Plymouth Eastern Corridor
urban fringe study

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 3
2. Planning Context: Sustainable Development .................................................. 5
3. Stakeholder objectives ....................................................................................... 8
4. Description of the area ...................................................................................... 10
5. Analysis .............................................................................................................. 31
6. The Vision .......................................................................................................... 34
7. Delivering the Vision: The framework ............................................................. 38
8. Mechanisms For delivery .................................................................................. 45

Key Partners & Consultees ................................................................................... 48
The Eastern Corridor of Plymouth comprises a wedge of land bounded by the A38 to the North, the Plym Estuary to the west and residential areas of Plymstock to the south. To the east the land rises to an open agricultural landscape with views back to Plymouth. A number of significant development proposals are being brought forward in the area and these will substantially change and increase its urban context and character over the next 10-20 years or so. They include the Sherford New Community proposal for 4000 homes, which will form a new eastern urban edge to Plymouth and the Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood development of up to 1650 homes, which together add approximately 5650 new homes to the area by 2016. In addition a new quarry is planned along with the closure and restoration of the Chelson Meadow landfill site. Amongst this significant change lie some of the most important landscape assets of Plymouth: Saltram House and the Plym Estuary.

The scale of change envisaged represents a huge challenge for the two Local Authorities within which this area falls, South Hams District Council and Plymouth City Council, and their partners including the National Trust, the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission. There is potential to capitalise on the huge amount of investment planned to unify the area into a cohesive and diverse sustainable landscape accommodating the recreation and rural needs of both the immediate area and Plymouth and its wider sub-region as a whole.

The timescale over which further changes in this area is planned is long, with Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood and Sherford New Community proposed for development up to 2016 with possible additional settlement expansion to the west of Sherford beyond this period (subject to assessment of need and economic justification through a plan, monitor and manage process as well as the outcome of an objection to this proposed extension by the National Trust), plus mineral extraction operations identified over the next 100 years or more. This study is therefore timely, allowing all parties involved in the area to jointly agree how the Eastern Corridor area might develop.

This work takes forward previous work nationally on the role and status of the Urban Fringe including the Countryside Agency/Groundwork report “The Countryside in and Around Towns” and builds upon the Plymouth Urban Fringe Partnership publication “A Charter for the Countryside and Seas Around Plymouth”.

Scope of the report

The urban fringe is a complex area with potentially competing uses and development pressures. In the past, patterns of land use and development have seen urban fringe areas develop in a piecemeal and ad-hoc way.

The brief, established through a joint partnership of the Countryside Agency, the National Trust, Plymouth City Council (PCC), South Hams District Council (SHDC) and the Forestry Commission, seeks to avoid this by establishing a collaborative, cross border study of the area and to provide suggestions regarding the future management of the area. The Brief recognised that the study represented an early opportunity to inform the Area Action Plans (AAPs) being prepared by SHDC and PCC. It proposed the creation of a “network of greenspaces” composed...
of an “interconnected web of formal and informal, historic and ecological landscapes” that will cater for varied recreational interests and, by providing a sub-regional inter-connected recreational resource with a varied range of recreational opportunities and experiences that offers the potential to relieve recreational pressures on Dartmoor and other protected landscapes. The need to connect the area with other sub-regional recreational facilities such as Dartmoor, Mount Edgcumbe Country Park, the Plym Valley and the South West Coast Path was also highlighted to develop a wider catchment area for the eastern corridor and complement other recreational and tourist facilities.

Two workshops carried out as part of the study process helped to refine the brief. The first of these, involving the key partners - National Trust, Plymouth City Council and South Hams District Council - concentrated on imagining what a rural urban fringe could contain, what its character might be and what uses could be established; and bringing this together to picture how people might use this area in the future. A second workshop brought together these partners plus stakeholders including community groups within the area, developers, the aggregate industries, Devon County Council as well as representatives of national bodies such as the Environment Agency, the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission, English Nature, Sustrans, Groundwork and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and focussed towards the detail of that vision and the mechanisms required to achieve that vision.

The workshops made it clear that the study needed to do more than simply establish an evidence base for the provision of greenspaces within the area linked to nationally recognised standards such as the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Six Acre Standard. It was felt that the provision of adequate levels of greenspace would not in itself ensure the delivery of a sustainable landscape in which a range of uses are integrated as envisaged by the Countryside Agency’s multifunctional urban fringe initiative. On the contrary, too often a focus on standards and levels of provision has meant that the broader planning and open space framework has been neglected, resulting in just the sort of piecemeal development that too often detracts from the urban fringe. It was concluded therefore that the study needed to set out a compelling vision for the entire Eastern Corridor landscape and provide a framework within which this vision can be achieved over time.

The nature of the framework to deliver this wider vision and network of greenspaces needs to be carefully considered from the outset. At the time of writing (April 2006) some parts of the development of the Eastern Corridor is at an advanced stage with much work completed on the two Area Action Plans for the area. The masterplan for the Sherford development proposal is reasonably fixed but will continue to evolve during implementation. However some major parts of the jigsaw still have to be resolved (such as the Chelson Meadow restoration). It is essential therefore that the framework is conceived to be flexible to future change and delivery focussed. It needs to show what can be achieved and describe the practical steps necessary to move forward. It will lead to the establishment of a delivery team whose focus will be the creation of an accessible multifunctional urban fringe on the eastern edge of Plymouth.
In 2004 the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into force, enacting a major reform of the planning system. The Act places a considerable emphasis on sustainable development and makes it a requirement that those responsible for preparing regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks carry out their functions with a view to contributing to the delivery of sustainable development.

This was augmented in 2005 by the publication of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, replacing PPG1. PPS1 sets the overarching planning policy framework for the delivery of sustainable development through the operation of the planning system.

‘Securing the future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy’ (2005) sets out the Government’s strategy for delivering a better quality of life through sustainable development. Five guiding principles are identified that the Government will use to achieve sustainable development:

1. Living within Environmental Limits;
2. Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society;
3. Achieving a Sustainable Economy;
4. Promoting Good Governance; and
5. Using Sound Science Responsibly.

PPS1 makes it a specific requirement for planning authorities to pursue each of the aims of sustainable development in an integrated way and stresses the importance of good design in the delivery of sustainable development. A key assertion is that ‘good design is indivisible from good planning’ and that ‘planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development’.

The net result of these changes is a considerable reorientation of planning from a largely reactive process seeking to mitigate the negative impacts of change to a proactive and more creative process seeking to deliver positive change. This fundamental change of emphasis offers an opportunity for all participants involved in the planning process to be more creative and visionary.

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe is just the sort of complex area the new planning system has been designed to address. It establishes a planning context that allows the key stakeholders to work together to develop a vision for the area and, through the mechanism of cross border Area Action Plans (AAPs), provides the opportunity for the creation of a framework within which the vision can be delivered.
2.2 National Planning Policies

There is a wide range of issues that affect the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area that is covered by Government policy, including:

- PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation

Key to the success of the overall vision for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area will be the ability to create the appropriate amount of open space that is of the right type and variety which can be delivered in combination with the protection and enhancement of the areas of historic value and of ecological and biodiversity interest.

2.3 Regional Planning Policy

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (January 2006)
The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West was produced in January 2006 and includes the Western sub-region. Whilst this is still at draft stage it identifies the Sherford area as the site of a new community, ultimately of 5,500 dwellings up to 2026 taking in to account Sherford and a further extension to Sherford beyond 2016. It states that urban extensions should be planned and developed as sustainable communities, which deliver a high quality of life through high standards of design and access, seek to protect, enhance and maintain environmental assets and landscape character, avoid areas susceptible to flooding, reflect the heritage and provide the appropriate physical and social infrastructure, including biodiversity gain. The RSS also calls for the provision of Green Infrastructure to provide for new development needs and to improve the quality of life. These networks will consist of multifunctional, accessible, connected assets planned around existing environmental characteristics.
This may take the form of protection, extension or enhancement of existing resources or the provision of new or replacement facilities. The potential for biodiversity gain in Strategic Nature Areas is also highlighted along with the need to promote environmental quality and protect cultural assets.

The Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016 (October 2004)
The Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016 (Adopted Oct 2004) stated the choice of Sherford as the location for a new community functioning as an urban extension of at least 4000 homes.

2.4 Local Development Frameworks (LDF)

This study has been carried out during the LDF process and the following LDF documents have been consulted upon. Both AAPs deal with cross border issues.

**Plymouth City Council**
- Plymouth City Council Core Strategy Preferred Options (July 2005)
- North Plymstock (including Minerals) AAP Preferred Options (July 2005)

**South Hams District Council**
- Sherford New Community AAP Preferred Options (June 2005)
- Core Strategy Submission Version (January 2006)

The Sherford New Community AAP (concerning the 4000 home community up to 2016) follows an extensive stakeholder consultation through an Enquiry by Design (EbD) process, which defined the shape, form and requirements for the new community at Sherford and established a clear eastward boundary to development. This is reinforced by the creation of a Community Park along the Sherford Valley and the protection of the ridge north east of Brixton. The consultation in June 2005 yielded significantly reduced levels of objection and increased support for the revised proposals.

It should be noted that The National Trust has formally objected to the North Plymstock Area Action Plan particularly in regard to the indicative westwards expansion of Sherford beyond 2016 within the Plymouth City boundary on the grounds of prematurity. This matter will be resolved through the formal Area Action Plan process. Both the North Plymstock AAP and the Sherford AAP will reach their submission stage in June 2006. Following a six week consultation there will be an examination in Public by an Inspector who will produce a binding report in spring 2007. Subsequently the AAP’s will be adopted and provide the Development Plan framework for the area.

2.3 Local Development Frameworks

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- Plymouth City Council Core Strategy Preferred Options (July 2005)
- North Plymstock (including Minerals) AAP Preferred Options (July 2005)
- South Hams LDF: Sherford New Community AAP Preferred Options (June 2005)
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (Jan 2006)

It should be noted that The National Trust has formally objected to the North Plymstock AAP in regard to the indicative westwards expansion of Sherford within the Plymouth City boundary on the grounds of prematurity. This matter will be resolved through the formal AAP process.
3. Stakeholder objectives

The following underlying objectives for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape were developed at two workshops involving the key partners to the project and key stakeholders. These objectives take in to account the need to create a multi-functional urban fringe in the Eastern Corridor. It is suggested that these objectives are taken forward into the South Hams District Council and Plymouth City Council planning frameworks for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe. Proposals for change within the area should be appraised to ensure that they help to deliver each of the objectives.

