Plymouth Airport Safeguarding
Consideration of Alternatives

Issue | November 2016
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1 Introduction

Arup has been appointed by Plymouth City Council (PCC) to prepare an Alternative Options Study for the former Plymouth Airport site (the site) as part of the evidence base informing the emerging Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) and subsequent examination.

The purpose of the study is to consider alternative land use options for the site and examine how these options would perform against a set of social, economic and environmental objectives derived from the Plymouth Plan Part One. The Plymouth Plan was approved in September 2015 and at the time of writing, set out the strategic objectives for the City and the policy position for the site, as described further in Section 2. The study seeks to determine the likely effects of the alternatives on the surrounding area and strategic vision for the City.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides some context to the study including a site context, policy position and background on the need to consider alternative uses;
- **Section 3** provides an overview of the alternatives being considered, namely safeguarding for aviation, a residential led option or an commercial led, mixed use option;
- **Section 4** presents the criteria against which the options have been considered; and
- **Section 5** presents the appraisal of the alternative options and concludes the study.

The consideration of alternatives has been informed through a desk based review of policy, guidance and emerging proposals, consultation with key officers from Plymouth City Council and Arup’s review of alternatives within the context of the appraisal criteria established in **Section 4**.
2 Study Context

2.1 The Site

The former Plymouth City Airport site is located approximately 6km north of Plymouth City Centre within the Derriford area. The site measures approximately 45.7 hectares and has the following current ownership structure:

- Plymouth City Council are the freeholder for the majority of the site;
- Approximately 5 hectares are under the ownership of Plymouth City Airport Limited a wholly owned subsidiary of Sutton Harbour Holdings (SHH); and
- SHH lease the remainder of the site from Plymouth City Council on a 150 year lease from 2004.

The site is bounded to the north and east by the B3432 and to the west by the Tavistock Road (A386), the main arterial route into the city from the north. To the north of the site is the George Junction Park and Ride. To the south lies the University of St Mark and St John (MARJON) campus.

The site is surrounded by the residential areas of Southway to the north-west, Derriford to the south, Glenholt to the north and Estover to the east. Given the former use, the site is currently secure and therefore inaccessible, offering no connectivity between these areas.

The surrounding area contains several important employment sites for the city including both the Derriford and Nuffield Hospitals, Plymouth International Medical & Technology Park (PIMTP), and Plymouth Science Park.

There are three areas of accessible green space surrounding the site with arms of woodland and open spaces in close proximity. These include Bircham Valley to the south, Common Wood to the North and Southway Valley (Goodwin Park) to the west.

2.2 The Emerging Policy Position

Plymouth City Council have previously undertaken a number of studies into the potential opportunities at the site and these are referenced below and should be read for greater context and understanding.

An economics study into air services for Plymouth was prepared by Berkley Hannover Consulting (2011), and a commercial options report prepared by Oriens Advisors (2011).

The Plymouth Airport Study 2014 examined the viability of air services at Plymouth City Airport and consolidated information from other studies. The Study formed part of the evidence base informing the Plymouth Plan and the Connectivity Topic Paper published in September 2014.

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1 The Plymouth Airport Study, Plymouth City Council (Arup), (September 2014).
The Connectivity Topic Paper\(^2\), prepared as part of the evidence base for the Plymouth Plan, identifies the Council’s aim to set out a balanced long term approach for the former airport site in the context of the wider growth aspirations of the city.

The Connectivity Topic Paper refers to the findings of 2014 airport study\(^3\) and sets out the following:

- ‘If the site is redeveloped for non-airport uses, the city would lose the only airport infrastructure it currently has. The challenges of finding a different site for air transport in the future are so severe that if the former airport site were to be redeveloped, it is unlikely that an alternative site could be found.’

- An operator could gain a Category 3 CAA licence which would allow general aviation uses at the former airport site. This would mean that the city would retain air connectivity, and that the former airport site could again be used for air services.’

In line with these conclusions the Plymouth Plan Part One\(^4\) seeks to safeguard the site for General Aviation operations. Policy 4 of the Plymouth Plan ‘Enhancing Plymouth’s Strategic Connectivity’ seeks to promote and secure improvements to the quality and resilience of Plymouth’s transport connectivity. This policy prioritises safeguarding the former airport site for General Aviation as follows:

‘Safeguarding the opportunity for the potential future re-use of Plymouth airport as a general aviation airport, whilst at the same time strengthening links to Exeter and Bristol airports.’

Since preparation of Plymouth Plan Part One in 2015 the council has moved toward progressing the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) with South Hams District Council & West Devon Borough Council. This report forms part of the evidence base which will inform the policies within the emerging JLP.

### 2.3 Guidance on the Consideration of Alternatives

National Planning Practice Guidance states that plan-makers should assess the policies in a draft Local Plan, and the reasonable alternatives, to identify the likely significant effects of the available options. In developing alternatives paragraph 152 of the NPPF identifies that options should deliver net gains across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Further to this the Inspector specifically identified at the Derriford and Seaton AAP examination in March 2013 that ‘the production process of the Plymouth Plan appears to be the logical planning vehicle for assessing the role of the

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\(^2\) Plymouth Plan Topic Paper Connectivity, Plymouth City Council, (September 2014)

\(^3\) The Plymouth Airport Study, Plymouth City Council (Arup), (September 2014).

\(^4\) The Plymouth Plan Part 2011-2031 Part One, Plymouth City Council, (September 2015)
airport site within northern Plymouth and any alternative uses which may be justified."

In accordance with this guidance the Council commissioned Arup to consider what reasonable alternative options could come forward the site if the reintroduction of aviation activity proves unviable. Alternative use options have been developed in the context of the scale of the site, its importance as a piece of critical infrastructure and strategic asset for the City and its strategic location within the Northern Corridor. The alternative options considered have been developed through review of previous studies into the options for the airport and Plymouth Plan evidence documents, as well as the known positions of interest groups.

The three alternative options for the future of the site are set out in Table 1 below and are considered to be representative of the realistic potential of the site in the context of its location, constraints and historic use.

### Table 1: Alternative Land Use Options

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Details &amp; Reasoning</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aviation Safeguarding Option</strong></td>
<td>Safeguarding for future aviation use as per the emerging policy position. This option recognises the previous use of the site and represents the policy approach of Plymouth City Council as set out in Plymouth Plan Part One. The option would make use of existing assets on the site. The focus of the option is on preserving an irreplaceable transport asset for the long term. Interim uses could form part of this option.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Led Option</strong></td>
<td>Residential led scheme with potential for elements of commercial, retail and community uses. Creation of a new neighbourhood within the Northern Corridor. A mixed use housing scheme including commercial, retail and community uses, based on alternative usage as currently being promoted by Sutton Harbour Holdings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commercial led Option</strong></td>
<td>Scheme to enhance the employment base of the area, building on the current strength of certain sectors. Creation of a new business park with a residential pockets as buffers to existing neighbourhoods. A commercial, employment led development which builds upon the success of surrounding employment sites. Areas of the site could be released for other uses.</td>
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Each option is explored further and assessed against the objectives of the Plymouth Plan in the subsequent sections of this report.
3 The Alternative Options for Assessment

This section provides further details on the alternative options which are considered. Following a description of the option the section provides narrative as to the potential role of the option for Plymouth and the reasoning behind its consideration.

