HOW CAN WE MAKE PLYMOUTH’S WATERFRONT ONE OF THE MOST VIBRANT IN EUROPE?

Plymouth Plan

Plymouth City Council

Plymouth Waterfront Partnership

Our Common Asset

Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum

Plymouth Plan
topic paper
Waterfront
How can we make Plymouth's waterfront one of the most vibrant in Europe?

What is this topic paper about? ................................................................. 2
Why does the waterfront matter? ............................................................ 3
Where are we now? ................................................................................ 5
Delivering Britain’s First Ocean City: Drivers and opportunities .......... 6
Alternatives ............................................................................................ 11
Plymouth’s Waterfront .......................................................................... 13
Solutions – What are the opportunities for delivering Britain’s first ocean city? ................................................................. 14
What happens next? ............................................................................. 19
What is this topic paper about?

How can we make Plymouth's waterfront one of the most vibrant in Europe?

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 ongoing discussions with local people and organisations about the future of the city. The topic paper looks at the role of the Waterfront and how it can be used to regenerate the city. Please refer to the Waterfront Evidence Base Document, which is available from www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouthplan/waterfronttopicpaper

Make your comments on this document as part of the Plymouth Plan Connections before 25 October 2014. www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouthplan
Why does the waterfront matter?

Plymouth is a unique maritime city that is blessed with a superb natural harbour, spectacular views to rival any city worldwide and a fascinating maritime history.

Plymouth’s waterfront is home to the Royal Navy, defence facilities, a commercial port, international ferry and a large fishing fleet as well as various marinas and other marine-related uses. It is a focus for leisure and tourism, including the historic Barbican, Hoe, Royal William Yard and National Marine Aquarium. It is also a place where many people live. Much of the water off Plymouth is designated as a European Marine Site for its special inter-tidal and sub-tidal habitats including mudflats, eelgrass beds and rocky reefs as well as species such as Little Egret birds and the Allis Shad fish.

The waterfront is one of Plymouth’s most important and valuable assets and it is essential that the Plymouth Plan considers its conservation and enhancement to ensure that it meets the needs of local people and businesses, whilst making the most of its potential to attract new residents, visitors and investors and protecting the environment.

Since Plymouth’s current Core Strategy was adopted in 2007, the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) has introduced a comprehensive marine planning and licensing regime for all developments below high water. The Plymouth Plan will therefore need to integrate with the Marine Management Organisation’s statutory marine planning process, which extends up as far as the high water mark, and with the work of the statutory harbour authorities. In this way the Plymouth Plan will need to have regard to the National Marine Policy Statement and the National Planning Policy Framework which both state the need for this integration across the marine and terrestrial planning regimes through integrated coastal zone management.

The Plymouth Plan provides the opportunity to consider what works well in the waterfront areas, what needs to be improved and how these improvements can be delivered. In particular, the Plymouth Plan will ensure the approach for improving access to and along the waterfront and activating it with vibrant uses to improve its role as an attractive destination where people want to live, work and play is considered, whilst safeguarding and enhancing the port-related activities and the quality of the marine environment itself.

Reaching the waterfront’s full potential will require the cooperation of many other key organisations and partners including the harbour authorities, landowners, major employers, local communities and key stakeholders.
DID YOU KNOW?

- Plymouth has over 30 miles of waterfront including Europe’s largest naval port.
- Plymouth’s commercial port handles over two million tonnes of goods a year.
- There are over 60,000 vessel movements a year in Plymouth waters.
- In terms of value, more fish are landed in Plymouth, than any other English port.
- The waterfront supports at least 25 per cent of the city’s total economy.
- Waterfront living is in very high demand.
- The Hoe is Plymouth’s best-loved open space.
- The waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries are designated as a European Marine Site.
- Kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding are the fastest growing watersports on our waters.

Question 1

Who are the key stakeholders and how can they help to deliver a common vision for the waterfront?
Where are we now?

The Core Strategy 2006-2021 set out the framework for the long term development of the city and included the adopted vision for the waterfront as set out in Area Visions for the East End, Sutton Harbour, The Hoe, Devonport and Millbay and Stonehouse. In addition, the Area Vision for Plymouth Sound and Estuaries set to conserve and enhance the unique marine environment and setting whilst promoting an integrated approach to sustainable development. Area Action Plans adopted between 2007 and 2008 for key parts of Plymouth’s waterfront at Devonport, Millbay and Stonehouse, and Sutton Harbour provided more detailed plans to be implemented up to 2021.