3.1 A place that has a distinct identity

This means developing the sense of place of the Eastern Corridor through recognising its unique and site-specific qualities and binding them together into a diverse and cohesive landscape. These qualities or features include the key views into and out of the area, the historic and cultural resources as well as the natural landscape elements including landform, stream corridors and woodlands and protecting and enhancing them where relevant. The area should develop into a place that is memorable, that stays in the minds of both local residents and tourists. Distinctive place names should be reinforced, helping people to start taking ‘ownership’ of the place. It should develop an identity that is in contrast and distinct to the wilder character of Dartmoor.

3.2 A place that contributes to sustainable living

The whole area currently works well in broadly representing sustainable/recycling processes, with food growing, settlements and waste management all located in the same area. The area has great potential to extend this to provide local food and sources of energy (biofuels plus Combined Heat and Power plant) on the doorstep of Plymouth, thereby minimising ‘food miles’.

3.3 A place that feels part of nature

This means ensuring that the physical elements that make up our understanding of the character and atmosphere of ‘countryside’ are retained and that the intactness and relationship between these elements are also protected. This is often about a fairly simple composition of elements, for example, the interplay of topography, trees, hedgerows and pasture but of key importance is a sense of scale and it will be essential to ensure that this scale, or the perception of this scale is retained.
Any change or development should respond to and have an awareness of protecting the natural elements of the area including the underlying topography and the alignment of watercourses. Above all, there should be an avoidance of ‘municipalisation’.

The feeling of nature is very much about peace and tranquillity and also about a sense of permanence. This means that there should be a gradation in character from the urban areas, through simple woodland buffers and appropriate land uses such as neighbourhood sports facilities, located at the edges to the urban areas.

To feel part of nature the area must support nature. The significant opportunities for conserving, enhancing and restoring the area’s biodiversity need to be grasped and the potential to enrich people’s appreciation of nature/wildlife grasped.

Farming practices in the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe should be maintained and developed in more ecologically sensitive ways, as they are often the most evocative image in relation to our understanding of the countryside.

3.4 A place that can support a range of uses and activities

This means planning and managing a multi-functional urban fringe that looks to accommodate the needs for recreation, biodiversity, agriculture and heritage protection. The area should cater for both visitors and local residents.

3.5 A place that can be an education resource

This could mean holding events, creating outdoor classrooms, setting up a resource centre or creating an information hub to provide interpretation of the historic, cultural and natural aspects of this place. This can be done both formally and informally, and part of this process should include the protection and enhancement of those assets. It can also provide a great opportunity to inform people about sustainability.

3.6 A place that is easily accessible to all and welcoming

This means ensuring that there is a fully interlinked and connected network of routes into the area and between component destinations. There should be a coherent, safe and welcoming network of cycle and pedestrian paths that link to public transport nodes and to visitor car parks allowing good north-south and west-east links. The area should also be well linked to the surrounding protected landscapes and strategic recreational routes.

3.7 A place that forms a setting to Plymouth

This means an area that adds to and complements the identity of Plymouth as a great waterfront city with excellent access to the countryside. The area should form the setting to urban Plymouth when arriving from the east, with good visual links between it and the main urban parts of the city and a clear distinction between urban and rural. The key view of the city from the A38 should be retained. The role of the Plym estuary is important to this objective in providing a great setting to both the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe and the urban edge of Plymouth.
4. Description of the area

4.1 Introduction

The Eastern Corridor study area comprises approximately 131 hectares and is located to the east of the Plym Estuary with Plympton to the north and Plymstock to the south and the open South Hams countryside to the east.

The relationship of Plymouth with its surrounding rural landscape is one of the most significant aspects of its overall character. The Plymouth Greenscape Assessment sets out the following characteristics that are considered central to the development of the city’s overall character and are important for defining the role that the Eastern Corridor should have for Plymouth:

- **The enclosing rural skylines.** In many locations, skylines of an undeveloped rural landscape enclose developed urban areas. This creates a clearly perceived limit to the urban area, and strengthens the identity of the various districts within the city.

- **The green links and woodland belts.** Significant green corridors were established as part of a planned network of open space in the post war period, particularly in the North West sector of the city. This allows strong visual connections with the landscape setting, as well as providing a continuity of open space and habitat.

- **The high viewpoints.** A number of high points within the city allow wide views of the surrounding countryside and The Sound. These enable local residents to perceive the extent of the city and the closeness of countryside of high quality.

- **The agricultural land permeating the city.** The city has a unique character in certain areas because of the remaining agricultural land. These areas include large tracts of land between Plympton and Plymstock, which are still connected to the surrounding countryside, as well as land enclosed by urban development, such as at Crownhill. These areas create a unique juxtaposition of urban and rural character.

- **The special character of the water’s edge.** The city’s relationship with the sea and the Rivers Plym and Tamar is a fundamental component in its evolution. The docks and urban edges of the city define its historical relationship with the sea, and allow wide views across the estuaries. The coastal and estuarine edges also include important designated natural habitats and routes for long distance footpaths.

- **The nature of the urban edge.** The surrounding rural environment provides a strong setting for peripheral urban development. The character of the urban edge is varied, ranging from defined boundaries such as strong woodland blocks at the southern edge of Plymstock, to more integrated and ill-defined edges on the northwest and northeastern districts, such as at Widewell. In places this urban edge appears almost arbitrary, creating an unresolved tension between urban and rural land.
4.2 Land Use Components of the Eastern Corridor

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area and its surroundings have been categorised into a number of character types based on a combination of features that includes topography, land use and land cover. These are set out in the Plymouth Greenscape Assessment (2000) and The Draft South Hams District Council Landscape Character Assessment (2001) and have been summarised below. Within these broad character types there are a number of specific existing and proposed land uses and features that will have an influence on the future character and uses of the Eastern Corridor study area.

Plymstock and Wixenford Quarries

Plymstock Quarry currently forms a dramatic landscape of limestone shelves created through previous mineral extraction processes. Wixenford Quarry is much smaller scale and located on lower lying land. Wixenford Quarry and the edge and fields to the north of Plymstock Quarry lie within the boundary of the “essential setting to the designed landscape” (Nicholas Pearson Associates) of Saltram.

Chelson Meadow Land Fill

Chelson Meadow has been in use since the 1960s as Plymouth’s main landfill site and will end operations by mid 2007 when final restoration will be carried out. Opportunities exist to influence the restoration processes to include new tree planting (subject to further research) and provision of public access. Opportunities to influence the way the final areas of restoration will be carried out need to be actioned now to fit in with a programmed completion of mid 2007. Public access will only be permitted once the gas emissions have reduced and the Environment Agency has certified that the site is safe. It is not possible to judge, at this stage, how long this will take, but it is likely to be in excess of 15 years and could be as much as 30 - 40 years. Chelson Meadow currently produces electricity from the landfill gases and this is likely to continue for at least a 10 – 15 year period.

Chelson Meadow landfill site is in distinct contrast to its surroundings due to its unnaturally raised topography and profile and comprises a distinctive linear hill in the southern part that runs east-west with a flatter section in the north. This site lies within what was originally part of the estate of Saltram and continues to form part of the “essential setting to the designed landscape” (Nicholas Pearson Associates).

Chelson Meadow Waste Management

Plymouth’s strategy for waste management is for it to be dealt with as close to its source as possible - ‘the proximity principle’ - and to make Plymouth as self sufficient as possible. This means considering appropriate local sites for landfill and at the same time reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill through recycling and waste treatment processes. Chelson Meadow is already in use as a waste management centre for Plymouth including reclamation facilities, civic amenity, composting, green waste, glass transfer, wood chipping and waste management offices and it is expected that this role will continue and new treatment methods accommodated as required.

Plymstock New Neighbourhood

Plymstock Quarry has been designated as a mixed used, but mainly residential development of up to 1650 new homes plus employment uses, community, health, leisure and play facilities and a primary school. There will also be formal sports pitch and informal open space to the north, “Northern Fields Country Park” comprising open grassland and deciduous woodland plus Wixenford Quarry which will be set aside for nature conservation.

Other Proposed Developments

Other, smaller developments include Pomphlett Industrial Estate proposed for private development in keeping with the adjacent Plymstock Quarry and Wakehams Quarry, to the south-west of Plymstock Quarry which is proposed as high quality new development to reflect its ‘gateway’ location.
Saltram Estate

Saltram Estate is of national importance and is Grade II* listed. It is a designed estate that was planned for agricultural use rather than to be just grazed or mown. It has a positive character in terms of the quality of the views, rolling topography, fields and parkland trees plus meandering woodland belts and streams that suggest a timeless countryside use. There are a number of permitted footpath routes that meander through the estate making the Estate extremely popular for local and city-wide recreational usage. Saltram House is prominently located on high ground overlooking the city and Plym Estuary.

Hardwick Wood Nature Reserve

The Hardwick Wood Nature Reserve comprises an area of ancient woodland on high ground above the A38 corridor and Saltram Estate. It lies within the boundary of the “essential setting to the designed landscape” of Saltram Estate (Nicholas Pearson Associates) and is partly owned by the National Trust. It includes a network of permissive paths.

East of Saltram Park

Whilst the greater part of this area does not in itself demonstrate strong landscape qualities it provides an important open character and green wedge function between Plympton and Plymstock. It forms part of an open approach into Plymouth and links with a ribbon of open space along the A38, although at a somewhat smaller scale. Within this area, mature hedgerows and small coppice woodlands are an attractive feature. The site also offers significant agricultural opportunities. The majority of the area remains in agricultural use with pasture fields defined by hedgerows and small woodland belts. There are numerous small streams that run through the area. Within this mainly agricultural landscape are scattered isolated dwellings plus some small-scale industries such as nurseries a temporary golf driving range and cemetery.

Plympton Ridge

This area of principally farming land is similar in character to the central area of study but is physically separated by the A38 corridor. It comprises a prominent ridge that runs west-east, serving to separate Plympton from the centre of the study area; however this area links visually with the open land north of Plympton forming an enclosing rim of undeveloped rural land around Plympton.