3.1 Option 1 - Aviation Safeguarding

This option is the base option for the site and reflects the historic aviation use of the site since the 1930’s and the position that the City Council was preferring when it published the Plymouth Plan Part One. This proposed safeguarding the site for the reinstatement of aviation activity or general aviation as a minimum. In this context general aviation can be defined as all civil aviation operations other than scheduled air services and non-scheduled air transport operations for remuneration or hire. General aviation activities can be classified as instructional flying, business flying, pleasure flying, aerial work and other flying.

This option retains the opportunity for future aviation use to recommence by ensuring that the site is not developed in a manner which would compromise the ability to re-establish the CAA licence and ensure safe operation of general aviation or commercial activity. This option acknowledges the site’s importance as a strategic asset and recognises the view that if the former airport site is lost to other uses it is very unlikely that an airport offering regional air connectivity would be forthcoming on an alternative site in the Plymouth sub region.

The safeguarding option would see the site continue either in its disused state or for meanwhile uses in the short term until such time that a robust business case for re-opening for general aviation can be made by third parties and the land acquired from SHH. We understand there to be a number of parties with interest in the reintroduction of aviation activity on the site. Some are more advanced in the progress of their business planning than others. Each is likely to have a bespoke approach to the reopening of the site with different approaches to the progressive build-up of aviation operations on the site. These parties will need to make representations to the Draft JLP to set out the specifics of their interest and approach to recommencement of aviation activity on site.

For the purpose of this assessment we consider how the recommencement of general aviation on the site could fit with the overall objectives of the Plymouth Plan. The option would, wherever possible make use of the remaining airport infrastructure to reinstate general aviation activity as a minimum on the site. The existing infrastructure comprises:

a) Main Terminal Building
b) Runway 13/31 (asphalt), within Code 2 grassed runway strip and RESAs;
c) Airport Apron (situated between the main terminal building and taxiway Charlie)
d) Maintenance Hangar
e) Engine Testing Bay  
f) Fire Station  
g) Fire Training Facility  
h) Control Tower  
i) Fuel Storage Facility  
j) Navigation and Visual Aids  
k) Approach Lighting (both within and outside of the airport boundary)

Previous studies including the Plymouth Airport Study 2014\(^5\) and Plymouth Airport as a GA Facility 2015\(^6\) have explored in detail the cost and viability of reinstating these assets to bring the site back into a functional CAA licenced airfield for general aviation use.

**Why this option is considered:**

Plymouth is a peripheral city with over 260,000\(^7\) inhabitants and an important regional centre for the wider South West Region.

Connectivity to and from the city is seen as a key economic driver for the future of Plymouth and the region and the opportunity for air travel is seen as an important part of the package of strategic connectivity objectives as set out in Policy 4 of the Plymouth Plan.

The site previously provided air connectivity and it would provide the opportunity to support choice via alternative options for the strategic connection of the City to the rest of the UK and Europe. Safeguarding the site as a key piece of infrastructure would help ensure this choice is maintained in the future at a time when Regional Airports face considerable viability pressures.

The option recognises the historic levels of residual demand for air travel within the City which has been identified through previous studies\(^8\) and is considered within the context of potential challenges to the immediate introduction of aviation uses. A phased approach to general aviation is therefore considered with the potential of adding new elements as the use of the site for aviation re-establishes.

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\(^5\) The Plymouth Airport Study, Plymouth City Council (Arup), (September 2014).  
\(^6\) Plymouth Airport as a GA facility - Business case assessment, Steer Davis Gleave, Fjori, March 2015  
\(^8\) The Plymouth Airport Study, Plymouth City Council (Arup), (September 2014).
### 3.2 Option 2 - Residential Led

Following the closure of the airport in 2011, the current leaseholders and part freeholder of the site, SHH have considered the redevelopment of the site focussing on the creation of a new neighbourhood or a residential led option.

A scheme comprising up to 1,600 residential units (including affordable provision) was the subject of a report commissioned by SHH which assessed the socio-economic benefits of redevelopment of the site in September 2015\(^9\). This assessment was based on a draft spatial framework prepared for the site which proposed a number of ancillary non-residential land uses including a 150 bed hotel, A3 restaurant space (150 sqm), A1 retail space (250sqm), a gym and a velodrome. The proposed uses also included approximately 4,000sqm of commercial space, a primary school, GP practice, and community centres.

In April 2016 SHH held a workshop with local businesses and community groups to explore further the views of local stakeholders on the redevelopment of the airport as a new neighbourhood including new community facilities. The general feedback from this event was that the local community were broadly accepting of the redevelopment of the site if aviation activity was deemed unviable.

A revised masterplan for the site is currently being progressed by SHH as part of its evidence for the allocation of the airport for mixed use redevelopment. As this is not yet publically available information for the purposes of this assessment the level of residential housing and mix of uses presented previously by SHH forms the basis of this option.

**Why this option is considered:**

The need for housing is set out in the Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (PBA, 2017) which identifies the objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing in the Plymouth Housing Market Area over the period 2014-2034 to be 27,300, averaging 1,365 dwellings per annum.

In considering this need, the draft plan will need to include a growth strategy for Plymouth and the wider HMA and identify that the OAN can be met on a variety of sites within the HMA. The evidence base does not consider whether or not the airport site will be required to meet the identified need – this will be a matter to be set out in the draft Joint Local Plan. Further detail regarding this evidence is set out in the Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment, and the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.

Should the Council not be able to find suitable sites to meet the identified need of the HMA, there would be a need to balance the airport opportunity (Option 1) against the need for housing sites and therefore a residential led option is considered as an alternative for the site. Such an option could create a new community in the North of Plymouth as well as offering potential to increase connectivity between existing residential and commercial areas, offer

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\(^9\) *Redevelopment of the Former Plymouth City Airport Site - Assessment of Socio-Economic Benefits*, Sutton Harbour Holdings plc, Regeneris Consulting Ltd, (September 2015).
opportunities for other uses (e.g. commercial, retail and recreation) and potential to accommodate expansion of the University of St Mark and St John.

3.3 Option 3 - New Business or Science Park, Employment Led

A commercial led option for the site is considered a realistic proposition for the redevelopment of part of the former airport site. Further work would be required in order to define the optimum location and extent of the area redeveloped but it is considered that future commercial and employment development could build upon the success of surrounding employment sites and growth sectors.

