

## STATEMENT 05

### City Centre & University AAP Public Examination

<b>Document Number:</b>	<b>CC&amp;UAAP 05</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Does the AAP contain sufficient guidance on what improvements to the public realm and circulation areas are expected?</b>
<b>Examination Session:</b>	<b>26 January 2010</b>

### **Issue to be Examined**

1. The Inspector has put forward the following question for examination:  
“Does the AAP contain sufficient guidance on what improvements to the public realm and circulation areas are expected?”
2. The Council considers that the submitted City Centre and University Area Action Plan is sound. It considers that the guidance the plan provides through Policy/Proposal CC03, together with the guidance already set out in the Core Strategy and Design SPD, is sufficient to ensure the highest quality of public realm and related circulation space, is satisfactory and will be effective in delivering high quality, sustainable and vibrant public spaces to compliment the changes envisaged in the City Centre.

### **Context**

3. Plymouth’s adopted Core Strategy Area Vision 3 sets out its strategic aspiration for the City Centre, this being, “to reinforce the City Centre’s role as a vibrant and thriving regional destination, providing high quality shopping, recreation, cultural, civic, education and commercial facilities, well connected to surrounding neighbourhoods as well as a safe place of quality in which to live”.
4. Policy/Proposal CC03 of this AAP reinforces this vision and sets out guidance for the development and improvement of the City Centre’s streets and spaces seeking, “to create a succession of safe linked spaces and features which enliven the City Centre, whilst respecting its unique Beaux Arts character”.
5. Clearly the retention and enhancement of the City’s Beaux Arts character is key to what makes Plymouth City Centre unique - this being expressed by the generous spatial proportions of Armada Way, Royal Parade and the grid iron pattern of the City Centre as explained in para 5.13 of the AAP. The Plan, therefore, fully recognises the bold statement and “monumental feature” that Watson and Abercrombie made back in 1943 with Armada Way when they prepared their plan for Plymouth and created the great linking view. It is this view, this character and these spatial proportions which the Plan fundamentally seeks to preserve and enhance.
6. The Plan fully responds to these important features, and actively seeks to guide future changes in a way that not only respects this important historic legacy, but also ensures that the City makes the best use of this space to create a high quality, permeable, flexible and exciting public realm which will become the heart of the city in response to the new uses that the Plan is encouraging in this part of the City.

7. To avoid extensive duplication of guidance within its LDF suite of documents, the Council has produced generic design guidance on matters of sustainable design for the City with a Design Supplementary Planning Document, known as “Sustainable Design in Plymouth”. This document has been adopted by the Council and includes matters such as the public realm, access and movement, all of which is relevant to the consideration of this AAP, as well as all other development plan documents. The guidance the Design SPD contains is considered to be particularly material to the inspector’s question.
8. Chapter 5 of the Design SPD discusses design principles for a “Well Connected and Accessible City”, providing guidance on how best to encourage unimpeded circulation, achieve quality place-making and a legible city. Chapter 6 of the SPD also considers material design principles for “Achieving Safe and Attractive Streets and Spaces” and discusses how development can deliver high quality public spaces and safe environments.

### **Detailed Considerations**

9. This AAP sets out the development principles for change within the city over the next 15 years, and provides a strategic framework to ensure that the best social, environmental and financial outcomes for the city overall, are delivered. It cannot, at this point in time, foresee the exact form that the new development will take and therefore cannot develop, with any certainty, a detailed masterplan of how the City’s streets and spaces will precisely look in the future. This will evolve, within the context of the principles set out in Plymouth’s Development Plan, as the development process moves forward.
10. However, once the AAP framework is in place, and as specific development proposals start to come forward, the Council intends to develop more detailed guidance, in the form of a Public Realm Delivery Plan. This document will set out the strategic improvements that the City will adopt to guide the delivery of change in the City Centre’s public realm and streetscape.
11. At this time however, the Policy/Proposal CC03 logically takes the view that design solutions for the public realm should be expressed in terms of guiding principles, enabling a relatively flexible approach, but within these guiding principles, to encourage a whole host of public uses to meet the needs of commerce, public bodies, and the public - both collectively and as individuals. Clearly, one of these principles will be the retention and enhancement of the Beaux Arts character in terms of its spatial properties, as well as preserving/ promoting the original “grand view”. But it will also

encourage a series of new linking streets and spaces, (in accordance with the Core Strategy, this AAP and the Design Guide SPD), which will:

- be of highest quality,
- be distinctive and memorable to citizens and visitors alike in a positive manner creating excitement and civic pride which will attract people,
- promote a legible city providing landmarks by which people will orientate themselves and negotiate their way around the city,
- facilitate free unobstructed movement for all,
- embrace the needs of all peoples whether they be pedestrians, cyclists, those with physical impairments, the young and the old,
- use durable and sustainable materials and make the most of new technologies,
- create comfortable places for people to be, whether that be for people at work, socialising, at rest or at play or partaking in some form of recreation,
- provide spaces within which the city can develop a cultural maturity expressing itself in many guises through public performance and exhibition, through open air theatre and public arts, and providing the space that will complement and encourage such dynamism,
- consider the ways to provide cover and shelter where appropriate without compromising the fundamental character of the beaux arts Plan and yet create streets and places which the public can use with comfort and derive shelter from the worst of seasonal weather.

### **Conclusion**

12. In conclusion, therefore, the Council considers that it has set out all the guidance that one could reasonably expect to find in the City Centre and University AAP in respect of the principles for improving the public realm and its streets. The Council also considers that it has listened to what the public has said throughout the public consultation process and has valued the comments made; amending the Plan accordingly to ensure it has captured the most valid contributions.