Coypool Site, Plymouth
Key Constraints & Opportunities
site facilities: CHP

surrounding land uses: housing under construction

site facilities: shared road & rail infrastructure

view from site to countryside to north

site features: surrounding woodland

view from site to housing at Leigham

site facilities: dryers / storage buildings

surrounding land uses: entrances to Princess Yachts, Plym Valley Railway & Plym Valley Trail
1.1 Introduction

Imerys, the minerals company, has been in the process of assessing its own operational needs for its site in Coypool. The company has been exploring a range of options resulting in two main options: option one would be to remain at the existing site and to invest in the current operation; option two would be for Imerys to move their operation to Lee Moor. Both have significant cost implications but the advantage of moving to Lee Moor would be that the company could realise a capital receipt on their site at Coypool.

The opportunity arising from the site becoming available also has great benefit for Plymouth City Council who needs to find additional capacity for waste management. An assessment of the city was undertaken in 2005 to identify sites suitable for waste management. Coypool was identified as the site which offered the most significant potential in the City to accommodate waste management facilities. This was reflected in the Waste Development Plan Document Preferred Options. The basis of discussions between PCC and Imerys has therefore been on the mutual benefits of making some of the site available for waste management and Imerys potentially benefiting from enabling development.

In order to progress discussions there needs to be much greater certainty both in terms of planning and feasibility. Ultimately this piece of work would establish a development brief for the site, leading on eventually to an outline planning application. The development brief would establish the basic land uses and land parcels as well as identifying infrastructure requirements. The brief would then form the basis for a valuation of the site.

1.2 Scope of the Report

This report provides a broad overview of the issues and opportunities for the potential future development of the Coypool site. It firstly sets out the broader planning context for the site and its context within Plymouth and identifies the key constraints and opportunities and explores development and land use options including an assessment of suitability for the site. These assessments have been made following a site visit and in discussion with various PCC officers concerning different land use demands and requirements for the city.

As part of the study, a separate ‘Sustainable Neighbourhoods Study’ has been carried out for the neighbourhood of Woodford to the east of the Coypool site. These studies are being carried out on a number of neighbourhoods within Plymouth to provide a clear understanding of how well this part of the city functions and to enable an assessment to be made in terms of what difference the development of this site might have. The conclusions of the Neighbourhood Study are set out in this report.

The conclusions of this report will assist PCC in writing a site allocation proposal for the Development Proposals Plan.

1.3 Planning Context

Plymouth CC is in the process of preparing their LDF with many of the documents at Preferred Options stage. These will be adopted in 2007/8 and will provide the Development Plan Framework for the area. At present, the City of Plymouth Local Plan (1995 – 2011), First Deposit 2001 and 1996 Adopted Plan are retained as current planning policy and this report references both sets of documents.
2.1 Landscape Character

This section describes the surrounding areas in terms of landscape character defined by a combination of natural features and landscape and townscape types to create a distinctive series of areas. This allows an assessment to be made on these surrounding character areas in terms of potential pressures for change due to any change or development within the Coypool site. It also briefly describes any opportunities.

The descriptions of landscape character set out below are based on the boundaries and definitions set out in the Plymouth Greenscape Assessment (2000). The Coypool site lies within “Marsh Mills” (Area 6) with “Underwood and Colebrook” (Area 7) to the east, and “Eastern Edge” (Area 5) forming a northern boundary to the site.

Marsh Mills (area 6)

This character area covers branching valley floors and lower slopes at the head of the Plym estuary. It is distinctive in its mix of land uses, which are predominately late 60s and 70s industrial, with small pockets of commercial units plus leisure facilities including a dry ski slope and a caravan park. Its character appears fragmented, divided by the railway line, major roads and junctions, and the natural watercourse of the River Plym. There are extensive areas of woodland and open parkland running north/south along the River Plym. The area is visible from a number of areas, in particular when approaching the city from the east.

Underwood and Colebrook (area 7)

This area occupies the floor and sides of a broad open valley that runs east to west. The area is predominately residential with small areas of traditional retail/commercial development. A railway line cuts through the centre of the area. To the north, its boundaries are defined by agricultural land, which is often visible from within the urban areas.