Alongside this, other parts of the site would likely come forward for other complimentary uses including the potential expansion of the University of St Mark and St John or an enhanced healthcare or medical research cluster linked to Derriford Hospital. A commercial led option could be developed in phases. For example, the site could offer a range of services and facilities to meet the needs of the surrounding communities as well as the wider region. This could include retail provision, key transport infrastructure (e.g. park and ride) and major sports provision.

Why this option is considered:

The area surrounding the site is already home to some of the City’s most successful employment space at Plymouth Science Park and also home to the University of St Mark and St John.

The 2014 Plymouth Employment Land Review identifies that business investment enquiries have increased significantly in recent years with demand focussed on priority sectors identified in the Local Economic Strategy. The highest number of investment enquiries have been coming from businesses in marine industries, healthcare and research and business services.

The success of Plymouth Science Park is clear in the rate of take up of flexible office space for start up’s and growing businesses as well as wet and dry laboratory space, all of which has comprehensive on site business support. The campus is home to innovative technology, digital, creative, marine and science based businesses. This success could be replicated with a new park in close proximity to the hospital and Marjon.

In a similar way to Option 2, the emerging JLP needs to consider options for the supply of employment land across the plan area. Should the Council not be able to find suitable sites to accommodate the identified need, the site could build on the existing employment base and contribute to meeting the demand identified in order to support Plymouth’s objectives for growth within specific priority economic sectors. It is considered that the site could accommodate the needs of inward investors and provide high quality business space to enable growth and accommodate further expansion of the nearby University.
Other uses could also be accommodated on the site alongside the commercial uses and the option could lead to increased connectivity and provide space for other strategic infrastructure provision (e.g. park and ride / sports and recreational use for both local residents and office workers).
4 The Assessment Framework

This section sets out the assessment framework for the three alternative land use options.

In order to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the alternatives, we have developed a number of core themes against which a commentary is provided. These themes align to the Plymouth Plan Strategic Objectives and the wider spatial strategy for the City as set out in the Plymouth Plan Part One. The following Core Themes for consideration of the alternatives have been identified:

- The Plymouth Vision
- Commercial Growth
- Transport Connectivity
- Housing
- Infrastructure

Table 2 below identifies which Strategic Objectives have been grouped under the Core Themes.

The assessment then considers how each option could perform against the Strategic Objectives of the Plymouth Plan and overall Vision for the City.
Table 2 – Strategic Objectives and Core Assessment Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appraisal Criteria (Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Policy)</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Core Themes</th>
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</table>
| SO1                                    | Making the Plan Happen. | To implement the policies of the Plymouth Plan to achieve the city vision and manage change and growth in Plymouth, in accordance with the following key themes:  

1. Plymouth will be a welcoming city where people feel they belong and want to invest personally and financially, where the services the City provides for people and the physical environment are designed to express high value for young and old, resident and visitor, local business and potential investor and where inequality and fairness are addressed for those living and working in the city.

2. Plymouth will be a sustainable linked neighbourhoods, which meet the needs of and provides quality places to live for all of Plymouth’s people.

3. Plymouth will be a green city, recognised internationally for its approach to sustainable development, its enhancement of its natural infrastructure network and its commitment to mitigating and adapting to climate change. | City Vision |
| SO2                                    | Bringing the Vision to Life. | By 2031, for Plymouth to be one of Europe’s most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone and where the following strategic outcomes have been realised:  

1. Plymouth's strategic role is fulfilled as a regional city and a major economic driver for the heart of the south west.

2. Plymouth as a healthy city, where its people live in happy, healthy, safe and aspiring communities.

3. Plymouth as a growing city, which has used its economic, social, environmental and cultural strengths to deliver quality and sustainable growth.

4. Plymouth as an international city, renowned as the UK’s premier marine city and famous for its waterfront, maritime heritage and culture. | City Vision |
| SO3                                    | Strengthening Plymouth's role in the region | To consolidate and strengthen Plymouth’s role as the major regional city in the south west peninsula of England, enhancing its contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the south west and providing the major commercial, service and employment centre. | Commercial Growth Transport Connections |
This will be achieved through:

1. **Strengthening the role of Plymouth City Centre, the Waterfront and Derriford as regional hubs** and economic drivers of primary importance within the south west.

2. **Supporting further investment in strategic services that serve the region**, including the city's regional health, higher and further education and strategic sports and cultural facilities.

3. Working with partners in the sub region to plan for and develop cultural opportunities, international projects for trade and investment and strategic cultural programmes to increase cultural investment in the south west.

4. **Unlocking the regional growth potential of Plymouth’s City Centre and Waterfront, Derriford and the city’s northern and eastern corridors**.

5. **Ensuring that strategic development proposals within the sub region support and complement Plymouth's role as a sub-regional driver**.

6. Working with partners in the region to deliver the Plymouth and South West Peninsula City Deal initiative, driving forward the growth of the marine sector across the whole peninsula.

7. **Working with partners in the region to see radical improvements to Plymouth and the region’s strategic connectivity by road, rail, sea and air as well as digital connectivity**.

8. Safeguarding the strategic defence role that Plymouth plays for the UK's security and optimising the benefits this brings to the regional economy.

9. Working with partners to enhance the region’s natural assets, particularly the network of European, national and locally designated sites.

10. Working with partners to protect the region's mineral resources.

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**SO4 Delivering a healthy city**

To integrate health and wellbeing, promote choice and personal responsibility, formulate health-enabling local policy and develop good quality local services. This will be achieved by:

1. Delivering solutions and creating environments which address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and make healthy choices available.

2. Reducing health and wellbeing inequalities and the burden of chronic diseases in the city.

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**Transport Connections**

**Commercial Growth**
3. Delivering the best health, wellbeing and social outcomes for children, young people and families, and reducing and mitigating the impact of child poverty.

4. Helping ensure that children, young people and adults feel safe and confident in their communities, with all people treated with dignity and respect.

5. **Building strong and safe communities in good quality neighbourhoods with decent homes for all, health-promoting natural and built environments, community facilities and public spaces and accessible local services.**

6. Enabling people of all ages to play an active role in their community and engage with arts and culture and other activities to promote social cohesion and good mental health and wellbeing.

7. **Providing a safe, accessible and health-enabling transport network which supports freedom of movement and active travel and promotes low carbon lifestyles** that are beneficial to physical and mental health.

8. Delivering quality lifelong learning which is available to everyone and can be tailored to quality employment and social opportunities in a city aspiring to good population wellbeing through a vibrant economy.

9. Ensuring people get the right care from the right people at the right time to improve their health, wellbeing and social outcomes.

10. **Making Plymouth a centre of clinical excellence and innovation** to benefit the sustainability and growth of the medical and health care sectors in the city and to create education and employment opportunities.

<table>
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<th>SO5</th>
<th>Creating a more prosperous city for all</th>
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<td></td>
<td>To create the conditions for high quality and sustainable growth, which meets the present and future needs of Plymouth residents and businesses and transforms the city into a prosperous place to live; and to empower people to equip themselves with the skills and to find the opportunities to take advantage of that prosperity. This will be achieved by:</td>
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1. **Transforming and rebalancing the economy to build a strong inward investment and export portfolio with a focus on higher value, knowledge based industries** (including marine, advanced manufacturing, and the medical/healthcare sector).