Billacombe Green

Billacombe Green comprises informal recreational areas and woodland and is a resource for residential areas of Plymstock. It also contains an Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Moorcroft and Hazeldene Quarries

There are extensive mineral reserves in the area stretching throughout much of the southern area of the Eastern Corridor. Moorcroft Quarry will finish limestone extraction around 2014 but will retain its processing plant to support the new Hazeldene Quarry to the east. Restoration proposals include the continuation and expansion of waste management operations in the western section of the site with other parts of the site identified for future employment uses. Due to the quarry operations, there is already a 120m buffer against future development around its boundaries. Hazeldene Quarry has just started quarrying limestone and is likely to have a working life of between 50-70 years. In addition, land to the north of the main Hazeldene Quarry has been safeguarded for future mineral extraction over a time period exceeding 200 years. Again, there will be a 120m buffer to its boundary. Due to the nature of the operations, the areas of active quarrying are visually separated from the surrounding areas by tree planting belts and raised earth bunds.
1. Study area boundary
   - East of Plymstock and South of A38 Urban Fringe
   - Inland Dissected Plateau *
   - North Plymstock

2. Industry & Spoiled Land
3. Saltram Park & Countryside
4. Victorian Core
5. Marsh Mills
6. Underwood & Colebrook
7. Plympton St. Maurice & Chaddlewood
8. Hartley, Higher & Lower Compton
9. Plymstock
10. Marsh Mills
11. Underwood & Colebrook
12. Plympton St. Maurice & Chaddlewood

* South Hams, Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines

Ref: PCC Greenspace Assessment and SHDC Character Assessment

Plymouth’s Eastern Corridor
4. Description of the area
A38 Road Corridor

The A38 road corridor forms a distinct physical barrier between north and south parts of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area and affect the immediately surrounding areas both visually and in terms of noise. It provides a vantage point of Plymouth when entering the city from the east, which is of citywide importance. Any development located in proximity to the A38 would need to have an effective buffer to protect it from noise.

The Plym Estuary

The tidal Plym Estuary is a feature of citywide importance; it provides a wonderful setting and backdrop to both Saltram House to the east, and the more, urban areas of Plymouth, including Mount Gould and Efford to the west and acts as a distinctive barrier between the two. It provides a sense of permanence and forms an important part of a green corridor of citywide importance, that continues north through the Plym Valley. It also contains strategic footpath and cycle routes along its west and east banks.

Sherford New Community

Sherford will form a discrete fully functional new settlement of approximately 4000 new homes as part of South Hams housing allocation requirement within the period to 2016 and will contain new schools, health centres, community facilities and services, employment uses and recreational uses. New footpaths and cycle routes will be planned as part of this new community. There will also be formal sports provision and a country park to the east, potentially containing an organic farm.

Beyond this period there are indicative proposals in the North Plymstock AAP to link the Sherford New Community and Plymstock Quarry through the land west of Sherford and north of Hazeldene. This is subject to assessment of need and economic justification through a plan, monitor and manage process and subject to resolution of an objection to this proposal by the National Trust.

Sherford will be a high quality and sustainable form of development with a high degree of permeability and pedestrian accessibility. The large area of community park identified to the east of Sherford will be a significant recreational and wildlife component of the eastern corridor countryside area and will be linked to it both through the urban streets of Sherford and through open space between Sherford and Elburton and Hazeldene Quarry.

Plymstock Quarry / New neighbourhood

Plymstock Quarry will be a major mixed use neighbourhood comprising 1650 houses plus a school and other community and local facilities. The site will offer the potential for major new natural, accessible green-space in the form of Pomphelett Plantation, Wixenford Quarry and the northern fields, which are particularly sensitive as they form part of the views from Saltram. The scheme is awaiting a revised proposal from the new landowners/developers.

Plympton St Maurice Conservation Area

The Plympton St Maurice Conservation Area includes the Castle, Pathfields and associated green space. It forms a key setting for the ancient borough of Plympton St Maurice.
principal land use context

Ref: Greenspace Assessment and SHDC Character Assessment

Plymouth’s Eastern Corridor
4. Description of the area

* South Hams, Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines
4.3 Landscape Character

Industry and Spoiled Land

This area presents a distinctive character strongly influenced by existing and former industrial uses. This has resulted in an area that contains a mix of uses including waste management uses, and disused quarries with exposed rock faces. Much of the area has a strong maritime influence and there is often a strong visual relationship with the water’s edge. Dominant features include the Chelson Meadows landfill and the Laira Bridge. Plymstock Quarry currently forms a dramatic landscape of limestone shelves created through previous mineral extraction processes. Wixenford Quarry is much smaller scale and located on lower lying land. Wixenford Quarry and the edge and fields to the north of Plymstock Quarry lie within the boundary of the “essential setting to the designed landscape” (Nicholas Pearson Associates) of Saltram.

Saltram Park and Countryside

The essential characteristics of this area are open rolling countryside rising to the north and east with medium to large fields of pasture defined by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small pockets of deciduous woodland. Belts of woodland become stronger and more pronounced to the north and west (some of which is ancient woodland: Hardwick Wood and Saltram Wood). The mature parkland landscape of Saltram Park owned by the National Trust is a key feature of the area. Elsewhere, extensive areas of glasshouses, pylon lines and the A38 intrude into the otherwise open, rural landscape and Moorcroft and Hazeldene Quarries give a more industrial feel to the southern edge of the area. Occasional scattered farm buildings break up open views and there are distant views of telecommunication towers, prominent headlands and a ribbon of residential housing at Plymstock. This area forms an important green wedge between the urban development at Plymstock and Plympton, which is considered of city-wide significance.

Inland Dissected Plateau overlain with “East of Plymstock, South of A38” Urban Fringe

“Saltram Park and Countryside” (Area 9 on the Landscape Character map) continues in character eastwards into South Hams District as Area 5 and forms part of the main characteristic landscape of South Hams District. This comprises principally arable land cover with some livestock uses. The areas of arable production are usually large fields with intensively managed boundary hedges and few hedgerow trees. Farmsteads and villages have historically avoided the most exposed parts of the plateau and tend to nestle into favoured and sheltered positions below the plateau surface and above the valley floors. Although the area comprises agricultural land uses, its rural character is affected by being overlooked by the residential areas of Plymstock and the noise and visual intrusion of the A38.

Surrounding Urban Areas

Marsh Mills

This character area is distinctive in its mix of land uses which include Marsh Mills China Clay works, depots, sewage treatment works, business parks/industrial units, commercial uses with some leisure activities in particular the dry ski slope, and sports grounds. The essential characteristics of this area are dominated by the intrusive nature of the A38 and major roads and junctions to the A38 and railway lines, which is an important issue in terms of the image of the city, as it is visible from a number of areas, in particular when approaching the city from the east. It is linked to the study area by good pedestrian and cycle links along the River Plym.

Underwood and Colebrook

This area forms a compact belt of urban development comprising a mix of pre/post war housing in the west and south, and late 60s, 70s and 80s housing and industrial estates to the north overlying a gentle valley landform.
The rural edges are often visible from within the urban areas, and some elements of the rural edge penetrate the urban area. There are prominent views throughout the area of Hardwick Wood and the agricultural land on the ridge above Woodford.

Plympton St Maurice and Chaddlewood

This area forms a compact belt of urban development confined by open countryside to the north, south and east. The essential characteristics of the area are the historic village centre of Plympton St Maurice and Plympton Castle, defined by the Conservation Area. The architectural and historic townscape qualities are attractive. Typical features include buildings on the edge of the footpaths with limited or no front gardens and small pockets of occasional open space. Within the Conservation Area there are attractive mature gardens and trees. There is a mix of detached, semi-detached and terrace housing with post war housing estates to the north and east. A strong railway corridor, which runs west/east, divides the north from the remainder of the character area. There are some areas of open green space fronting roadway corridors, housing and commercial areas. There are small belts of woodland particularly within the centre of the character area.

North Plymstock including Elburton

This area is defined by its topography, land use and housing style. It is an urban area containing a mix of semi detached and detached housing predominately pre war to post war. Essential characteristics of this area are small intimate greenway corridors linking larger open spaces. There are important panoramic views of the city from high points such as Burrow Hill and Dunstone Wood. Much of this area is separated from the study area by the A379.
4.4 Access and Movement

Vehicular Access

Vehicular access into the area is limited to five routes that traverse the area north to south; these are Colesdown Hill, Haye Road, Vinery Lane, Stamps Hill and Sherford Road, which form connections between the two neighbourhoods of Plympton and Plymstock plus Brixton and other more rural settlements. Of these, the strategic links into the area are Sherford Road from the A38 in the north and Haye Road and Sherford Road linking to the A379 in the south. All these roads are fairly narrow and winding with high hedges and potentially dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians to feel comfortable sharing with vehicular traffic. The A38 that runs through the northern part of the study area has a negative impact on the area, urbanising it and adding noise and visual intrusion.

Pedestrian

There is a noticeable lack of Public Rights of Way running through the study area with only two short sections in the east of the area. However, surrounding the study area, there are a number of important, long distance routes. The West Devon long distance footpath, which follows the route of the National Cycle Network Route 27 (NCN27 see below), is of regional importance and the South West Coast Path National Trail, which lies to the south west of the study area, is of national importance. The Erme-Plym trail runs west-east within Plymstock to the south and is of city importance, linking to Dartmoor and the Two Moors Way.

Cycle

The Plym Valley Cycleway (NCN27) links the Devon Coast north to south along the east edge of the Plym Estuary and is of regional importance. It is an attractive route for much of its length, but the experience of long distance cycling is weakened by some on-road sections and by the link beneath the A38 underpass at Marsh Mills.

The NCN27 links with two other cycle routes at Marsh Mills, one that follows Embankment Way towards the city centre, and the other westwards, along Forder Valley Road. The Plymouth to Exeter cycle route runs just to the north of the study area and is a signed, on-road route through Plympton. There are proposals for further long distance cycle routes running west-east to the north of Plymstock (NCN2) and linking to the A38 through the study area.

Public Transport

The residential areas to the north and south of the study area are well served by bus routes, which link local areas to each other and to the city centre. There is a bus route along Plympton Hill/Sherford Road, linking north and south communities.

The North Plymstock and the Sherford Area Action Plans identify the need for a High Quality Public Transport system (HQPT) to link the new communities at both Sherford and Plymstock Quarry with the city centre (via the A379) and to Langage. Integrated into this will be the proposed Park and Ride at Sherford, adjacent to the A38.
4. Description of the area

Note: NCN 2 Proposed cycle route to be added
4.5 Historic & Cultural Assets

Saltram House

Saltram House is Grade I listed with Grade II* grounds and is of national importance. The house was largely created between the 1740s and 1820s by three generations of the Parker family. It features some of Robert Adam’s finest rooms and an exceptional collection of paintings, including many by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Angelica Kauffmann. The gardens are predominantly 19th-century and contain an Orangery and several follies, as well as beautiful shrubberies and imposing specimen trees. The wider Saltram Estate was never a great English landscape pastoral park, but a designed agricultural setting for the house and stables.

Historically, the main changes to the estate have included the infilling of Chelson Meadow in the C18 to form a racecourse and the selling off of parts of the estate in the C20 century to allow land filling at Chelson Meadow and the expansion of quarries at Moorcroft and Pomphlett/Plymstock. The estate was later severed by the construction of the A38. Mineral workings may have been a feature of the estate, with older maps showing limekilns and later maps showing both limekilns and quarries.