The Core Strategy also included specific policies for the waterfront and the marine environment also exist under themes including economy, transport and communications and natural environment which together set out the strategic direction for this critical resource.

The Core Strategy also recognised the importance of managing the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries in a coordinated manner and referenced the role of the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum as providing this role through the Tamar Estuaries Management Plan which is reviewed every six years.
Delivering Britain’s First Ocean City: Drivers and opportunities

DRIVERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Marine employment and port activities

Transforming the marine economy is at the heart of Plymouth’s vision for economic regeneration as the city works to diversify the economy into marine technologies including renewables, engineering and bioscience.

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed its commitment to Plymouth as a strategic naval base through the relocation of key naval functions to the naval dockyard from elsewhere. At the same time it is disposing of waterfront land that is surplus to its requirements.

In 2014 the City Deal for Plymouth and the South West Peninsula was signed which opens up considerable opportunities for Plymouth to reshape and modernise the waterfront of South Yard and thereby to continue the transformation of the marine economy through the establishment of a special marine campus. There will be further opportunities should additional sites come forward in the future.

Plymouth continues to function as a busy regional port and the port infrastructure, including the deep-water berths and facilities, will need to be safeguarded from other development as demand for waterfront living continues to put pressure on these sites. Some of these marine related sites are classified as hazardous, for example the fuel depots at Cattedown, and development around them is strictly controlled in order to minimise risk, but there may be opportunities should these zones be modified to reflect changes to the ways in which these sites are used.

Opportunities exist for Plymouth to make more of marine leisure and tourism for providing employment and there is the potential for Millbay to develop as a cruise-liner terminal.

CASE STUDY: ROYAL WILLIAM YARD

The Royal William Yard has recently been regenerated to introduce a mix of residential, office, restaurant and shop uses.

Regeneration and Housing

The National Planning Policy Framework requires Plymouth to significantly boost housing supply and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. Parts of the waterfront area are already prioritised for new homes through the Core Strategy, and as more waterfront land becomes available, a strategic approach will be needed for delivering housing, including housing within areas of deprivation. The Area Visions will provide more detail on how this will be done for each neighbourhood, and it will be important for each to have full regard for the marine environment and where appropriate to include policies on access to and along
the waterfront, marine employment opportunities and improving the public realm near the water - thereby addressing health and employment inequalities in some of the city’s most deprived communities.

**Transport, Access and Recreation**

The Mackay Vision did much to highlight the importance for Plymouth to reconnect the city centre to the waterfront and proposed improved access including a new boulevard to link the centre to Millbay.

There has been strong progress in improving waterside access over the recent years and generally there is good pedestrian access through the Waterfront Walkway along most of the waterfront, although there are still some exceptions. These exceptions include parts of the city’s western shore from Mount Wise to Saltash Passage, where the presence of the dockyard and naval base preclude public access. Also, Millbay, Coxsie, Cattewater, Laira and Oreston all suffer from reduced access due to a range of commercial and industrial activities which limit access to the waterfront.

The South West Coast Path comes through the city and is well used by residents and visitors with links into Cornwall provided by both seasonal and year-round ferries as well as the Tamar Bridge. This popular path is an important tourism asset and efforts should be made to introduce new routes closer to the waterfront where they are currently missing.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people are drawn to the waterfront as part of the city’s key events programme, causing specific transport challenges. Opportunities will need to be investigated to further encourage access by non-car forms of transport to these popular areas. Water based transport can also offer opportunities and there is potential to further develop the water transport network especially aimed at the leisure visitor and linking the waterfront communities.

For port related use, it is important to safeguard the port infrastructure as well as the HGV transport routes to the port itself, particularly if Plymouth should want to further develop its port-related function.

Plymouth is also a national centre for watersports with some of the best sailing waters in the country. In order to access the water, there needs to be a good network of public slipways and steps but these are lacking in some areas. There are currently 18 slipways and 19 water access points in the form of steps, jetties or pontoons in Plymouth. Many in public ownership are in poor condition. All new options should therefore be explored through the planning process in order to ensure that the slipways, steps, jetties and pontoons exist for people to access the water as the city’s population increases and demand for water recreation correspondingly rises.

The Plymouth Visitor Plan also identifies the need to improve waterside access as a means of developing the visitor economy of the city. Currently the Hoe, the Barbican and the Royal William Yard are the key waterfront recreational areas with additional facilities provided at Mountbatten, Devil’s Point and Mount Wise.

