

North Plymstock Area Action Plan

Public Examination

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Title:	The impact of the transport proposals on properties in Vinery Lane.
Examination Session:	7A

Summary of Key Points

1. The City Council, along with South Hams District Council and Devon County Council, submitted papers to the Joint Session held on 13th February 2007. These addressed the adequacy of transport links to the A379 and the impacts of the transport proposal on KGV playing fields. This paper addresses only the representations of Mr S O'Higgins.
2. The concerns raised by Mr S O'Higgins relate to:
 - A. The failure of the plan to consider alternative routes for the delivery of the HQPT and the submitted routes lack of a robust and credible evidence base.
 - B. The proposed routes segregation of the sports facilities from existing communities and its greater impact upon the amenity of existing properties.
 - C. The new transport route being too prescriptive and detailed, in advance of more thorough assessment, causing the plan to be inflexible.
3. The representation suggests that these concerns can be addressed by taking the following measures:
 - A. Omission of the route alignment, until further detailed assessment and consultation has been undertaken.
 - B. Requiring the consideration of a potential alternative route along the northern boundary of the playing fields.
 - C. Requiring detailed plans for the route alignment in the AAP to be identified as "illustrative only".

Detailed Points

Failure of the plan to consider alternatives and lack of robust evidence base.

4. The plan preparation process did consider alternatives. The plan's preparation addressed options, which were highlighted in the development of the earlier stages of plans production. The options were considered in the light of subsequent transport evidence. This process is reflected in the reasoned justifications in the various stages of the preparation of this AAP.
5. Early options emerging from the Enquiry by Design (EbD) (CD93) process for Sherford, included a new transport route on the northern side of KGV playing fields. Subsequent information from the 'Plymouth Eastern Corridor Study' (CD11) published in March 2006, helped the City Council to form a view on the most appropriate alignment, in the light of this evidence. Its findings and implications were, following consultation, used to inform the submission version of this AAP.

6. The Plymouth Eastern Corridor Study (ECS), identifies that within the recommended option:

“A number of options exist as to the exact alignment of the highway/busway at the junction with Hays Road. It is recommended that the alignment of the carriageway pass through the south part of the playing fields.” (5.4.2, page 35)

Therefore the ECS, and hence plan preparation process, had regard to potential alternative alignments. The evidence base provides the rationale behind the identification of the southern side of playing field route, which is not shared to same extent by the alternative northern side route.

7. The representation also suggests that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) did not consider options, and therefore is inadequate. It has been demonstrated, above, that options have been considered and the evidence supports the decision for the submitted alignment. SA of the AAP is required to appraise the likely significant effects of the plan and reasonable alternatives on the environment. In doing so, the City Council is required to appraise in broad terms the effects of strategic options and then in more detail the effects of preferred options, when these are selected. The identification of the submission proposal and sustainability appraisal followed this process.
8. The initial route proposals in the Issues & Options (IO16) and Preferred Options (PO3) were broad in their scope, and so the SA (IO33 & PO13) covers any subsequent detailed alignment across the Playing fields. The more precise definition of the route followed the evidence in the ECS, which was subject to SA and consultation through the Key Changes documentation (KC1 & KC2) prior to submission of the AAP.
9. In addition, the options also have to be sufficiently different from each other, to enable meaningful comparisons to be made. At the level of detail expected in the sustainability appraisal of planning frameworks and given the relative ‘broadness’ of the impact scoring methodology, it is considered that a ‘northern side’ and ‘southern side’ of KGV playing field routes comparison, would not be sufficiently different to provide meaningful information for the purposes of SA. This is particularly so in relation to the purpose of SA at the planning framework level, which is intended to identify significant environmental impacts. It is only reasonable to identify alternative options for appraisal that have the potential to give rise to significantly different impacts in the context of SA.

Impact of the route on existing properties

10. The concern about the effect of the submitted route’s separation of the existing community in Elburton from the playing fields and the potential impact of it upon the amenity of properties on the fringes of Elburton were examined at the Hearing on 13th February. The City Council contends the plan acknowledges this issue and the planning framework

provides for the mitigation of impacts arising from transport impacts on KGV.

11. The suggested alternative northern route would be further from the existing residential area, increasing the separation between it and existing properties on the fringe of Elburton. However, the disadvantages would be the consequential poorer relationship between the route and existing area, greater separation of the existing area from HQPT services and, significantly, the bisection of the proposed sports hub facility.
12. The submitted route avoids direct loss of private dwellings on Vinery Lane, whereas the alternative route has more potential for the loss of property, depending on the balance of impacts in deciding the precise alignment. The impact of the route on No's 50 and 52 Vinery Lane, by either the submitted route or alternative route are approximately equal, as these two dwellings are roughly in the middle between the two routes. The alternative route would have significantly more impact upon the amenity of 41 and 60 Vinery Lane.
13. The submitted route does not require the acquisition and demolition of any dwelling houses on Vinery Lane to make provision for either the transport route or the sports hub. It is considered that these dwellings can sit along side the new sports developments without significant adverse impact. However, the plan does not prevent the potential inclusion of some or all of these properties into either the road or sports hub proposal. This would be a detailed matter subject to agreement between landowners and developers and it is not likely to be a matter which the City Council would need to intervene.
14. The submitted transport proposal will be approximately 55 metres to the south of 50 Vinery Lane. It is considered that this level of separation, in addition to any mitigation measures that might be required, is entirely capable of maintaining an acceptable quality of residential environment. The nearest existing playing field at KGV is 40 metres to the west of 50 Vinery Lane. On the assumption that this dwelling and its neighbour are not incorporated into the sports hub, the nearest new sports facility to the east, is likely to be in the same order of distance. The nature of impacts and mitigation from issues such as flood lighting would be potential material considerations that would need consideration in the determination of planning applications.
15. The City Council accepts that the plan is not specifically clear on the issue of the need to protect the residential amenity of occupiers of properties on Vinery Lane from potentially unacceptable impacts arising from the sports hub or transport proposal. This issue is addressed by general plan policies in the Core Strategy, however this specific concern could be addressed in the AAP.

The proposals are prescriptive and plan is inflexible

16. PPS12 'Local Development Framework' (para 2.19) suggests that in areas of change area action plans should identify the distribution of

uses and inter-relationships, including site specific allocations. As the transport connections between the new community and existing infrastructure are such a significant issue, the plan must provide clear guidance on what is considered to be the most likely acceptable route (the proposal) and the principle requirements which the route would expected to deliver, including any compensatory measures to off-set its impacts. It has already been demonstrated that the transport route proposal is soundly based on evidence and in light of the consideration of alternatives. The lack of a robust proposal to guide decision making on this matter could lead to a less sustainable outcome.

17. The plan is not overly prescriptive on the precision of the routes definition, and the issues of detail can be resolved at planning application stage.

PCC Suggested Adjustments

18. The existing plan is considered by the Council to be sound. However, the following minor amendments are suggested to address some of the specific concerns raised;

Proposal NP05 Sherford & Sports Hub (North Elburton) - amend criterion 31 to read:

Environmental improvements to new transport link to Haye Road, including any mitigation measures. The mitigation of potentially significant adverse impacts arising from the sports facilities upon the amenity of effected residential properties.

Proposal NP05 Sherford & Sports Hub (North Elburton) - amend criterion 39 to read:

The delivery of a high quality public transport route and new road linking the settlement at Sherford with the A379 (at Stanborough Cross junction) in the first phase of development and associated junctions and highway improvements, including any necessary measures to mitigate potentially unacceptable impacts on the amenity of effected residential occupier properties.