Historic Settlements and Listed Buildings

Plympton and Plymstock are both historic settlements, with the stannery town of Plympton first recorded in 904. The historic core of Plympton is still very much in evidence and is defined by the Plympton St Maurice Conservation Area with Plympton Castle at its heart. Many of the historic routes that linked these settlements to key destinations such as The Hoe in central Plymouth are still in evidence.

Plympton has a number of associations with key historic figures: it was the birthplace and residence of the artist and first president of the Royal Academy of Art, Sir Joshua Reynolds as well as three of his protégés. Reynolds was lord mayor of Plympton, as well as its Member of Parliament. Another famous resident and MP was the architect Sir Christopher Wren.

There are some interesting names in the area, many of which are associated with woodland, these include Plympton, from the old English meaning Plum-tree-town as well as Haye Farm (hay meaning hedge, sometimes an enclosure in a wood); Underwood, in Plympton; Thornefield, a former farm south of Haye Farm; Crabtree, west of the Plym estuary, plus the names warren, furze and ford. Several orchards are shown on the Tithe maps for the area. There are also a number of Listed Buildings scattered through the area, these are Wixenford Farm, Hayes Farm and West Sherford.

Plympton St Maurice Conservation Area

The intimate scale and character of the townscape within the Conservation Area, the north-south “green lanes” and the cultural significance of its green spaces are an important feature of this area, and are of city-wide significance. This area developed in the form of an Iron Age camp and later, an Anglo-Saxon fort on a low spur of land. The choice of Plympton (Plympton Erle) by the Earl of Devon for his castle related to its strategic position commanding ancient trackways. There are a number of historic routes that can still be traced that lead from this area towards Mountbatten, Wembury and South Devon, Plymbridge, Dartmoor and Exeter. This Conservation Area has the potential to contribute to the overall recreation draw of the Eastern Corridor for visitors and its inclusion will help to ease recreational pressure on the Saltram Estate from the north. Care will need to be taken, however, to ensure that additional visitor pressure is limited to pedestrians and cyclists to conserve the fine grained character of the Conservation Area.
4. Description of the area

Ref: The National Trust / English Heritage

Plymouth’s Eastern Corridor

21
4.6 Views and View Points

Due to the varied topography of the city there are numerous locations where good views are possible. This includes views channelled along valley corridors, panoramic views from high points, and wide views over open water. The high points also act as landmarks, which are important, both as features in their own right, and as a means of orientation within the city.

Key landmarks and orientation points within the city include topographical features such as Hardwick Wood, amphitheatre on the edge of the Plym; and industrial areas such as Chelson Meadow landfill site.

The strong relationship of the city with the water’s edge is one of Plymouth’s most valued characteristics, and the study area possesses an important relationship in terms of views with the Plym estuary.

The visual relationship of many areas of the city with the open countryside, is one of the most significant assets for the city in terms of landscape character, and in strengthening the identity of the city as an urban area close to countryside of high landscape value.

Key views include the following:

**Views from the A38**

Approaching Plymouth on the A38 from the east, offers drivers a brief but distinctive view of the city. The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape drops away to the west and beyond are the tall buildings of the City Centre and the coast. The views give a strong impression of a city placed within a strong landscape context.

The development of Sherford will inevitably have an impact on this impression but the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape will still have an even more significant key role to play in providing this setting for the city.

The potential future expansion of Sherford (which is subject to an assessment of need and economic justification through a plan, monitor and manage process) back towards the city could have a significant impact on this view and it will be important for these elevated views to be protected.

**Hardwick Woods and Ridgeway**

From northern parts of the area, the elevated topography offers extensive views over the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape and beyond. Key areas from which views are potentially available are Hardwick Woods and the Ridge Road. These are not currently highly accessible but could be an important component of the recreational offer for the area – people will always be drawn to highpoints and their potential should be optimised within the framework.

**Views to the north**

To the north of the Ridgeway, the landscape slopes steeply away to Plympton. The intimate, secluded and well-treed landscape here varies markedly from the larger scale agricultural landscapes to the south. Views over Plympton to Dartmoor are attractive and provide a strong landscape setting to the urban area.

**Views within Saltram**

Views from Saltram to its landscape and urban context are hugely important to the character and ambience of the place. Currently the key views are to the south over the Plym Estuary and Chelson Meadow. Although compromised by the landfill, the views still offer a largely rural context. Of key importance is the fact that the urban areas between Saltram and the sea are largely obscured by topography and vegetation. The house and parkland therefore feels well connected with Staddon Heights and other areas of coastal landscape to the south. With the Plymstock Quarry development the views out from Saltram may change although the visual impact on Saltram of this proposed development is still subject to detailed planning permission and the recogni
tion of the importance of protecting these views. The views from Sal­
tram to the south may also be altered due to the restoration of Chelson
Meadows landfill and, in the long term, this could offer an opportunity
to create a new, designed landscape configured to complement the
historic parkland of Saltram.

Views across the Plym Estuary to Saltram and Chelson Meadow

These views are one of the great under utilised resources of Plymouth.
The approach along the estuary with views to the wooded fringes of
Saltram is one of the potentially iconic images of Plymouth – one that is
detracted from by the poor visual quality of the road corridor. Nonethe-
less these views need to be protected and enhanced in the future to
secure the quality of one of the best entrances into the city.

4.7 Ecology and Biodiversity

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area lies in a South West Na-
ture Map Strategic Nature Area (Coastal habitats) and supports a wide
variety of habitats associated with historic landscapes, pastoral and
arable farmland, woodland, post-industrial land-use including mineral
extraction and landfill and urban fringe environments. This section sets
out a strategic overview of the ecological interest and potential for the
area.

UK or Local Biodiversity Action Plans Habitats

The following habitats are noted as being listed in the UK or local Bio-
diversity Action Plans (South-West and Devon) and are evident within
the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe Study Area. The Devon Biodiversity
Action Plan is Devon’s response to the national biodiversity planning
process and takes the objectives and targets of the UK Biodiversity
Action Plan (BAP) and translates and amplifies these within a local
context. It is intended to provide a consensus on the priorities for con-
servation action within Devon.

Ancient and species-rich hedgerows (UK and South-West and Devon
BAPs)
Estuaries (South west and Devon BAPs)
Mudflats (UK BAP)
Parkland and lowland wood pasture (UK. South-West and Devon
BAPs)
Cereal field margins/arable farmland (UK BAP/South-West BAP)
Lowland calcareous grassland/calcareous grassland (UK/South-West
BAPs)
Flower rich meadows and pastures (UK and Devon BAPs)
Pits, quarries and cuttings (Devon BAP)
Oak woodland (Devon BAP)
Ash-Maple Woodland (South-West BAP)
Rivers, streams and associated habitats (South-West BAP)

In addition, non-statutory designations are associated with the Plym
estuary, Saltram House, woodlands north of the A38 and the quarries
on the northern boundary of Plymstock and include estuarine, wood-
land and grassland habitats. The “Sherford Bat Survey” has shown
that there is a physical link between bat colonies at Sherford quarry
(disused) and at Saltram Estate.

UK or Local Biodiversity Action Plans Species

A number of species recorded within the study area are the subject of
UK or local Biodiversity Action Plans (South west and Devon). These
include:

Common Pipistrelle bat (UK and South west BAPs)
Greater Horseshoe bat (UK and Devon BAP)
Lesser Horseshoe bat (UK BAP)
Linnet (UK BAP)
Bullfinch (UK BAP)
Song thrush (UK BAP)
Otter
Primrose (Devon BAP)
Ecological Interest of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe Study Area

The habitats within the study area support a good range of plant and animal species, from those associated with the saline conditions of the Plym estuary through to species associated with ancient woodland sites. A selection of species of note (nationally or locally scarce or legally protected) and the broad habitats they occupy is set out below. (UK or Local Biodiversity Action Plans Species are highlighted.)

Estuarine habitats including mudflat, small areas of salt marsh and sandy and shingle shorelines

These habitats occur in small quantities along the Plym estuary, which is dominated by mudflats at low tides. There are also small strips of shoreline supporting salt marsh vegetation, sandy and shingle beaches.

Ancient and semi-natural woodland

There are a number of ancient and old semi-natural woodlands in the study area. The largest area of semi-natural woodland occurs to the north of the A38 at Hardwick Wood. Other smaller areas of ancient and old semi-natural woodland are largely associated with the cliff edges along the Plym Estuary in the parkland surrounding Saltram House.


Parkland

The only area of parkland landscape is found in Saltram Park, which occupies a large part of the study area and is of high ecological as well as historic and landscape value.


Unimproved calcareous grassland

Small areas of unimproved species-rich calcareous grassland occur mostly notably associated with the Billacombe area of Plymstock, which includes the Billacombe Green SSSI.

Plants: Common Gromwell, Field Eryngo, Perennial Flax, Pyramidal Orchid and Common Broomrape.


Unimproved neutral grassland

There are small pockets of unimproved species-rich and relatively species-rich neutral grassland associated with the quarries on the northern boundary of Plymstock and in small fields on the edges of these quarries.

Plants: Common Gromwell, Field Eryngo, Perennial Flax, Pyramidal Orchid and Common Broomrape.
ecology and biodiversity

Plymouth’s Eastern Corridor
4. Description of the area

Site Boundary
Local Wildlife Sites
Tree Preservation Orders
Floodplain
Site of Special Scientific Interest
Animals: Brimstone, Ringlet and Marbled White butterflies, Jersey Tiger Moth and Six-spot Burnet Moth. Greater Horseshoe Bat, Common Pipistrelle Bat, Noctule Bat, Slow Worm, Common Lizard and Badger. Agriculturally improved and semi-improved grassland

To the east of Saltram Park and north and north-east of Plymstock the landscape is dominated by farmland which comprises many fields supporting species-poor agriculturally improved grassland swards.

Animals: Linnet, Song Thrush, Bullfinch, Noctule Bat and Badger.

**Scrub**

Scrub is most prevalent on former industrial land associated with the limestone quarries on the northern edge of Plymstock or along major roads such as the A38.


**Hedgerows**

Throughout the main farmed and parkland landscapes there is a variety of hedgerows, a number of which are species-rich and would qualify as Important Hedgerows under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. The hedgerows are managed in a variety of ways. Most are closely trimmed, but others, particularly along stream valleys or in small field patterns with pasture support mature standard trees or are taller and less well maintained.