2. Capitalising on Plymouth as a ‘city of makers’, using this wealth to drive the creative economy by retaining more creative graduates and attracting makers on a national scale to locate to Plymouth.

3. **Ensuring that there is a supply of employment land and accommodation of the right type and quality in the optimum locations** to meet the needs of new and existing businesses. |

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<th>Housing</th>
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<td>Infrastructure Investment</td>
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<td>Transport</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Commercial Growth</td>
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4. **Identifying locations for new homes to meet Plymouth’s objectively assessed housing needs** in full and ensuring that at least a five year supply of deliverable sites for housing is always available.

5. Managing the city’s growth in a way that is resilient and adaptive to future environmental changes and impacts, and which provides sustainable solutions for development, energy, waste and water catchment management.

6. Creating an environment to harness the aspiration and talent of the city’s population and attract new talent, ideas and innovation to the city.

7. Developing a pipeline of skilled staff and supporting those who are outside of the labour market back into work.

8. **Managing the city’s growth to ensure future investment in infrastructure can be sustained and the highest quality of services and facilities can be provided for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.**

9. Maintaining and enhancing Plymouth’s natural networks, providing the green and blue natural spaces needed to support the social and economic wellbeing of Plymouth as well as safeguarding the natural environment for future generations.

10. **Delivering a sustainable transport network that supports Plymouth’s long term growth.**

11. Positively planning for retail development so that investment is directed to the City Centre and, where appropriate, other key centres to support the overall growth strategy.

12. Providing innovative and high quality architectural development, ensuring that place shaping and design is at the heart of the city’s growth, whilst recognising the value that heritage assets provide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SO6</th>
<th>Enhancing Plymouth’s profile as an international city</th>
<th>Transport Connectivity</th>
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<tr>
<td>To enhance Plymouth’s profile as an international city where the city projects itself to people who might invest, study or visit the city; to encourage and support Plymouth’s businesses to engage in trading terms in an increasingly global market place; and to ensure the city fulfils its potential as a distinctive, dynamic, cultural centre of international renown. This will be achieved by:</td>
<td>Commercial Growth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Raising the profile of Plymouth internationally through the Britain’s Ocean City brand and through using Mayflower 400 in 2020 as a key catalyst and driver.</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Promoting Plymouth as an internationally competitive tourist destination, providing an accessible and well connected visitor experience</strong> which capitalises on the city’s world class waterfront and maritime heritage and delivers a long standing economic legacy for the city.</td>
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</table>
3. **Supporting the growth of internationally significant businesses, attracting new investment into the city and encouraging all businesses to expand trading in the global market place.**

4. Establishing Plymouth as a distinctive, vibrant, cultural city known on the international stage for its rich heritage, creative industries and unparalleled natural setting, having an equally strong appeal for residents, visitors and investors.

5. Providing innovative, high quality architectural development to set the city apart and create an attractive, forward looking environment.

6. Providing a full range of hotel and visitor accommodation, including new high quality provision, to ensure that there is adequate accommodation capacity for all visitors.

7. Recognising Plymouth internationally as a leading green city.

8. **Further developing our universities, research institutions and knowledge based industries which are widely known for their innovation and world class assets.**

9. Delivering a strong, diverse and dynamic city that welcomes new residents, students and visitors and that celebrates cultural diversity.

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**SO7**

**Strategic planning for the sub region**

To deliver an integrated approach to the strategic planning of the sub region of Plymouth, South East Cornwall and South West Devon, based upon the following principles:

1. **Plymouth’s role as a major centre of employment and higher-level services for the sub region, a regional transport hub,** and a market place for rural businesses, fisheries, agriculture and tourism, to be acknowledged and strengthened.

2. Plymouth’s growth to be focused around the creation of a city of sustainable linked neighbourhoods, and developing in sustainable locations with good access to public transport.

3. The self-sufficiency, vitality and distinctiveness of key settlements and market towns to be strengthened so that they function as sustainable communities in their own right, reducing the need to travel and recognising the functional economic and social linkages that people in the sub region have with Plymouth.

4. Growth and change throughout the sub region to be managed in a way which safeguards the special environmental quality and local distinctiveness of the city, the surrounding rural areas and adjacent marine waters, using these as positive assets to enhance the prosperity of the area.

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**Transport Connectivity**

**Infrastructure Investment**
### Strategic Objective 8 An effective spatial strategy for Plymouth

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<td><strong>5.</strong> Delivery of a cross border approach to ensure that the strategic infrastructure needs of the city and the sub region are provided for as growth takes place.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong> Delivery of strong, integrated and sustainable transport network, including road, rail and water transport, to be provided to connect Plymouth with surrounding communities.</td>
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### To manage change and growth in Plymouth in accordance with the following spatial principles and priorities:

1. **Priority to be given to delivering major growth in the city’s primary economic nodes of the City Centre / Waterfront and Derriford/Northern Corridor**, as well as the Eastern Corridor, in order to drive a step change in Plymouth’s economy and housing delivery.

2. **Priority to be given to meeting Plymouth’s housing need within the city’s administrative boundaries, provided that this can be delivered on appropriate sites and in a way which supports quality places and sustainable linked neighbourhoods.**

3. **Development to be planned in a manner which helps to reduce the need to travel**, supported by an integrated transport system which supports growth and delivers quality sustainable transport links to and between the city's neighbourhoods.

4. Future housing growth outside of the city’s boundaries, if required, to be provided in the most sustainable locations at the north-eastern or eastern fringes of the city, and be delivered in line with the principles of quality places and sustainable linked neighbourhoods.

5. Priority to be given to meeting the city’s employment and economic development needs within Plymouth’s Principal Urban Area.

6. Plymouth’s waterfront to be safeguarded and managed such that it fulfils its role in strengthening Plymouth’s economy, supporting the UK’s strategic defence needs, providing quality recreational spaces for the city’s population and visitors to enjoy, supporting the strengthening of disadvantaged communities, celebrating Plymouth’s cultural and maritime heritage, enriching the city’s biodiversity and meeting the needs of sustainable flood management.

7. **The Derriford area to be intensified to provide a new heart and focal point for the communities in the north of Plymouth**, with new commercial, residential, community, educational and health developments and strategic green space.

8. A proactive approach to be taken to strengthen local communities, particularly in the west and north-west of Plymouth and in some central locations.