**Public & Civil Protection**
Some port-related uses, such as the Cattedown fuel storage facilities are hazardous and have associated risk zones that can limit land uses nearby. In terms of planning, it will therefore be important to fully understand the constraints that these developments impose, and to explore ways in which the areas affected can be reduced.

Increasing storms arising from climate change and sea-level rises will result in increasing risks along the waterfront which can have implications for development. It is important that resilience to flood and storm damage is factored in and the Flooding Topic Paper provides further information on this matter.

**Historic Environment**

The historic built environment strongly defines the character of the waterfront and includes some superb military buildings such as the Royal William Yard, Royal Citadel, Palmerston Forts, South Yard and six Conservation Areas including the Barbican, Plymouth’s medieval harbour.

As well as Listed Buildings there are important areas of archaeology, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens. There are also over 450 separate shipwrecks and aircraft wrecks recorded in the waters around Plymouth, of which only two are protected. The granite quays and wharves with the associated maritime heritage are testament to the vital role that Plymouth played in the country’s history as a historic naval and shipping centre. Whilst many of these are unsuitable for modern use, the Plymouth Plan will need to identify how the city can build on its distinctive heritage whilst still looking forward to the future.

The historic environment can be embraced to improve local communities through placemaking and the separate Neighbourhood Plans provide further detail on how this will be achieved.

**Marine Environment & Integrated Management**

Plymouth Sound and its associated tributaries comprise a complex suite of marine inlets. The estuaries entering Plymouth Sound, the large bay of the Sound itself, Wembury Bay and the River Yealm are of international importance and support a range of marine habitats and species rarely found in Britain. Within these waters are one of the highest concentrations of designated marine protected areas anywhere in England and these must be taken account of in the planning process.

Whilst the marine environment is heavily protected, the waters and waterfront are under increasing pressure from development and the associated impacts as Plymouth moves to deliver its vision of becoming Britain’s First Ocean City and one of Europe’s finest and most vibrant waterfront cities, whilst retaining its key national defence functions.

The challenge for Plymouth is therefore how to balance all the demands placed on the waterfront whilst protecting the marine habitats, species, water quality and seascape which plays such a strong role in shaping the city.
The Marine Management Act 2009 brought in tighter controls for all developments that impact on the marine environment, introduced marine planning and called for tighter environmental protection and under the National Planning Policy Framework, Plymouth City Council must take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and apply Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

In Plymouth, the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum has provided the mechanism for delivering much of this Integrated Coastal Zone Management by bringing together all the Relevant Authorities and delivering a common management approach under the careful chairmanship of the Queen’s Harbour Master.

### MANAGING THE WATERS

For over 20 years, the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF) has been managing the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries.

Chaired by the Queen’s Harbour Master, TECF brings together all the organisations who have responsibility or jurisdiction for the water and ensures that the waters are managed sustainably.

Plymouth City Council hosts the service and coordinates the delivery of the agreed Tamar Estuaries Management Plan. More information is available from [www.plymouth.gov.uk/tecf](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/tecf)

### Question 2

Do you agree that we have captured the key opportunities? Have we missed anything important?

### Place shaping

'Place-shaping' is now widely understood to describe the ways in which local players collectively use their influence, powers, creativity and abilities to create attractive, prosperous and safe communities, places where people want to live, work and do business.

Many parts of the waterfront already pulse with activity and can therefore be described as ‘vibrant’ - such as the naval dockyards, Barbican, Sutton Harbour and the marinas, docks and wharves.

Other parts of the waterfront still have considerable potential for further vibrancy through high quality architecture, improved public realm and signage, regeneration of underused areas improving access and maximising public enjoyment of the waterfront, promoting the use of empty buildings and spaces (such as the Hoe foreshore buildings) and promoting mixed-use regeneration as well as ‘meanwhile’ uses of key sites.
With its world-class sailing waters, Plymouth is an important venue for national and international sailing events, hosting prestigious events such as the America’s Cup.

Place-shaping can only be achieved by working collaboratively with partners, local businesses, employers and local communities who have a shared understanding of the priorities for the city and what needs to be in place to deliver them.
Alternatives

What alternatives are we considering?

There are many pressures on the waterfront with this part of the city being subject to sometimes conflicting demands. The question for the city is therefore whether to prioritise a single use over others, or alternatively to find ways to accommodate all of the key uses in a sustainable way.