Plants: Stinking Iris, Primrose and Common Broomrape

Animals: Linnet, Song Thrush, Bullfinch, Doormouse, Reptiles and Badger

**Ponds and lakes**

A variety of standing water bodies occur associated with the Parkland or as a result of mineral extraction. Wixenford Quarry contains marsh / wetlands recognised as a County Wildlife Site.

Plants: Greater Tussock Sedge, Grey Club-rush and Southern Marsh Orchid.

Animals: Keeled Skimmer and Black tailed Skimmer Dragonflies, Scarce Blue Damsel Fly, Palmate Newt, Daubenton’s Bat, Whiskered/Brandts Bats and Soprano Pipistrelle Bat.

**Streams**

A number of smaller watercourses drain the study area. For the most part they flow through a farmed landscape and are not big enough to support significant wetland areas. They do provide valuable linear features within the landscape.

**Arable**

Arable land is distributed throughout the study area. Fields are often associated with hedgerows.

Animals: Linnet, Song Thrush, Bullfinch and Badger.

**Bare ground (Quarries)**

There are large areas of bare ground or recently disturbed land associated with the quarries on the northern boundary of Plymstock and the restoration of the landfill site south of Saltram Park

Plants: Sharp-leaved Fluellen, Stinking Iris, Ploughman’s Spikenard, Blue Fleabane, Carline Thistle, Bee Orchid, Twiggey Mullein, Common Gromwell and Pyramidal Orchid.

4.8 Recreation Requirements & Demands

Existing recreation provision: urban areas

The Plymouth Greenspace Assessment Study assessed each character area in terms of proportion of greenspace against overall area. Greenscape includes wood, scrub, cliff, water, cemetery, disused quarry, playing field, parkland and agriculture.

Underwood and Colebrook

In relation to hectares of greenscape per 1000 people, Underwood & Colebrook, which lies to the north west of the study area has 1-4 ha of Greenscape per 1000 people of which approximately 5% is parkland and only approximately 1% is playing fields coverage.

Plympton St Maurice and Chaddlewood

In relation to hectares of greenscape per 1000 people, Plympton, to the north-east of the study area, has 5-10ha of greenscape per 1000 people of which approximately 5% is parkland and approximately 4% is playing fields coverage.

North Plymstock

In relation to hectares of greenscape per 1000 people, North Plymstock, which lies to the south of the study area has 5-10ha of greenscape per 1000 people of which less than 3% is parkland and approximately 7% is playing field coverage which is the highest % in the city.

The City of Plymouth Local Plan

The City of Plymouth Local Plan has recognised Plymouth as being substandard in terms of provision for Playing Fields, according to National Playing Field Association (NPFA) standards, with Plymouth at 0.66ha per 1000 population compared with suggested recommended new standards of provision of between 0.9 and 1.2 ha per 1000 population. These standards are based on the NPFA “6 Acre Standard” which sets out minimum guidance of 2.4ha of “Playing Space” per 1000 population, subdivided into:

1.2ha for “sports pitches”;
0.4ha for other “outdoor sport” (eg greens, courts, athletics tracks, and miscellaneous sites such as croquet lawns and training sites).
0.8ha for children’s play.

This will be reviewed in the light of the Playing Pitch Strategy (see below) that is currently in preparation for Plymouth.

Draft Plymouth Playing Pitches Strategy

The Draft Plymouth Playing Field Strategy (February 2006) sets out an assessment of current and future playing pitch provision (in terms of fractions of a pitch) based on three regions within Plymouth: north, south and east. The current figures use the 2001 Census figures and the future trends use the Urban Capacity Study and allow for a 10% increase in capacity using ‘Sports England’ methodology. These figures include Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood. The figures for the east region of Plymouth show a shortfall in pitches for junior football, mini soccer and weekend cricket and a surplus of senior football, midweek cricket and rugby union.
South Hams District Council

South Hams District Council has produced a draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance, which sets out policies on public open space, sport and recreation. This endorses the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) Standard for Sport and play provision as the baseline standard for new development.

Saltram House

The house and grounds are owned and managed by the National Trust and provide cultural, educational and informal recreational opportunities as well as securing an area of biodiversity importance. It is of national importance as a heritage resource and of regional importance for informal recreation as well as an important local recreation resource for residents nearby.

The aims of the National Trust are to protect and conserve special places and high quality environments for everyone’s benefit; to engage with local communities through volunteering and educational visits and to provide for informal recreation. Visitors to the house in 2004 were 68 000 and to the parkland, the number of visitors was on the order of 200 000. Figures to the estate are expected to remain in the region of 200,000 per annum, based upon the existing population of the surrounding area. Saltram Estate has a policy of offering reduced rates to the house and garden if access to the house is via public transport.

A significant current pressure on the estate is the number of visitors who use the estate for informal recreation; this may be quite independent of its value as a cultural resource and it is likely that demand would increase considerably should the population of the surrounding area also increase. An equally significant pressure is the potential loss of the rural character and setting to the estate due to the proposed future development changes in the immediate and wider area and the expected increase in numbers of users for informal recreation that these developments may bring about.

Billacombe Green

Billacombe Green is considered of citywide importance for informal recreation. It is likely this area will have greater use once Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood has been developed.

Hardwick Wood Nature Reserve

Hardwick Wood is considered of district importance for informal recreation.

George V Playing Fields

These are considered of city importance for both informal and formal recreation and will form part of recreation facilities associated with the Sherford New Community.
Sherford New Community and Plymstock New Neighbourhood

The combination of Sherford New Community and Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood within the period to 2016 is likely to create about 5650 new homes and a population of about 12430. In relation to existing standards, these levels of population increase indicate potential minimum requirements in the order of:

- The Sherford New Community Summary Report (Oct 2004) sets out the proposed provision of open space for the new community. It states that all homes should be within 300m of informal greenspace of over 2ha and that provision of green corridors and amenity greenspace will be design/needs led. In terms of outdoor sports facilities, over 12 ha of grass pitches plus over 2.7 ha of other pitches will be provided. In addition, a new Community Park of over 100ha including an organic farm, will be provided to the east of the new community, providing a neighbourhood, and potentially city wide or regional resource. This shows that the Sherford New Community will meet the minimum targets for outdoor sports facilities as well as providing a number of neighbourhood greenspaces and a community park of potentially city and regional importance.

- Provision of open space for Plymstock New Neighbourhood will include a sports / activity site. Informal provision will include the new “Northern Fields Country Park” which will encompass Wixenfield Quarry, which will be set aside for nature conservation.

Access to open space

Good access to both formal and informal recreation facilities is important and, distances to each facility should be related to whether they have a neighbourhood, city or regional role. Based on principles of sustainable communities, ideal walking distances mean that neighbourhood facilities (such as some sports provision and larger play areas) should be located within a 5-10min walk zone (400-800m) of residential areas and district facilities within a 20min walk zone (1.7km). Beyond these walking distances should be a range of district and regional greenspaces that are easily accessible to the population of Plymouth by a range of access means, including public transport. The plans summarise informal and formal recreation provision within the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area in relation to existing and proposed residential areas.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plymstock Quarry</th>
<th>Sherford</th>
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<tr>
<td>New dwelling provision</td>
<td>1650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average household size</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential Population</td>
<td>3630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Play Area</td>
<td>2.5ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(average 0.7ha per 1,000 pop)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Playing Field</td>
<td>4.4ha</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1.2ha per 1,000 pop)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pools</td>
<td>131sqm of water (0.62 of 25m swimming pool)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Halls</td>
<td>3.66 Courts (0.91 Sports Hall)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Plymouth Local Plan standards, Sports Facility Calculator: Sport England.)
recreation provision

informal provision

formal provision

Plymouth’s Eastern Corridor
4. Description of the area
5. Analysis

Landscape Character Areas and Land Use Components Key Issues

The Study Area is made up of quite distinctive landscape character areas and land uses, which lack integration into a cohesive landscape. Any new development into this area must ensure that it does not act to further fragment remaining cohesiveness and identity of this landscape. Any change should serve to pull together these character areas and land uses to create greater unity and cohesiveness.

Access and Movement Key Issues

The Study Area is relatively inaccessible currently with a particular absence of west-east pedestrian and cyclist links, which make it difficult to penetrate the landscape. There is a particular need for a good south-west to north-east link into the landscape linking with the pedestrian and cycle routes links into Plymouth across Laira Bridge.

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe Study Area has the potential to form part of a much wider, city and regional network of recreational links between Plymouth and other areas of countryside or tourism interest such as Dartmoor, Mount Edgcumbe Country Park and the Tamar Valley.

Any access framework developed for the area needs to be considered not only simply as a means to get into the area and to access its component parts, but also as part of the overall structure to the area. It ultimately needs to be designed to fit in with the topography, landscape features and woodland to create a landscape which easy to understand, safe to use and easy to navigate.

Historic and Cultural Assets Key Issues

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area contains a number of cultural assets that cannot be replaced and should be considered of national importance. Opportunities exist to link these to a wider, regional network of features of historic and tourism interest. There are also great educational opportunities linked to these. Any recreational proposals will need to ensure that these assets including their setting and context are protected. In addition, the historic routes that exist could be reinforced to become an integral part of the access network for the area. Until such time as Chelson Meadow can be utilised for public access there may be additional recreational pressure from the development of Plymstock Quarry that may put additional pressure on the Saltram Estate. This issue will need to be considered carefully in the design of the Plymstock Quarry development.
Views Key Issues

The views within, over and of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape are fundamental in defining not only the image of the area and its assets but also of Plymouth as a whole. There are opportunities to consciously seek to improve views and strengthen the image of the city, particularly through the design of Chelson Meadow and the appropriate management of the landscape up to the boundaries of the A38 and Sherford.

Ecology & Biodiversity Key Issues

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area contains a wide range of habitats and associated flora and fauna that provide a rich and valuable asset for Plymouth. These include a number of habitats supporting UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species, which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. These need to be protected and potentially extended and diversified where opportunities exist. There are excellent opportunities for educational and recreational opportunities linked with the different habitats of the area.

There are many opportunities for biodiversity enhancement within the Eastern Corridor including within the proposed northern open spaces at Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood, at the proposed Sherford New Community Community Park, through the restoration of Chelson Meadow, the promotion of less intensive agricultural practices, the creation of wetland areas for high tide roosting sites, the planting of new, native broadleaved woodlands and the restoration of redundant quarries.

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area contains a wide range of habitats and associated flora and fauna that provide a rich and valuable asset for Plymouth. These include a number of UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats & species, which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

There are number of key sites & biodiversity assets that need to protected from development & sheltered from the increased recreational pressure that may come as a result of improved access. These sites include the Plym Estuary, Pomphelett Plantation, Hardwick Wood, the woodlands & veteran trees of Saltram Park, the wetlands of Wixenford Quarry. In taking steps to protect this resource from the expected increases in recreation, we must balance the need to provide accessible ‘wildlife rich’ natural green space and the need to educate visitors about the areas wildlife should not be missed.