### Commercial Growth

- Housing
- Transport Connectivity
| Issue | November 2016 |

**SO9**  
'Delivering infrastructure and investment.'

To take a proactive and co-ordinated approach to delivering the infrastructure and investment needed to realise the city vision and deliver the strategic objectives and policies of the Plymouth Plan. This will be achieved by:

1. **Working with the key infrastructure providers and other agencies in the city and the sub region to identify and deliver the improvements needed to support the sustainable growth of Plymouth.**

2. **Co-ordinating infrastructure and investment in the context of a long term perspective and medium term resource planning.**

3. Ensuring that infrastructure provision keeps pace with development to avoid disruption to local communities.

4. **Identifying and managing key risks to delivery of the Plymouth Plan and devising contingency scenarios.**

5. Using developer contributions to help deliver the city vision and mitigate the impacts of growth on the city.

6. **Creating supportive conditions that enable and encourage private, public and community sector investment in new homes, jobs and infrastructure.**

7. **Ensuring that infrastructure and assets are used efficiently**, through for example, demand management measures and co-location of services.

8. Engaging partners in actively monitoring the delivery of the Plymouth Plan.

| Infrastructure Investment |
5 Appraisal of Alternative Options

This section of the report summarises the appraisal of the alternative land use options against the framework of strategic objectives identified through review of the Plymouth Plan Part One and other supporting strategies and guidance.

The appraisal seeks to acknowledge the merits of each scenario to the achievement of the Plymouth Plan. The narrative seeks to distinguish the Council’s view of the benefits and dis-benefits that could emerge from each scenario but does not seek to weight or prioritise the options to identify which scenario would achieve the best outcome for the city in the next plan period.
Table 3: Alternative Land Use Options Appraisal