The key alternatives that need to be considered are:

1. Prioritising or expanding the port and waterfront industries role.
2. Prioritising the visitor economy role.
3. Prioritising new homes in waterfront areas.
4. Maximising public access to and along the waterfront.
5. An overarching place-shaping policy to support the strategic demands on Plymouth’s waterfront which includes:
   - need for high quality development on the waterfront
   - supporting sustainable communities
   - preserving and enhancing the natural environment and historic heritage
   - supporting tourism and a vibrant visitor economy
   - supporting employment, particularly the marine industries
   - improving access to underused waterfront sites
   - improving connectivity to/from/within the waterfront
   - a strong mechanism to protect waterfront land from unsuitable development
   - joining marine and terrestrial issues through an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach.

Question 3

Do you agree that these are the alternative approaches? Are there any other that should be considered?

Pointers to preferred option

Planning of the waterfront requires a long-term view which integrates the land – sea interface and recognises the need to balance all the different uses. The preferred approach is therefore likely to be through an over-arching place-shaping policy that supports all the strategic demands on this limited resource. At the centre of this policy will be the requirement to build a coherent identity for the various parts of the waterfront which build on its key functions with specific areas prioritised for marine employment, tourism and leisure and mixed use.

Delivery of this option will require a collaborative approach with all relevant partners working together to deliver the place-making vision.
Question 4
Do you agree that one overarching policy place-shaping policy that supports the strategic demands on Plymouth’s waterfront is the preferred option?

Question 5
Who are the critical partners in delivering this vision and what role will they have?
Plymouth’s Waterfront

PLYMOUTH’S WATERFRONT

KEY
- Marine Employment Sites including Defence
- Deep Water Berths to be safeguarded
- European Marine Site
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Improve access and enhance public enjoyment
- Mixed Use, Recreational and Entertainment Areas
- Conserve and enhance areas of principle historic interest including line of major (19th century) fortification
- City Gateway
- Key views
- Proposed Cruise Liner Terminal
- Brittany Ferries Terminal
- Yacht Marina
- Capitalise on waterfront opportunities
- Promote and enhance water transport links
- Waterfront walkway

Promote and enhance water transport links

City Gateway

Key views

Proposed Cruise Liner Terminal

Brittany Ferries Terminal

Yacht Marina

Capitalise on waterfront opportunities

Promote and enhance water transport links

Waterfront walkway

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Plymouth Breakwater

To Plymouth Breakwater

To Plymouth

Plymouth's Waterfront
## Solutions – What are the opportunities for delivering Britain’s first ocean city?

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<th>Plymouth Plan Solution</th>
<th>Related theme</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Safeguard key port-related sites and support the development of port activity and other marine related commercial activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harness the unique natural and historic built environment of the waterfront to boost the economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve port facilities including a cruise liner terminal and safeguard key waterfront marine employment sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigate issues and opportunities arising from the Naval Base Strategic Land Review.</td>
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Waterfront Topic Paper
Develop a marine industries production campus in South Yard.

Manage risk effectively around hazardous installations in order to reduce the restricted areas around them.

**PLACE SHAPING**

Increase access to and along the waterfront and enhance the waterfront gateways create a positive sense of arrival.

There should be an over-arching place-shaping policy to support the strategic demands of the Plymouth Waterfront that includes the need for high quality development that

Bring into use empty buildings and spaces along the waterfront through mixed-use development and meanwhile uses where appropriate.
Ensure that Neighbourhood Plans have due regard for all marine issues.

Protect the waterfront’s unique environment without stifling investment.

**TRANSPORT & ACCESS**

Improve access to and along the waterfront including creation of the “Mackay” boulevard linking the city centre to Millbay and safeguarding key HGV routes to the port.

Improve facilities for walking, cycling, public transport and water transport.
**HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

Ensure the various key heritage assets are conserved and that their regeneration potential is embraced and that opportunities are sought to enhance their character, appearance and setting.

**MARINE ENVIRONMENT & INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT**

Ensure that there are policies and mechanisms that support the need for Integrated Coastal Zone Management that delivers a sustainable approach to the management of waterfront and the adjacent waters through the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum.

- Improve water access points such as slipways, quays and wharves through a sustainable approach.
Adopt a ‘no net loss’ with respect to impacts of developments on marine habitats and features and develop a robust mechanism to delivering the management of increasing recreational impacts on the marine environment.

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<td>Do you agree with the solutions as listed? Are there any missing?</td>
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<td>Can your organisation help with their delivery?</td>
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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:

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Plymouth
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The closing date for consultation responses is 25 October 2014.

References

- Heart of South West Strategic Economic Plan. 2014. www.heartofswlep.co.uk