There are significant opportunities for biodiversity enhancement within the Eastern Corridor including the restoration of redundant quarries, allowing unrestored quarries to naturally vegetate, the proposed northern open spaces at the Plymstock Quarry development, within the proposed Sherford New Community Park, through the restoration of Chelson Meadow, through the promotion of less intensive agricultural practices, the creation of wetlands, the design of new development (SUDs, green roofs) and the planting of new, native broadleaved woodlands.

Biodiversity conservation and enhancement needs to regarded as a cross cutting theme with the potential to inform and influence all land use proposals with the study area.

Recreation Key Issues

There is a range of formal and informal recreation provision located both within both the existing residential areas and proposed within Sherford New Community and Plymstock Quarry development. Beyond this provision, the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area represents an opportunity for a range of citywide and potentially regional recreational opportunities, which could be linked to recreational resources and tourist attractions beyond the study boundary.

Plymouth is surrounded by landscapes and natural assets of national & international value. Key ‘honey pot’ sites within the adjoining National Park & Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are already under considerable pressure due to existing recreational demands.
If Plymouth is to grow sustainably, and limit the impact on its surrounding natural heritage, there is a clear need to identify a locally accessible green infrastructure that can support the recreational demands of this population.

It will also be essential for recreation provision throughout the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe to be balanced with the protection of natural and historic environments through zoning and dispersal.

**Key Issues Summary**

The foregoing paints a picture of a complex landscape under remarkable pressure for change. It is a landscape of parts rather than any type of cohesive entity with a recognizable identity and image. However it has some fundamentals that many other ‘growth areas’ around our towns and cities would love to have: a stunning estuary; Saltram House; beautiful woodlands; a gentle Devonian topography; and elevated views over Plymouth and the coast. These natural qualities provide a basic framework within which a remarkable recreational landscape can be created over time. However the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe currently does not have the significant government funding available for new green infrastructure that many of the growth areas currently enjoy despite facing similar green infrastructure costs and demands. This deficiency must be remedied as the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe has major potential for becoming a strategic area for new Green Infrastructure to improve the quality of life for existing as well as new residents of the envisaged major development.

It is also an inescapable conclusion that the major development proposals, in particular Sherford, will effectively create a new urban edge to Plymouth within which the new landscape will lie. This development ‘encircled’ landscape will contain Saltram as its historic core, the restored landfill site, the quarries and agricultural land that will be subject to significant urban fringe pressures. This encircled landscape represents a remarkable opportunity to the surrounding existing and proposed communities and the broader city region of Plymouth.

The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe can become a recreational resource of potentially greater significance to Plymouth than the ‘Downs’ are to Bristol. The Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe can be designed to spread the urban fringe pressures of the area and relieve the current almost exclusive recreational focus on the sensitive landscape of the Saltram Estate.
6. The Vision

The purpose of the stakeholder workshops held at the outset of the project was to draw up an outline for the vision by agreeing a set of objectives that would shape the area in the future. They are as follows:

1. A place that has a distinct identity
2. A place that contributes to sustainable living
3. A place that feels part of nature
4. A place that can support a range of uses and activities
5. A place that can become an education resource
6. A place that is easily accessible to all and welcoming
7. A place that forms a setting to Plymouth

Each objective on its own paints an intriguing picture in the mind of a future landscape. Taken together, the objectives paint a picture of a complex and diverse area. For the vision to work it must be united by a strong landscape framework and develop its own recognisable image and identity. That image and identity will partly spring from the intrinsic qualities and characteristics of the area but will also partly derive from its future functions and its future role.

For any place to develop its own brand and its own identity it must become a tract of land that has its own special qualities and its own boundary. In short, it must become a place, and a place that can be described to others and an identity that projects the right image. Whatever else the vision aspires to it must paint a picture of a landscape that is highly functional, valued for a variety of reasons, but above all a place of beauty.

Saltram House is already a place that has a very clear brand and identity that projects an image of quality and beauty way beyond the region. For this reason we would suggest that the whole area might at the very least aspire to become as beautiful and as valuable as the Saltram Estate. This is a very worthwhile pursuit in any case, and acts as a quality benchmark against which all future proposals might be judged.

Our suggestion is that the area becomes known as the East Plymouth Countryside Park or another name derived through further community engagement with stakeholders. The title recognises the importance of the whole area to the City of Plymouth. The title also conveys the message about this area being large scale, complex and diverse, and yet part of a tract of land that has an overarching identity. Other factors also play a part. Its overall scale and its location in relation to the city is important. When Sherford is built the land to the west will inevitably feel less like open land and more like an annexed tract of countryside, even with green corridors and connecting green links between it and the open countryside to the east of Sherford. There will be greater human activity in parts and more urbanising influences round and about. Part of the vision for this area is to counter this potential effect and to create a large tract of land of sufficient scale and importance to mark it out as a major city-wide and regional asset.

Its overall scale conveys important messages about the potential for creating pockets of tranquillity and refuge from the city, and its location also conveys important messages about its degree of accessibility.
To help form a better picture we have compared the scale of the Eastern Corridor Landscape with other well known “parks” with very clear identities such as Richmond Park and Windsor Great Park. It is evident that the scales are broadly similar. This says something important about identity, scale and function. For the vision to succeed there must be a very clear picture of scale, function and identity.

Although for the communities of Plymouth and the surrounding area it will be seen as a great recreational resource it will also be a contemporary working landscape with food and energy production, recycling facilities and educational resources.

This area will become a place where people will want to come and visit, a place where they can easily drop in for a couple of hours or for the afternoon to experience the diverse but connected range of landscapes and recreational opportunities. It will be a place where they can walk or cycle through a rich network of natural spaces, and learn about and participate in agriculture and local food production. Where they can start to understand better the whole life cycle processes involved in sustainable living. They may wander past productive orchards of apples and plums or rich habitats for wading birds.

For the more adventurous, there will be excellent opportunities to travel out of the city and through the centre of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe to link with the countryside and coast of South Hams and north to Dartmoor National Park. Alternatively, visitors can head straight to a cafe and have a coffee in the countryside. Others might want to visit their allotment or visit an outdoor art exhibition. Opportunities for climbing will be available in the restored quarry workings alongside opportunities to learn about and appreciate diverse wildlife areas and the historic landscapes of Saltram and Plympton St. Maurice.

The whole area will be accessible by an excellent public transport system that will link key destinations such as residential areas, employment areas, schools and sports pitches to each other and will connect up with safe cycle and walking routes.
One of the important decisions in shaping the vision for the Eastern Corridor is to identify a boundary for the East Plymouth Countryside Park. Boundaries are extremely important in reinforcing identity and in establishing delivery mechanisms as well as highlighting issues about future governance. A little more is said about this in the final chapter on Mechanisms for Delivery. Our view is that, although the new community park planned to the east of Sherford is an extremely important potential asset for the area of Sherford and a significant component of the greenspace network, it in itself is unlikely to be viewed as part of the land to the west of Sherford, when Sherford is built. For this reason we would suggest that it does not form part of the East Plymouth Countryside Park but is clearly connected to it as part of the wider landscape and open space framework.

Scale comparisons:
Delivering the Vision: The Framework

The current proposals for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape will be implemented over the next 10-15 years and beyond. In this period, social and economic conditions will change. It is in this context that the vision for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe will need to be achieved, which suggests the need for a flexible framework for change to address this issue. A framework establishes the fundamental structure of the landscape within which change will take place without being so specific that the plan is inflexible. It seeks to deliver the linkages and connections that make up the landscape structure whilst giving flexibility as to how they can be achieved.

There are three elements to the Framework:

- a landscape character framework
- a land use and open space framework
- an access and movement framework

The frameworks overlap and overlay one upon another. They also provide the mechanism for judging how individual proposals meet the seven key objectives. The landscape character framework will be particularly important in shaping a place that has a distinct identity and ensuring that it not only feels part of nature but also helps protect and enhance the setting of the city. The land use and open space framework will be particularly important in determining how land contributes to sustainable living and is capable of supporting a range of uses and activities. The access and movement framework will reshape the whole area turning into a destination and an area that is better understood and more welcoming.
7.1 The Landscape Character Framework

The landscape character framework identifies a number of broad areas that should be designed, developed or managed to achieve key landscape characteristics over time. An interlinked pattern of landscape character areas that have been conceived of together will create the structure within which will lie open spaces, other land uses and linkages. Achieving the landscape character framework will involve working with private sector individuals and developers, landowners and landscape managers. The landscape framework provides the vehicle for creating a clear identity for the whole area, an overall defining landscape structure within which many different activities and uses can develop.

The Recreation Spine

The Recreation Spine almost acts as a transect running east-west touching upon all the main landscapes that make up the Eastern Corridor. It provides the opportunity for people to experience all the different landscapes that make up this locality from the estuarine waters edge to wooded ridge, elevated hill and open countryside. Indeed the transect could be extended to connect with the high moor to the north east.

The Recreation Spine lies at the heart of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe and will form a pivotal thread from the centre of Plymouth, across The Plym Estuary, Chelson Meadow, through the centre of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe and out into open countryside. This Recreation Spine should be conceived as a stunning linear landscape of varying width and character emanating out from the Plym Estuary. The progression from Estuarine landscape and the low tide beaches along the Plym Estuary to the agricultural landscapes to the east could be emphasised with the creation of a series of ecologically rich landscapes defined by wide woodland belts that follow the natural contours of the land and meandering stream courses. It will provide secondary links to the north and south connecting specific recreation use zones with surrounding residential areas encouraging dispersal of visitors throughout the study area.

Saltram House and Estate will form the key focus to this spine and it will be essential that the character, setting and fabric of the house and grounds are retained and enhanced. Key to this will be the continuation of the agricultural activities of the estate that underpin its appeal. Equally important, in the long term, is Chelson Meadow, which lies at a pivotal position overlooking the Plym Estuary and centre of Plymouth. Through sensitive restoration and woodland planting (subject to further research as part of the restoration proposals), it has the potential to become a magnificent 21st century park developed as a modern interpretation of the romantic English landscape tradition where, as an intended reaction to the age of reason, nature should be seen to predominate over man and straight lines were banished! Importantly, these landscapes were realised with the contribution of contemporary artists and poets. It could provide, as informal recreation, a key role in the development of an outer ‘setting’ for Saltram House. Spring or summer meadows could be re-created and it could become the setting for temporary art exhibitions or outdoor performances for the city.