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<th>Option 2: Residential Led</th>
<th>Option 3 New Science or Business Park – Employment Led</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plymouth City Vision</td>
<td>This option would contribute positively to the City Vision which seeks to ensure Plymouth maintains its status as an international city with good connectivity and improved city gateways.</td>
<td>This option would contribute positively to the City Vision which seeks to create a network of sustainable, linked neighbourhoods and provide quality places to live and work.</td>
<td>This option would contribute positively to the City Vision which seeks to realise Plymouth’s strategic role as a regional city and major economic driver for the South West.</td>
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<td>It is recognised that regional airports can play a vital role in connecting communities as well as offering enhanced connectivity for business travellers. Airports are principal points of arrival which showcase and direct people to the city’s distinctive attributes, assets and attractions.</td>
<td>The efficient use of the land in the administrative area of the City could contribute to Plymouths sustainable growth. The airport site is brownfield land which could be used to establish a high quality community environment that fosters health and wellbeing for the surrounding residents.</td>
<td>Encouraging further expansion and diversification of inward investment and indigenous business growth through the provision of flexible employment space would enhance Plymouth’s strategic role as the major economic driver of the far South West.</td>
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<td>Safeguarding the site for aviation offers the potential for enhanced connectivity and further resilience in access into the City. The site could, in the future contribute to the type of welcome the city could offer and encourage investment through delivering more resilient transport opportunities.</td>
<td>The emerging vision for the Northern Corridor seeks to address the root causes of a vehicular dominated environment and the negative consequences of separation and difficulty of movement. A residential led scheme could link the existing neighbourhoods around the airport and incorporate principals of sustainability.</td>
<td>The Tamar Science Park and the Plymouth International Medical &amp; Technology Park have been successful and brought inward investment to Plymouth, however this success means the supply of quality employment floorspace in the Northern Corridor is diminishing.</td>
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<td>To develop as a city and achieve a strategic role for the heart of the South West, connections between other regions are important and therefore should be strengthened, future air operations could contributing to this objective and help influence Plymouth’s growth.</td>
<td>Greater permeability with the Northern Corridor could encourage more sustainable transport modes, walking cycling and the use of public transport. However a large residential housing scheme could also increase the pressure on the existing transport systems if sustainable movement alternative and behavioural incentives are put in place in parallel to the development of the site.</td>
<td>Plymouth has a limited supply of large employment sites. The 2014 ELR demonstrated that there was a limited number of high quality employment sites to service advanced manufacturing, medical and hi-tech industries across the city. Commercial development on the site could provide a significant opportunity for further investment and growth of key economic sectors in alignment with the City Vision.</td>
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<td>The airport and potential range of aviation options as a feature of Plymouth could have a role in contributing to the status of the city and by</td>
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<td>association the happiness, health and aspirations of communities.</td>
<td>The site is in close proximity to green infrastructure assets (e.g. Bircham Valley to the south Common Wood to the north and Southway Valley to the west). Development of the site could link these assets and provide a more cohesive GI strategy for the Northern Corridor. This would align with the City Vision for a green city and enhancement of the natural infrastructure network.</td>
<td>A commercial led option could provide links between the surrounding areas of the city and would increase the permeability as a whole on the Northern Corridor. There would be potential for integration with the existing public transport network and with the green infrastructure network thereby aligning with the vision to be a green city.</td>
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<td>Consultation on the Plymouth Plan Part One and publication of the ‘Northern Toolkit’ showed public support for the safeguarding of the airport for aviation. The business case for potential aviation at the site continues to be developed.</td>
<td>The Northern Corridor is identified as a key growth area for the City, contributing to the overall growth agenda and to Plymouth’s aim of becoming one of Europe’s most vibrant waterfront cities. A mixed use neighbourhood featuring a quality environment and modest local community facilities is unlikely to make much of a contribution to Plymouth’s profile as an international city. However a high quality development could create a distinctive new forward looking environment which would contribute to changing perceptions of the city. The environment could be attractive and foster a sense of places and community while potentially having a positive effect on residential land values.</td>
<td>A commercial led option could include a range of services and facilities made viable by the working population which could also serve the needs of local residents in the Northern Corridor. For example the site could become a hub for sports and meet the undersupply of playing pitch provision that currently exists in the Northern Corridor.</td>
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<td>It is recognised that Plymouth’s growth is an important consideration and this is supported strongly by the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Safeguarding the site for aviation reduces the opportunity for the site to come forward for housing in the short to medium term during the plan period to 2031.</td>
<td>It is acknowledged that the site forms one of a number of potential expansion opportunities for St Mark and St John University which is an important asset for the city in terms of knowledge based industries and innovation.</td>
<td>This option includes the potential for expansion of the University of St Mark and St John which would align with the City vision and a build-up of knowledge based industries.</td>
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<td>However, it’s worth considering that should the airport be re-developed Plymouth’s population will continue to increase with a corresponding demand for housing this will place pressure on the same areas that could temporarily retained as greenfield through development of the airport site. It is the duty of local authorities to give consideration to the life of the policies beyond the plan period.</td>
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<td>In accordance with the NPPF. Paragraph 157, PCC through safeguarding the site for general aviation are seeking to plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area.</td>
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<td>Further PCC are in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 162 whereby local authorities should take account of the need for strategic infrastructure.</td>
<td>This option could contribute positively to Commercial Growth in the future through promoting Plymouth as an international tourist destination with a well-connected visitor experience. The option could also contribute to making Plymouth and South West Devon better connected for UK and International inward investment.</td>
<td>This option could contribute positively to building stronger inward investment and a portfolio focused on higher value knowledge based industries.</td>
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<td>This option to safeguard the former airport site for aviation would not place any additional stress on the transport systems of the city and local residents could continue with their existing patterns of travel.</td>
<td>Safeguarding is an important part of the City’s offer for potential future investment and promotion of Plymouth as a location that can compete for internationally significant business. Should the airport reopen it could encourage business to expand trading into the global market place. This option retains the strategic opportunity for an important asset to reopen which could further strengthen Plymouth’s economic importance in the South West.</td>
<td>The former airport is located in the area of Plymouth notable for its concentrations of medical and clinical activities. The site is north of the PIMTP and south of the Belliver Industrial Estate and to the north of Derriford Hospital. A commercial led redevelopment of the airport into a complimentary business or science park could be designed to link to existing business areas and could enhance Plymouth as a centre of clinical excellence. This could also involve the expansion of the University of St Mark and St John. Locational factors for those involved in product development and supply can include proximity to clients and supply-chain partners, a prestige effect around facilities (for example in relation to client</td>
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<td>Commercial Growth</td>
<td>This option could contribute positively to Commercial Growth through unlocking growth potential on the city’s northern corridor. A residential led housing scheme adjacent to the Derriford area could support growth in the area and strengthen its role within Plymouth and as a South West hub. The emerging spatial strategy for the Northern Corridor promotes a limited amount of new housing within the core area of Derriford. This is due to the presence of large scale non-residential sites (such as Derriford Hospital, Marjon, the Plymouth International Medical and Technology Park in addition to community parkland. The residential option would provide a new neighbourhood including additional housing within an easy walking distances of the hospital, employment centres and the proposed district centre</td>
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<td>Safeguarding the airport site retains the potential to increase the capacity of Plymouth’s strategic defence role.</td>
<td>at Derriford. This option could therefore service and support these features and the surrounding business and industrial estates. The scheme could enable an expansion of the University of St Mark and St John in addition to both primary and secondary education in the area. This would align with Strategic Objective 5 to support the building of higher value knowledge based industries within the City associated with higher education.</td>
<td>facing R&amp;D centres), and proximity to healthcare providers such as Derriford Hospital. The size of the former airport site would enable it to meet a large portion of the floorspace demand for B Class uses in Plymouth, however this could have a dampening effect on other areas of the city as opposed to complementing them if the scale and mix of space is not properly considered. An oversupply of employment land across Plymouth could impact on regeneration within certain areas which are more challenging to develop. The site could also reduce the demand for other strategic employment locations, such as Langage, which has costly infrastructure needs. Finally it is also worth noting that the NPPF states that “Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose.” Demand for the comprehensive redevelopment of the whole airport site for commercial and business use within the plan period is not justified by the evidence within the ELR. Redevelopment of the airport site would need to be partial, phased and complimentary to the release of land in other strategic locations such as Langage.</td>
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<td>Safeguarding the airport site through Policy 4 of the Plymouth Plan has been approved by Plymouth City Council in anticipation of the future needs of Plymouth residents, businesses and visitors. This aligns with strongly with Strategic Objective 5 of the Plymouth Plan to manage growth ensuring investment in infrastructure and provision of high quality services and facilities.</td>
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<td>Improved connections within the UK to regional hubs is a key consideration for business therefore the presence and potential of the airport is an important factor in achieving strong inward investment.</td>
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<td>This option aligns with the objective to manage the cities growth so that it is resilient and adaptive to environmental changes. The impacts of climate change have already been seen in 2014 when the mainline railway line to Plymouth was severed by at Dawlish. This failure demonstrates how fragile long distance connectivity to Plymouth can be. It also serves to demonstrate the vulnerability of the South West’s transport infrastructure as rail patronage in the far south west has grown by approximately 90% since 2004.</td>
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<td>Safeguarding would impact on the sites to the south east of the runway. The types of development that could be permitted in the area around Thornbury Road would be restricted to uses that would not prejudice flying operations. The heights of buildings would need to be low and uses would be primarily B2 uses which could be relocated.</td>
<td>This option could contribute positively to the promotion of a choice of localised travel solutions in the Northern Corridor. The option could also improve permeability at the neighbourhood level, however this would be at the expense of strategic connectivity for the city as a whole. A mixed use sustainable neighbourhood incorporating innovative transport solutions could provide ease of access for areas along the Northern Corridor. A well-integrated design based on place making principals could potentially reduce the need to travel by car. The site is located close to the current termination point for a number of existing bus services. Developing the site for residential use could enable an extension to these services and support their viability as there would be limited deviation to the existing routes. The flat topography of the site would enable roads to be designed to a high standard for</td>
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<td>Transport connectivity and sustainability</td>