Eastern Edge (area 5)

This character area lies on the north-eastern edge of Plymouth bounding open agricultural land, parkland and woodland to the north and east, and post war housing and some industrial land to the south and west. The area consists of a long wooded valley corridor along its western boundary, which forms an attractive framing edge to the farmland on high rolling ground to the east. The open agricultural land along the ridgeline is a major component of the area and defines the boundary of urban development. There are expansive views of the city and River Plym from the high ground in the south of the area.

A golf course is currently under construction to the east of the Coypool site and this may modify the rural character of the surrounding areas but not significantly enough for the wider landscape to be considered “urbanised”.

landscape character areas
Conclusions

This shows that the area immediately surrounding the southern section of the Coypool site forms part of the urban extent of Plymouth. It contains a mix of land uses that means that any change of land use would have an insignificant effect on the immediate area. The northern section of the Coypool site forms a distinct wedge of industrial development within a more rural landscape that forms part of the wider, rural setting of Plymouth. Given the existing industrial precedent, any change of use in this northern section is unlikely to have a significant effect on the surrounding landscape character. Opportunities exist though to better integrate this area of development into the surrounding rural character, for example, through use of materials, scale of buildings, and breaking up the mass of development.

2.2 Visual Assessment

The Coypool site lies on the eastern, lower slopes of the River Plym and extends northwards into open countryside. At close range, the site is well screened, even in winter due to the woodland areas that form the boundaries to the site. The topography means that the site is very visible from the upper valley slopes to the west and east. From the west, there are panoramic views of the site from the residential areas of Leigham and Mainstone. From the upper slopes to the east, select views are possible of the site although these are less significant and are limited by hedgerows and topography. The key features that are particularly prominent include the chimneystack and the large, hanger-type buildings.

Conclusions

The loss of any peripheral woodland areas would dramatically increase the visual impact of the site from local, and to a lesser extent, from the more distant viewpoints. Any development should seek to retain the woodland belts and options explored for extending these woodland areas to better integrate the development visually into the surrounding rural landscape. There is a distinct contrast in visual impact between the northern and southern sections of the site, with the southern section well integrated with its urban context and the northern section highly visible in its more open, rural context. Any change of use is unlikely to have a significant impact on the views of the site given its existing industrial character. Opportunities exist to reduce the impact of the development, particularly in the northern section.
2.3 Surrounding Land Uses

Employment

The Coypool site is designated as ‘Economy / Employment’ in the City of Plymouth Local Plan. Other areas of employment include the Princess Yacht works, which forms a significant area of development to the west, forming an island bounded by the river to the west and railway line to the east.

Mixed use

There is a range of mixed-use developments within the Marsh Mills area. Immediately to the south of the site, is a bulky-goods retail area, including B&Q. This is considered a district or citywide facility rather than a local one.
Housing & Sustainable Communities

The neighbourhood of Woodford lies to the east of the site. It comprises extensive swathes of post war housing, which is fairly low density, semi detached, with generous gardens and on road parking. These housing areas are laid out around wide, meandering roads, and cul de sacs.

The Plymouth Sustainable Communities study, which looks at range of socio, economic and environmental factors in order to assess how sustainable a neighbourhood is, concludes that the neighbourhood of Woodford contains few local and neighbourhood facilities, which, due to low housing densities and few direct links within the area, are not easily accessible to much of the neighbourhood population.

Within the southeast section of the Coypool site, there is a new development currently under construction of 57 units of 2 and 3 bed houses and apartments at a density of approximately 52dph.

Park and Ride

There is a Park and Ride site to the south of the Coypool site, which forms one of 3 strategic transport resources for the city. (The other two are at Milehouse, in Central Park, and at The George, Derriford.) Currently, the Coypool Park and Ride is open from approximately 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday but potential exists for this to have a dual, different use on Sundays. This works well as is unlikely to be expanded.
Recreation and Leisure

The Greenscape Assessment Report for the City of Plymouth sets out a description and brief evaluation of each of the city's Greenspaces based on function as well as importance (defined as neighbourhood, district, city, regional or national importance).