Not all of this Recreation Spine will come under public ownership and much of the essential linkages will pass through the productive landscapes to be negotiated through agreement with landowners. Through research, it has the potential to become a magnificent 21st century park developed as a modern interpretation of the romantic English landscape tradition where, as an intended reaction to the age of reason, nature should be seen to predominate over man and straight lines were banished! Importantly, these landscapes were realised with the contribution of contemporary artists and poets. It could provide, as informal recreation, a key role in the development of an outer ‘setting’ for Saltram House. Spring or summer meadows could be re-created and it could become the setting for temporary art exhibitions or outdoor performances for the city.

Not all of this Access Spine will come under public ownership and much of the essential linkages will pass through the productive landscapes.
the framework plan
The Productive Landscapes

Within the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe it will be unachievable, and undesirable, to bring all areas under public ownership. A variety of private sector economic activities will continue within the area. These private sector activities will need to be protected and encouraged to achieve a sustainable landscape. The Productive Landscapes around Saltram, between Saltram and the proposed Sherford New Community and to the north of the A38 will continue to be predominantly agricultural with an increasing role as a source of locally grown produce for the new communities. The farming practices within the core of the ‘encircled’ landscape will inevitably change as the new settlements are built. Although the National Trust will maintain its agricultural role other landowners may not. This will result in development pressures that could be contrary to the overall vision. To avoid this, the Productive Landscapes will develop new agricultural, food production and economic practices that will ensure that the uses of the area are still ‘rooted in the soil’. These new uses, which may include the growing of crops for energy production, may result in a rich new landscape character very different from traditional agricultural landscapes.

The concept of Sherford’s new Community Park, in part containing a productive landscape comprising an organic farm should also be utilised to anchor the easterly end of the Eastern Corridor. This will mean that large areas of the existing farmland can remain productive and opportunities exist for the area to diversify and become an experimental local food and energy crop growing area, which can start to colonise and develop the area. Land uses could include a city farm, allotments, weekend allotment homes, energy crops (subject to further research, these could include cereal straw, oil seed rape, Miscanthus, poplar, willow, alder and hazel) and orchards.

Within these areas, the existing characteristics and continuity of the farming land should be reinforced through strengthening existing field boundary patterns, hedgerows and woodlands and habitats should be protected and enhanced through appropriate management. This will aim to address the decline in diversity that has accompanied agricultural intensification.

Meandering Woodlands

The existing woodland belts within the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape are an essential component of the area. They add character and definition to the different areas of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe and in places they create a strong landscape structure that ties the various uses together. The meandering woodlands will represent a potential expansion of these existing woodland belts by forming a strong structure to define and zone the different recreational uses of the area and to help define the edges to the residential areas. They will also help to create a series of different scaled spaces and define views within and to and from the study area. They will also help to provide a buffer or transition area between Saltram Estate and the wider landscape that is not under their control. The character of these woodland belts will be defined by a small selection of appropriate native broad-leaved trees with thought given in some areas, to designed contrasts between different landscape and woodland types to enhance the landscape experience.

7.2 The Land Use and Open Space Framework

Within the area there are a number of specific requirements for open space provision in relation to the development of Sherford New Community and Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood. Formal recreation demands and local informal amenity spaces will need to be met by a range of provision within and close to the main residential areas. Above these more local requirements, the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe offers the opportunities for some unique and site specific places of city and potentially sub regional value.

It is likely that development pressures and the pattern of land use within the area will evolve as the main development proposals are implemented. As this happens it is fundamental that land use proposals are appraised against how well they help to achieve the overall objectives and vision for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape. There is
a number of key land use proposals which can be discussed with a
degree of certainty as well as a number of desirable uses which can
also be considered throughout the delivery process. These are set out
below.

An Eastern Gateway to Saltram

Saltram Estate is acknowledged as a tourist destination of national
importance. As part of the visioning and framework development proc-
 ess, a redefinition of the entrance to Saltram has been considered to
help disperse visitors to this destination. An opportunity exists to con-
sider an access in to the Saltram Estate from Haye Road subject to a
review of access arrangements by the National Trust. The new gate-
way would, if desired, offer an opportunity to control access into the
area and reduce casual use and parking around the main house. The
agricultural estate provides wildlife habitats and a rich mix of flora that
is enjoyed informally but must be carefully managed to ensure it is pro-
tected, retained and enhanced.

Plympton Ridge

Although much of this area will be retained as productive landscapes,
it has a key role to play in creating a sense of continuity to the Eastern
Corridor Urban Fringe study area, by linking, both physically and visu-
ally, Plympton in the north, with the central part of the Eastern Corri-
dor. Through improved access, people will be encouraged up onto the
ridge to take advantage of the panoramic views as well utilising new
regionally important, strategic, east-west recreational links.

Chelson Meadow

Key to the success of creating the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe as a
coherent identity will be the future of the Chelson Meadow landfill site.
Chelson Meadow lies at a pivotal position overlooking the Plym Estu-
ary and centre of Plymouth. It also has a key role in the development
of an outer ‘setting’ for Saltram House. Through sensitive restoration
and woodland planting, it has the potential to become a magnificent
21st century park that provides for informal recreation with excellent
views of the surrounding areas. Spring or summer meadows could be
re-created and it could become the setting for temporary art exhibitions
or outdoor performances for the city. It will be important to create a
recreation link through the site as soon as gas emissions reduce to an
acceptable level, although it is recognised that this may be a long-term
aspiration.

The North Plymstock AAP Preferred Options states that the Preferred
Option for Chelson Meadow is to create a new recreation and leisure
resource for the city, providing informal public open space and more
active “open air” sports / leisure uses. The need and desirability of
these uses should be balanced against the potential to design the area
as a special landscape that complements the distinct character of Salt-
ram. Intensive formal recreational provision on the exposed landscape
of the restored landfill could easily detract from the overall vision. Any
such proposals will need to be carefully considered and integrated into
the landscape.

Chelson Meadow Waste Management Site

This area will be retained as a key waste management site for the city
with potential to expand into new areas of waste recycling and energy
production etc (for example, through the establishment of a Combined
Heat and Power plant). The Greenhouse centre could become a focus
for education and an information source about the early development
and objectives of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe, and there are
opportunities to be explored into methods of obtaining heat as well as
energy from other waste materials.

The Plym Estuary

The Plym Estuary already provides a key role in the setting of the East-
ern Corridor Urban Fringe study area, and contains important regional
and national footpath and cycle connections. There are excellent op-
portunities (subject to ecological evaluation), to develop water based
links between destinations and a “Plymouth Trail” could be created,
focussing on tourism, for example linking Saltram Estate with the Barbican, The Hoe and Mount Edgcumbe. Other “Plymouth Trails” could focus on nature conservation, linking the esturine habitats of the Plym Estuary adjacent to the study area, to those further north.

**Wixenford Quarry and Northern Fields**

This will form part of the Northern Fields Country Park located to the northern slopes of Plymstock Quarry and will be retained as an important habitat reserve. These areas will also play an important role in the creating the “outer setting” to the Saltram Estate.

**Billacombe Green**

Billacombe Green will be retained and its recreation use increased with the establishment of Plymstock New Neighbourhood. A generous width landscape and habitat corridor should be protected between the Green and the main Recreation Spine to ensure that it can remain a part of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape.

**Moorcroft and Hazeldene Quarries**

These sites face a huge timescale before an alternative use is likely. The framework plan sets out a structure for these elements and proposes that, long term they are restored to a combination of employment uses and recreation. After operations have finished, the steep sides and deep water pools that remain have the potential to become city wide or regional recreation opportunities, for example through the creation of a rock climbing or sailing centre. They will also provide important habitat sites.

In the shorter term, although the quarries may appear as a constraint to what can be achieved within the area it is important that they are integrated in a positive way. The nature of buffer planting and its management needs to be carefully considered to provide interim environmental, recreation and economic benefits to the area. This could for example include the use of the buffer area for coppice biomass crops for local combined heat power systems.

**Plym Flyover Sculpture Garden**

The entrance into the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe landscape along the Plym Valley from the north is an extremely poor quality arrival into the area, although the landscape resource is remarkable. The space under the A38 flyover creates a dramatic and sheltered space within close proximity to the river. This has traditionally been seen as a negative part of the area but with imagination and design, the development of the area could become an exciting and animated space that welcomes people into the Urban Fringe Study area. It could, for example, contain sculptural elements that are in keeping with the scale of the road infrastructure. If this new gateway is made more welcoming, it will relieve some of the recreational pressure currently experienced by Saltram House car park.

**Travellers site**

The location of the travellers’ site should be reviewed as part of Plymouth’s strategy for traveller site allocation with the objective of relocating this to enable the western area of the site, along the waterfront to be opened up to visitors.

**Sherford New Community and Plymstock Quarry New Neighbourhood**

Both development proposals represent a dramatic change in the character of the area. They will be developed as models of sustainable communities providing fairly compact, mixed use areas. Both developments have the potential to have good recreational and commuting links with the surrounding Eastern Corridor landscape and other destinations.
The indicative western extension to Sherford New Community back towards the city is potentially problematic both in terms of landscape character and visual impact. It could directly intrude into the elevated views of the city from the A38 and as such would have a significant impact on its landscape setting. This report suggests that any development of this area should be carefully considered in the light of these concerns. Any consideration of development of this site should certainly as a minimum facilitate recreational opportunities, key green connections between Sherford and Sherford Community Park and Saltram/Plymstock Quarry as well as secure wildlife corridors. This is considered to be of fundamental importance or the fundamental concept of an holistic and integrated Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe will not be achieved.

7.3 The Access and Movement Framework

The access and movement framework creates the structure of the landscape and links the various open spaces and uses within it. Access is key to developing an integrated Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe and ensuring that the various parts form a coherent whole. There are a number of key recommendations for the access and movement framework, which are set out below. These represent aspirations that would lead to the creation of a truly linked area and would be the subject of further research to take forward.

The key new accessibility function comprises a central Recreation Spine carrying the main west-east cycle and walking route that will link at key nodes to routes north and south. Within this central spine will be a series of ‘arrival nodes’ that will link with public transport and road links allowing people to disburse fairly evenly throughout the area. These would be located at Saltram House, at the east entrance to Saltram House on Haye Road (subject to further research), at the entrance to Chelson Meadow and (off peak) at the Sherford New Community Park and Ride site. There could potentially be the opportunity to create a node on the western bank of the Plym Estuary, encouraging waterborne links, and further nodes within the core of the Sherford New Community and Plymstock quarry New Neighbourhood. In the short term, the spine might need to make use of informal access through Saltram through agreement with the National Trust in the context of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe Partnership. However it is a priority to investigate the detailed feasibility of routes through the Northern Fields of Plymstock Quarry development and along the valley to the south edge of Chelson Meadow which provides a direct potential linkage from the accessible south western part of the area to the less accessible north eastern landscape around Sherford. The direct pedestrian link between Drunken Bridge Hill and Colesdown Hill should be opened up, beneath the A38, allowing greatly strengthened connections between Plympton and the centre of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area. Opportunities to utilise quarry buffers to improve north south accessibility parallel to Haye Road should also be explored.