<td>This option would contribute positively to meeting the objective to ensure the potential for Plymouth’s strategic connectivity by air is maintained. Subject to a robust business model and land acquisition the airport site could theoretically see the reintroduction and incremental increase in aviation activities and could, through charter flights improve connectivity to the rest of the UK and Europe. Improving the city’s connectivity could be a driver for inward investment to the Plymouth sub region. A city’s international profile is reinforced by its connections and accessibility by multiple modes of travel, particularly aviation. The safeguarding of the airport for general aviation could lead to some flights by visitors / tourists on a private charter basis. This could help to reinforce the profile of Plymouth as a visitor destination and</td>
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<td>the option would align well with the strategic objective of ensuring the city provides a well-connected visitor experience.</td>
<td>public transport. The residents would have access to the George Junction Park and Ride with the 100 and 101 services into Plymouth centre via Milehouse and Derriford Hospital respectively. The development could make a significant contribution to the funding of the Northern Corridor Cycle Network (a cycle path could be provide adjacent to Plymbridge Road). There could also be links to the Southway shops and the Derriford area. The natural and locally designated green infrastructure assets could be linked through the site and improve Plymouth’s connectivity to Dartmoor. This option would not contribute to the Strategic Objective to work with partners and improve Plymouth’s and the regions strategic air connectivity. The site was previously an operational airport a use with an associated number of journeys. On balance a residential option would likely lead to an increased impact on the road network through associated trips generated. This could be mitigated through use and promotion of sustainable travel.</td>
<td>As with the residential option a number of bus services could be enhanced and extended into the site to service the commuters working in the new Business or Science Park. Contributions could also be secured for the Northern Corridor Cycle Network and local permeability to surrounding neighbourhoods enhanced.</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>This option would not contribute to the housing related objectives of the Plan or the identification of locations for new homes to meet Plymouth’s objectively assessed housing need.</td>
<td>This option would contribute positively to the meeting Plymounds Housing need. A residential housing led option could contribute to the available housing land supply and meeting the</td>
<td>This option could contribute positively towards the identification of land for residential housing.</td>
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<td>The safeguarding option would prevent the use of the former airport site in making any contribution to Plymouth’s housing need. It is recognised that in its current state the site is brownfield in nature, however there are other areas on the Northern Corridor, albeit greenfield that could support new homes and deliver similar socioeconomic benefits that the residential redevelopment of the airport site may achieve. Housing provision could therefore be achieved through the development of other parcels of land and a suitable housing mix and supply achieved elsewhere. It is the role of the emerging JLP to demonstrate this. The former airport site is an infrastructure asset which would not be replaced if developed. The potential for the reintroduction of aviation activity to Plymouth would be permanently lost. There are no alternative sites available due to the size of the site required and the environmental constraints of the surrounding area on the edges of the city. The pragmatic approach would be to maintain a safeguarding option and at the five year interim JLP Review the housing need situation could be re-assessed alongside the safeguarding policy. If there is no reasonable prospect of a robust and deliverable business plan for the reintroduction of aviation emerging for the site and housing objectively assessed housing need of the city and wider JLP. As it emerges, the JLP will need to evidence how the OAN is to be met with a focus on ensuring that the five year land supply is robust. This option is generally supported by the NPPF which promotes the effective use of land that has been previously developed, although the NPPF also expects LPAs to assess the infrastructure needs of their areas. The former airport site is a significant brownfield site with the potential to create improved connectivity to a number of adjacent neighbourhoods in the Northern Corridor if redeveloped. It is within the existing urban area and the curtilage of the city rather than the city fringes which could align specifically with Strategic Objective 8. The release of a large scale site within the Northern Corridor which has not previously been considered could impact on the phasing and infrastructure requirements of other sites being promoted within the Derriford area. Funds raised through S106 or CIL contributions from the former airport site could be used to support essential infrastructure priorities in the Northern Corridor. The 2013 Regulation 123 list of infrastructure priority investments for the city does</td>
<td>A commercial option could involve a mix of both housing and commercial space and could therefore make a contribution to meeting Plymouth’s objectively assessed housing need. The Plymouth Plan Part One and Plymouth Employment Land Review have identified a sufficient supply of employment land and accommodation. The former airport site could therefore make provision for a proportion land of residential use. The key issue of whether or not the former airport site would be the optimum location for housing has been considered under the narrative for Options 1 and 2 and is not considered further here as Option 3 is a commercial redevelopment option. The advantages of the site and its links to the surrounding uses have been addressed above under the Transport Connectivity and Sustainability &amp; Commercial Growth Themes.</td>
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<td>completions elsewhere across the city are lagging behind then consideration could be given to the release of the site for alternative use.</td>
<td>not currently specify any projects for CIL funding in the north of the city (although the case for revision of this list to include a Northern Corridor project could be made). The Plymouth Plan Part One proposed to build approximately 4,300 dwellings in North Plymouth although this is being reappraised through the JLP. Development of former airport site would align with objective of creating a growth hub in this part of the city. The Northern Corridor is made up of a series of disparate opportunity sites. The airport sits north of the main growth areas around Derriford and progressing the redevelopment of the site as a new neighbourhood would offer the opportunity to deal with some local connectivity challenges. This option could also address the need for affordable and starter homes in North Plymouth as well as the need for alternative educational, primary healthcare and open space and leisure choice in the Northern Corridor. The site is of a scale which means its development capacity could make a significant contribution to Plymouth’s OAN. Fulfilling the obligation to meet housing choice and affordable housing need is an important part of Plymouth’s strategic role in the sub region. It is</td>
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<td>anticipated that the site could deliver 30% affordable housing in line with local plan policy and contribute to wider social economic benefits. The option could create a new neighbourhood of decent homes with associated community facilities and public spaces and accessible services. The release of the land from aviation use would also enable the potential to make best use of neighbouring sites which are currently restricted due safety zone limitation of the safeguarding extension zone.</td>
<td>This option could contribute to infrastructure investment and delivery of key improvements to support sustainable growth of Plymouth. The Redevelopment of the Former Plymouth City Airport Site – Assessment of Socio Economic Benefits report prepared for SHH identified that a mixed use redevelopment scheme could deliver a number of socio economic benefits. The benefits of this type of development could provide approximately 360 for full time jobs for Plymouth with 300 jobs on site. The proposal could also create an estimated 340 full time equivalent’s though temporary construction over a 10 year build period. The jobs created would be a mix of permanent and casual positions, from managerial to shop assistant roles, and would vary in skill requirements.</td>
<td>The commercial option could contribute to Plymouth’s role as a major centre of employment in the south west. The site location, adjacent to some of Plymouth’s existing business parks offers the opportunity to create a base for higher-level services for the sub region with a focus of the provision of high quality business space for the identified key sectors. A strategy for development would be required, enabling a phased approach and incorporating, where necessary other, linked uses. This could include for example university expansion which could assist in providing a research base for some key growth sectors.</td>
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<td>Strategic Infrastructure</td>
<td>This option could contribute positively to ensuring that the strategic infrastructure needs of the city are safeguarded as growth takes place. Plymouth’s strategic role within the sub-region could be strengthened by the reintroduction of aviation activity providing connections to other UK and European cities and other transport hubs. Critical aviation infrastructure both facilitates growth of the city and responds to it. The potential for the reintroduction of air connectivity to Plymouth can only be protected through safeguarding the site and the phased reintroduction of aviation activity starting with general aviation. The airport site should be regarded as a strategic long term infrastructure asset and its future safeguarded for its original function despite current</td>
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<td>viability challenges. The future for general aviation in the UK is in danger of suffering a Beeching style cull given the drive to find solutions to the housing crisis. Airfields are increasingly on the agenda as there are now in the region of 20 at risk of redevelopment around the Country including Wellsborne, Redhill, Fairoaks Plymouth. The recent launch of the All Parliamentary Group for General Aviation chaired by Grant Shapps has emphasised the importance of supporting general aviation as a flourishing, wealth generating and job creating sector of worth in our economy. The safeguarding policy for aviation use would align with the Plymouth Plan’s objective to create supportive conditions to enable private and community investment in infrastructure. The topography, location and the former use of the site for aviation identifies the site as a significant and unique infrastructure asset which could play an important part again in the cities future. Safeguarding would align with the Plymouth Plan’s objective to ensure that infrastructure assets are used efficiently. Developments proposing new housing on brownfield land are strongly supported by NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development however this goal should be balanced to ensure that any adverse impacts of doing so are managed. The report further identifies that the scheme could generate a GVA of around £59.2 and identifies that there could potentially be an income of £3.1m through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on an estimated 1,600 dwellings. There is an opportunity for the site to become a community hub for the north of Plymouth through provision new commercial, residential, community, educational and health developments and strategic green space. This aligns with the strategic objective seeking to build strong and safe communities. A housing led scheme could present opportunities for improvements to the city’s infrastructure. Planning conditions could secure improvements for the site and surrounding environments. Financial contributions through S106 from the residential option could positively contribute to essential infrastructure e.g. the Forder Valley Link Road. Contributions could also contribute to the Woolwell to George widening scheme. These scheme improvements could relieve pressure at the crunch point Manadon Roundabout Junction (A386).</td>
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<td>The option would also offer potential for the wider site to contribute to other infrastructure needs through a phased masterplan. This could include a park and ride, public open space / recreational provision and a certain level of housing growth. There would be direct employment generated through the provision of high quality business park space.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Option 1: Base Option - Safeguarded Aviation</th>
<th>Option 2: Residential Led</th>
<th>Option 3 New Science or Business Park – Employment Led</th>
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<td>would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the polices in the framework as a whole. This option would align with the NPPF which makes clear the importance of transport infrastructure in delivering sustainable development. In particular this option would align with the direction given in NPPF which encourages planning policies which ‘recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment, including a poor environment or any lack of infrastructure.’ (Para 21) NPPF also promotes sustainable transport and encourages local planning authorities to ‘work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development, including large scale facilities….or transport investment necessary to support strategies for the growth of airports’ (Para 31). NPPF goes on to state that ‘local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.’ (Para 41)</td>
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The NPPF sets out that when planning for airports Local Plans should take account of the NPPF and the Government Framework for UK Aviation. The Aviation Policy Framework 2013 sets out the Governments Policy on Aviation. An objective of this is to ensure that the UK’s air links continue to make it one of the best connected countries in the world. This includes increasing links to emerging markets so that the UK can compete successfully for economic growth opportunities.