The report describes three defined Greenscapes that surround the Coypool site. Area 097 is associated with the Plym valley and is considered of regional importance for both habitats and species and visual amenity. It is of regional importance for informal recreation and of district importance for sport and formal recreation and forms a connection with the wider rural landscape to the north. Area 110 is of city importance for habitats and species and for visual amenity. It is of city importance for informal recreation and is not used for sport and formal recreation. Within this area is a caravan park situated on low-lying ground adjacent to the river Plym. Area 111 is currently not used for either informal recreation or for sport and formal recreation although it is soon to contain the new golf course. It is of district importance for habitats and species and of city importance for visual amenity. Area 99 is a new golf course that is currently under construction. Running through areas 97 and 110 is a section of the regionally important long distance cycle route that links Plymouth northwards, through Dartmoor to the coast at Barnstable.

Immediately to the south of the Coypool site is located the Plym Valley Railway Association, which is planning to reopen a section of the GWR Plymouth to Launceston link between Marsh Mills and Plym Bridge for recreational use.

Conclusions

The Coypool site lies predominantly within an area of industrial and mixed uses which form a broad north-south swathe; this also links to a similar area of land uses that continues eastwards along the A38 and B3416 / Plymouth Road corridor. These land uses are located along lower lying, flatter land. Beyond this immediate area, there are also large areas of residential use, located on higher, more sloping topography. This means that there is no single, dominant land use that surrounds the Coypool site, although suitability for different uses will be very much tied up with topography plus the provision of good access and links.

The area also offers significant opportunities for both informal and formal recreation, and any change of use should not adversely affect these uses.
2.4 Strategic Access

The Coypool site is accessed through the retail site to the south, which provides good, direct links to the A38 and the city centre via the Marsh Mills roundabout. Our understanding is that these links have been designed for HGV use. There are three potential road spurs that link the eastern housing areas to the Coypool site. These are not used as access to the site other than the southern spur that provides access to the new housing development in the southeast corner. It is assumed that these have been designed for residential traffic and service/emergency vehicles only. There is a dedicated rail line into the Coypool site that provides access to the wider rail network at Tavistock junction.

Conclusions

The access to the south would provide suitable access for any future change of use. However this would not be deemed the most appropriate access for residential use since it passes through a bulk retail land use. Subject to investigations into land ownership, the three spurs roads from the east could provide suitable access to any proposed residential land uses.

Any new land use or development that significantly affects vehicle movements, particularly at peak times would need to be considered in the light of a TIA, which may conclude that there is a limitation on future change of uses and development. Potential to expand the use of the existing rail link could be explored, including freight use. Opportunities exist to improve pedestrian links between residential and employment areas and to the wider countryside.
3.0 SITE ANALYSIS

3.1 Site Description

The Coypool site is currently used by Imerys as part of wider operations for China Clay manufacture. The site is used for China Clay drying which is piped from their operations at Lee Moor, Dartmoor. It is then either distributed or returned to Lee Moor for further processing.

The site is located on the eastern side of the River Plym valley with slopes varying from about 1:15 up to 1:6 although much of the central part of site has been terraced. Buildings on the site include a number of large floor plate warehouse and drying buildings as well as open water settling tanks. There is also a gas turbine CHP plus chimneystack. Within the site, to the west, is a woodland area containing a minor watercourse and pond area that is located on low-level marshy ground.

There is a weighbridge set just inside the entrance. At present, the site road divides into two, allowing the upper, eastern section to be leased off and remain fairly separate from the China Clay operations. The rail route within the site is partially set in a cutting and along some sections, is shared with the lower road access.

The site lies outside the extent of flooding of the River Plym, but the area immediately to the west of the site boundary, is shown to have a moderate chance of flooding. (Ref. Environment Agency.)

Given its current use for China Clay refining, we understand that there might be some issues of contamination in terms of Radon and Sulphur.

There is likely to be other ground contamination and there would need to be investigations into the level and extent of this on site. This would include potential problems with the demolition and removal of existing buildings and particularly, the quantities of asbestos cladding and roofing.