These links within the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area will connect to more strategic and long distance routes, including pedestrian/cycle routes along the South Coast Path and north to Dartmoor. There will also be new strategic links allowing connections eastwards into the countryside of South Hams.

The area as a whole will be linked by an integrated network of sustainable transport links to areas within the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe study area and to the centre of Plymouth. This will include links with the Park and Ride at the A38, north of Sherford, into the city centre, with stops in Sherford and Plymstock, along with links with local services. These could be combined with cycle hire opportunities. For one off events, at Saltram House, or Chelson Meadow, for example, shuttle buses could be used in conjunction with the Park and Ride. Water borne links should also be considered as of this integrated network of sustainable transport options.
8. Mechanisms for delivery

8.1 Introduction

Delivery of the Vision and greenspace framework will be a complex process that will occur over an extended period. Ultimately it will be the drive and commitment of the local stakeholders and local communities that will ensure the delivery of the vision. The stakeholder workshop held as part of the process of developing this report generated a huge amount of energy and enthusiasm to take the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe project forward. This energy and enthusiasm should be built on over the coming years.

The challenge of delivery can be considered in two parts. Firstly there are the conditions that are necessary for delivery to be even a possibility. These conditions include leadership, partnership, entrepreneurialism, inclusion and integrated management. Secondly there are the specific actions that need to be taken forward to move the process forward. Each of these is considered separately.

The conditions for delivery

- **Leadership**: There needs to be a strong champion who has the drive and commitment to take forward this vision and to inspire and direct the various stakeholders and parties involved in this process. They must be able to market and promote the process to keep people both involved and interested. Good leadership will be able to influence relevant national, regional and local policy to ensure that the right objectives and outcomes are achieved and to avoid the process being one that has to be reactive to policy.

- **Partnership**: Delivery of the vision can only be achieved by genuine partnership working. The setting up of partnership agreements that set out clear objectives, milestones and responsibilities will be essential to allow multi-agency working. Private sector involvement in these partnerships and in their core management will be essential.

- **Influence / control over the land**: Ultimately it will be virtually impossible to deliver much of the vision without a degree of control or influence over the land. The first step towards achieving this will be the definition of the boundaries of the area to form a part of the permanent recreational and productive landscape. This needs to be unambiguous and give planning certainty to all landowners in the area. Quite simply, where there is any ‘hope value’ in the land inappropriate proposals will come forward and the land will not be managed properly. The clear definition of the boundaries of Saltram Farm can be achieved through the process of developing the AAPs covering the area. However this will need to be supported by some form of legal agreement that secures the area in perpetuity. The ‘flip-side’ of this is that the extent of the urban area will also need to be clearly defined.
Control over the land also requires the creation of a body that exercises that control. Within the boundaries of the ‘Farm’ there will ultimately need to be some form of management body or company that is responsible for the development of the vision and its delivery over time. This body could be formally constituted as a charitable company or trust with local stakeholders on the board. It could be given an entrepreneurial remit to create value from appropriate land uses and reinvest any profits back into the delivery of the vision and its management. It could secure land currently in private ownership and piece together the landholdings required for the delivery of the vision. The body could also take responsibility for the management and temporary productive use of areas identified for future development. It may be appropriate to secure funding of the trust through PCC, SHDC and developer contributions.

• **Entrepreneurialism:** Those responsible for delivery of the vision will need to work creatively and actively to seek to make connections between development opportunities and the potential for landscape enhancement. They will need to convince developers of the added value the Eastern Corridor landscape will bring to their developments and marketing offer. They will need to be able to see where development values can be maximised to deliver wider social and economic benefits. In short they will need to work in an entrepreneurial way, making connections and linkages to bring about the desired change.

• **Integrated Management:** The establishment of an agreed management system between the different parties will be essential to take this process forward. As referred to above this could be achieved through the establishment of charitable company or Trust. Clear programmes need to be established that will set out the links between key activities, targets, funding conditions and priorities of different areas. Issues concerning long term management and maintenance will also need to be discussed at the outset. As part of this process, it would be useful to set up a central source of information and data on the area and have a clear mechanism for information exchange.

• **Inclusion:** Involving and including the community and residents groups in the process of creating this area will be essential and should aim to lead to a sense of ‘ownership’ in the vision for the locality. This should be done through the continuation of stakeholder and community workshops to allow ongoing monitoring and feedback throughout the development process and subsequent use of the area. Stakeholders should include local authority representatives, special interest groups and regional bodies. At an early stage in the process it will be important to establish ‘certainty’ about the proposals, so that local groups etc know what they are signing up to and can be confident in understanding the outcomes. This means stating clearly what is going to happen to each area where this is known and protecting these decisions through covenants, planning designations and policies if necessary.

### 8.2 Actions

• **Pushing the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe further up the political and funding agenda:** there is a need to build on the momentum created by this study. The stakeholder workshops demonstrated a real willingness amongst the attendees to create a remarkable landscape for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe. This momentum should be developed with the potential of the area being raised further up the political agenda and the funding priorities of government and non-government organisations (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Lottery, South West Regional Development Agency, etc.). The formation of multi-party Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe Working Group would be a first step in achieving this. This would need to include senior officer and member and stakeholder representation. The group would need to unite behind the vision and ensure that it is effectively communicated to the community.

• **Establishing the statutory planning context:** the complexity of issues and development pressures within the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe mean that the Area Action Plans (AAPs) are an important initial delivery tool and set out quite specific proposals. The proposals set out in this report represent an important background to the AAPs but will need to be developed further and tested as part of the development of the cross-border AAPs to ensure delivery of the vi-
vision for the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe. Best practice is available on Masterplanning from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the Town and County Planning Association at a more detailed masterplanning stage for the proposed Countryside Park.

The fundamental outcome from the development of the AAPs should be the identification of the boundaries of the East Plymouth Countryside Park. This will require detailed discussion and negotiation with landowners. The planning status of the core area needs to be clearly established as the primary step towards delivering the vision. Clearly further detailed planning and legal advice will be required to take this action forward. As such this cannot be detailed in the next Submission Stage of the AAPs in June but will form part of the evolutionary review process for these AAPs. However the vision for the area as set out in this study should be incorporated in the current AAP process.

The AAPs need to be underpinned by a detailed plan, which establishes detailed costs and priorities for the key aspects of the framework. This is essential to be able to quantify costs and any development values that may arise as a basis for s.106 negotiations with key developers.

- **Establishment of the Eastern Corridor Urban Fringe Company or Trust:** A single body needs to be developed to take forward the vision for the area. This body will need to be strongly embedded in the community to take advantage of community development funds which are being considered by the Government as a means for local people to secure the ownership of land. However the National Trust would also need to be a key partner. The body would need to have a salaried officer and a remit to act in an entrepreneurial way to deliver the vision.

- **Identifying project priorities:** an effective delivery process needs to demonstrate early progress and deliver benefits to the community and stakeholders. Some of the aspirations set out in this document will take some time to deliver whilst others will be able to happen relatively quickly.

- **Securing benefits through s.106 agreements:** the development of costed proposals within the context of a wider vision for the urban fringe will allow the relevant Local Planning Authorities to enter discussions to secure contributions for delivery and management from the key developers and holding the S.106 in a pooled delivery fund. However there needs to be a word of caution here. The demands on developers through s.106 agreements are onerous, even more so for developments such as Sherford which includes substantial infrastructure provision. Plymouth City Council and South Hams District Council will need to agree on their joint priorities for s.106 prior to entering negotiations and seek to supplement these funds with external resources.

- **Adding value through private sector development:** the potential for individual landowners within the area to contribute to the delivery of the Vision needs to be investigated. The aspirations of each landowner need to be fully understood. Opportunities to take forward new business opportunities building on the proximity of the new settlements need to be investigated. The South West Regional Development Agency should be involved in this process.

Plymouth’s Eastern Corridor
8. Mechanisms for Delivery
47
# Key Partners & Consultees

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<tr>
<th>Plymouth City Council</th>
<th>South Hams District Council</th>
<th>National Trust</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Coldwell</td>
<td>Alex Whish</td>
<td>Michael Calder – Regional Planning Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan Selman</td>
<td>Paul Tyler</td>
<td>Carol Murrin – Property Manager, Saltram</td>
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<td>Alistair MacPherson</td>
<td>Ross Kennerley</td>
<td>John Banfield – Warden</td>
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<td>Chris Poulney – Transport Study</td>
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<td>John Longworth – Krafft – Area Manager</td>
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<td>Nick Jones – Parks &amp; Open Spaces</td>
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<td>Alan Taylor – Regional Committee</td>
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<td>Gerry Glynn – Sports Development</td>
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<td>Jeremy Pearson – Curator (Buildings)</td>
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<td>Mark Vincent – Chelson Meadow</td>
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<td>Guy Ferguson – Plymbridge Wood</td>
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<td>Robin Pearce – Rights of Way</td>
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<td>Richard Barras – Design</td>
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<td>Jon Salvatore - Archaeology</td>
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Aggregate Industries UK Ltd.  Colin Yelland
Billacombe Residents Association  Andrew Wortley
Brixton Parish  Paul Lowden
CABE  Mark Pearson
Countryside Agency  Andrew Burns
Dartmoor National Park  Phil Markham
Devon County Council  Richard Butler
Devon Wildlife Trust  Joy Howard
Elburton Residents  Cathy Doidge
Environment Agency  Mark Durk
Forestry Commission  John Clarke
Garden History Society  James Shepherd
Groundwork Devon and Cornwall  Kim Austin
English Heritage 

Countryside Agency  Andrew Burns
Devon County Council  Richard Butler
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Mount Edgcumbe Country Park  Ian Berry
Plympton Community Council  Keith Clapton
Plympton St. Maurice Civic Association  Freddie Mills
Plymstock Community Forum  Elaine O’Flaherty
Red Tree LLP Ltd.  James Koe
Scott Wilson  Paul Murrain
SHARD  Paddy Ryder
South Devon AONB  Carl Budden
South West RDA  Lindley Owen
Sustrans  Tim Selman
Tamar Valley AONB  Roger Smith
Westbury Homes  

Plymouth’s Eastern Corridor
Key partners & consultees 49