dwellings required to meet Plymouth’s needs. Several potential locations have been assessed as part of work done jointly between Plymouth and South Hams on the Urban Fringe DPD. This work found that sites at Newnham, and at Woolwell, had capacity for considerable growth. In fact, Woolwell was shown as potentially having capacity for 2000 new dwellings.
Identifying those features of the urban fringe which set Plymouth’s ‘limits to growth’ – for example the Plym Valley, the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty around Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuary, and Dartmoor National Park.

Identifying the role of Broadley Park (Roborough) and Langage in helping to meet the employment land needs arising from the city’s growth, as well as the potential role of some of the land at Sherford (see Economy topic paper).

**Question 4**

Should opportunities for Plymouth to expand be identified at Sherford and in the urban fringe to the east and north? Should other locations be considered?

All of these elements need to be understood in the context of the overall housing need of the HMA, demonstrating that the local authorities are proactively and positively planning for growth across the area, but doing so in a way which makes best use of potential of the city of Plymouth to grow in a sustainable and quality-driven way.

These principles are illustrated on the map below:
**What are the next steps?**

The development of a vision or agreed understanding of how the wider area works, which each authority can integrate into their Local Plans, is seen as a robust way of bringing together collective interests and setting out how the respective authorities have engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to set out how cross boundary issues have been addressed.

Our emerging vision requires further assessment and consideration to ensure that it is delivering the best option for growth across administrative boundaries. Over the next few months, we will be working with adjoining authorities to ‘test’ this vision, check that it is deliverable and develop a framework for monitoring and responding to its implementation over the next 15 years.

At the same time, the individual authorities will continue to progress their respective Local Plans and, through the Duty to Cooperate, will engage on relevant aspects as they are developed.
What happens next?

Any comments received on this topic paper will be considered in the preparation of the Plymouth Plan. You can make comments at www.plymouth.gov.uk/PlymouthPlan or by email plymouthplan@plymouth.gov.uk. Alternatively, please post your comments to:

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Department
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth
PL1 3BJ

The closing date for consultation responses is 25 October 2014.

List of development plan documents of neighbouring authorities relating to the Plymouth Principal Urban Area

- Plymouth Core Strategy (adopted 2007)
- South Hams Core Strategy (adopted 2006)
- West Devon Core Strategy (adopted 2010)
- Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies Submission Version (March 2014)
- North Plymstock AAP (adopted 2007)
- Sherford AAP (adopted 2007)
- Devon Waste Plan (submitted / examination 2014)

List of key Plymouth Plan evidence base documents.

- Sustainable Growth Distribution Study (2005)
- Plymouth Urban Fringe DPD Sustainable Neighbourhood Assessments (2011)
- Plymouth Urban Fringe DPD Overview Paper (2011)
- Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (2013)
- Plymouth Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2014)