3.2 Opportunities

The site offers fairly extensive terraced areas that could accommodate large floor plate uses. Road and rail access is good although some of the gradients to the site roads are fairly steep. In some places the road and rail routes share the same surface, which might not be acceptable for certain uses or shared uses. In terms of other infrastructure, our understanding is that the CHP plant would be dismantled and moved to Lee Moor, if Imerys operations are relocated there.

Beyond the existing developed areas, the steeper topography means that new development other than small floor plate uses would be difficult. Much of the outer boundary areas are locally designated Green spaces and should be retained.

Future land uses would need to address any possible contamination of the site.
existing contours at 10m intervals
(note: contours do not reflect terracing of site)

key features

access & movement
3.3 Developable Areas

The area of land that lies within the Imerys boundary is approximately 29.1ha. Within this figure of 29.1ha is 7.1ha that has been designated as PCC ‘Greenscapes’ and is therefore assumed to be remain undeveloped. This leaves 22ha of potential development land. There is currently approximately 15.6ha of land that has been developed for Imerys use. This includes all terraced areas which contain the large floor plate buildings as well as settling tanks; it also includes areas of fairly level land that are currently used for a range of ancillary buildings and structures. This area also includes all land taken up with the railway and associated sidings which amounts to approximately 1.2ha.

The remaining 6.4ha comprises land that has remained undeveloped. This is due to either because it is either lower, lying damp ground, or forms steeper land (approx 1:7) that has become scrub or woodland. These areas are not considered suitable for development.

In addition to the above figures, there are two areas of land that could be considered for housing development as they form a potentially natural extension to the existing housing areas. Approximately 0.7ha lies within a local Greenscape designation and approximately 0.4ha lies beyond the site boundary.
The following section sets out the level of existing demand within Plymouth for different types of land use that could potentially be located on this site if Imerys were to relocate to Lee Moor. It also provides an overview of requirements for the different land uses and suitability of the Coypool site.

4.1 Waste Management
4 - 6ha

Plymouth’s Waste Development Plan Document Preferred Option 2005 sets out the city’s spatial strategy for the provision of waste management. The preferred vision sets a policy for Plymouth based on facilities being provided on “the proximity principle”, enabling Plymouth to be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of managing its waste.

Plymouth’s waste is currently dealt with inside the city at the Chelson Meadow waste management centre and landfill site. The landfill element of Chelson Meadow will end in mid 2007, and there is currently no other long term waste treatment or disposal system in place to deal with people’s rubbish.

The Waste Management Development Plan states that “The City Council’s preferred option is to allocate the China Clay works site at Coypool for the development of a range of waste management facilities. Not all the site is required and it would be appropriate to include other development in this site, but which is compatible and would not conflict with waste management uses.”

Whilst the city’s waste management strategy is yet to be written, Plymouth’s waste management operations could comprise four types of operation which, if developed as separate entities, would give a combined land take of between 6 and 10ha, depending on the type and scale of waste management facility. The basic requirements for each of these operations can be summarised as:

- **Waste Treatment**
  There are three alternative potential methods for the treatment of waste, which would require land areas of 4ha (Energy from Waste), 2ha (Pyrolysis / Gasification) or 0.9ha (Anaerobic Digestion). The ‘Energy from Waste’ option would provide a sub regional (rather than city only) waste management role and would require a typical floor print building of 3 600m2 to 5000m2, 30m height, plus a chimney stack of at least 70m. The second method (Pyrolysis / Gasification) would also require a building footprint in the region of 3 600 – 5000m2 at a height of 25m and a chimney stack up to 70m. The third method (Anaerobic Digestion), would require a building footprint in the region of 1000m2 at a height of 7m plus 2no 15m diameter tanks of 6m height but no chimney stack. This latter option would require a 250m exclusion zone from the edge of the facility to housing and as remote as possible from other heavily staffed operations.

- **Materials Recovery Facility**
  This will require a land area of approximately 1ha plus building footprint of about 1000m2 to a height of up to 12m.

- **Open Windrow Composting**
  This will require a land area of approximately 3ha plus office and site welfare facilities. It would require a 250m exclusion zone from the edge of the facility to housing and as remote as possible from other heavily staffed operations.