The Framework recognises the very important role airports across the UK play in providing domestic and international connections and the vital contribution they can make to the growth of regional economies. Nineteen million passengers took domestic flights in 2011.

Further, this the framework considers the potential of GA aerodromes which can complement commercial air transport and provide increased connectivity at important hubs such as London.

The framework states: “These links are particularly important for local businesses. Ninety-six per cent of city pairs served by business aviation have no scheduled connection.”
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<tr>
<td>The National General Aviation Strategy (March 2015)(^{10}) supports the growth of the sector and identifies a key challenge to General Aviation as the prioritisation of other land uses. The strategy highlights new Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for planning authorities to consider the value of the network of GA airfields within Local Plans and take this into account in making planning decisions(^{11}). An aerodrome is recognised as being part of a larger network and local planning authorities should have regard to the extent to which an aerodrome contributes to connectivity outside the authority’s own boundaries.</td>
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6 Summary

In accordance with policy guidance, this report has considered the proposed safeguarding of the former Plymouth Airport site against reasonable alternatives in order to understand the likely social, economic and environmental dimensions of the site moving forward.

The assessment draws information from a number of previous studies and in the context of the scale of the site, its previous use and strategic position within Plymouth considers the following land use options as reasonable prospects for future consideration on the site:

- Option 1 - Safeguarding for future aviation use;
- Option 2 - A new neighbourhood. A residential led option with a range of other uses; and
- Option 3 - A Science or Business Park. A commercial led option.

The options have been considered in the context of five core themes derived from the strategic objectives of the Draft Plymouth Plan: The Plymouth Vision, Commercial Growth, Transport Connectivity, Housing, and Infrastructure.

In considering the alternatives all have merit and all would have the potential to bring benefits for Plymouth and the wider region.

**Option 1** is a pragmatic option bearing in mind the importance of the strategic infrastructure asset to the long term connectivity of the city. Once it’s gone there will be no further opportunities to reconsider the reconnection of Plymouth by air to the rest of the UK and Europe. The option seeks to plan positively, safeguarding the former airport and thereby retaining a strategic opportunity for aviation within the city. Future aviation use on the site would contribute positively to the Plymouth City Vision and a number of the accompanying objectives in relation to economic and commercial growth, transport connectivity, infrastructure investment and tourism.

The NPPF and PPG outline that local plans should take account of the Aviation Policy Framework and local authorities should plan positively for infrastructure and take account of the need for strategic infrastructure. PPG specifically states local authorities should have regard to the extent to which an aerodrome contributes to connectivity outside the authorities’ boundaries as part of a larger network.

General aviation has received support from an All Parliamentary group which emphasised the importance of it as a flourishing, wealth generating and job creating sector. Growth within the sector is also supported through the National General Aviation Strategy (March 2015) which and identifies a key challenge to General Aviation as the prioritisation of other land uses. The strategy highlights new planning practice guidance for planning authorities to consider the value of the network of GA airfields within Local Plans and take this into account in making planning decisions.
Safeguarding the potential for aviation connections is seen as key to the future of the city and the wider South West Devon region, allowing better connections for the local population, visitors and to support economic growth. The site is considered to offer the potential for increased connectivity by air and it is considered that if lost to other uses, such infrastructure is unlikely to be viable elsewhere within or surrounding the city.

The option therefore seeks to retain the opportunity for future aviation uses in the short to medium term. Should the emerging JLP be able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply the site should be safeguarded to protect the opportunity outlined. Any safeguarding policy could be time limited and include for a mid-plan review at which point the potential for such use can be re-assessed and alternatives reconsidered for the remainder of the plan period and beyond.

Option 2 is based on emerging proposals from Sutton Harbour Holdings and includes a residential led option with a range of other uses which would enable it to align with the Plymouth City Vision and a number of the Plymouth Plan strategic objectives, albeit not without cost to the strategic connectivity of the city.

The development of the brownfield site could link natural infrastructure assets in the surrounding area and facilitate permeability in the Northern Corridor although development at the scale proposed could lead to negative effects on the existing transport system. The release of the land for development would also form one of a number of potential opportunities for the expansion of the University of St Mark and St John.

This option could contribute to meeting Plymouth’s housing need within the urban area and potentially defer the need for the release of greenfield land. The option would also generate potential financial contributions that could contribute to essential infrastructure and city enhancement schemes. In addition there would be direct socio economic benefits for the city by creating both temporary and permanent employment. However, the option would permanently change the use of the site and remove any potential for future aviation provision for Plymouth.

Option 3 would see an employment led option for the site that would build on the success of surrounding areas and potentially involve an expansion of the University of St Mark and St John. In addition, other uses could be introduced to complement the employment uses and/or facilitate the wider site strategy.

The option could contribute to Plymouth City Vision which seeks to realise Plymouth’s strategic role as a regional city and major economic driver for the south west and presents an opportunity to meet the city’s demand for high quality large scale employment sites to serve advance manufacturing, medical and hi-tech industries. The site could also reduce the reliance on Langage for B2 and B8 uses.

The option would also permanently change the use of the site and remove any potential for future aviation provision for Plymouth.

In summary and through consideration of alternatives, it is acknowledged that all three options for the site offer reasonable alternatives which would each bring positive effects to Plymouth and the wider region in their own right. The approach to safeguard the site for aviation uses offers the city and the wider
region an opportunity to deliver future aviation services, improving strategic connectivity and positively planning for infrastructure. While the options for residential and employment led proposals would contribute positively to the overall vision and a number of the plan objectives, these options would result in a permanent land use change, removing any prospect of air travel returning to Plymouth.
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