- **Civic Amenity and Recycling Centre (CARC)**
  This will have a land take of approximately 1ha. In addition, there needs to be either a 200m road length, or area of 150m2 to allow for queuing of vehicles, based on projected public vehicle numbers.

However, some of the land uses set out above can share resources when developed in combination with each other, which means that land take can be reduced. This means that the maximum land take required to support Plymouth’s combined waste management requirements would be approximately Xha and the minimum area would be in the region of 4 to 5 hectares.

All uses would require relatively flat land although some uses could be accommodated on terraced land.

**Access Requirements**

The site could be operational 24 hours although lorry movements would be between 8 – 5.30pm weekdays only. There needs to be good road access for frequent and regular use by HGVs. Operations except
the CARC will require a weighbridge at the entrance to the site. If the site takes on a sub regional role, then rail access could be required, however the rail infrastructure should not be closed in case it becomes viable in the future.

### Bad Neighbour Impacts

Although some of the waste management operations are not necessarily bad neighbour uses, issues such as traffic, air emissions, dust, odour, noise, litter and visual intrusion plus pollution of water and nature habitats would need to be alleviated and mitigated as necessary. This would be addressed through the EIA process.

### Suitability

Depending on the potential treatment methods for waste, a waste management site in close proximity to housing could be a significant problem and proximity to other industrial operations can also be an issue, particularly with the treatment methods that rely on some open-air maturation such as composting. This means that the Coypool site would be a suitable site for waste management given that its northern section is remote from housing areas. Changes to landscape character and visual impact are likely to be insignificant.

Potentially suitable neighbours could include RCV Depot; Bus Depot; industrial/employment uses that do not employ large numbers of people and recreational uses.

### 4.2 Prince Rock Depot

0.7ha provisional

Plymouth would like to relocate their current RCV fleet operation from Prince Rock. This would include the fleet car park, staff accommodation; bin storage facilities and the refuse transfer station. The land area for this would be approximately 0.4 hectares and the relocation of RCV garage would be 0.3 ha. Requirements are likely to be relatively flat land.

**Suitability**

These proposals are at an early stage but the site would appear to be suitable for this type of use.

Changes to landscape character and visual impact are likely to be insignificant.

Potentially suitable neighbours could include waste management; Bus Depot; industrial/employment uses that do not employ large numbers of people and recreational uses.

### 4.3 Bus Depot

5.7ha provisional

Plymouth CC would like to relocate the current ‘City Bus’ depot at Milehouse. Along with this, there could be opportunities for other private bus companies to relocate here and share resources. In addition, overnight facilities for lorries and the city centre coach park could be located here. These aims are at an early stage and there has been no detailed work or research done to date.

Requirements are likely to be relatively flat land. If overnight parking operations are included, then welfare facilities such as accommodation would be required. The existing access via the retail area is deemed to be adequate. Operational hours could be 24 hour if there is coach parking and 6am to 12midnight for bus operations.

Very preliminary space requirements have been based on the site area of Milehouse Bus depot which is approximately 5.7ha.

**Suitability**

These proposals are at an early stage and it would be difficult to make a judgement now on suitability of the site and compatibility with other uses. Issues are likely to include extended operating hours and traffic movements plus and issues of noise, light and pollution.

Changes to landscape character and visual impact are likely to be insignificant.

Potentially suitable neighbours could include waste management; RCV Depot; industrial/employment uses that do not employ large numbers of people and recreational uses.
4.4 Residential Use

The Devon Structure Plan has interpreted RPG10 at a County level and set out the requirement for the Plymouth Principal Urban Area (PUA) to meet anticipated housing needs by providing 14,500 new dwellings by 2016. Within this overall allocation, the City is expected to accommodate 10,000 new dwellings within its boundary (with South Hams accommodating 4,500 new dwellings).

Preferred Option 1 of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options (July 2005) seeks to accommodate the Devon Structure Plan 2001-16 level of growth in a way that supports the City’s urban renaissance agenda which is set firmly with the context of the Government’s aspirations for delivering ‘Urban Renaissance’ and Sustainable Communities.

The City’s Urban Capacity Study has already identified sufficient sites to meet this demand and the City is therefore not actively seeking new sites. Any new residential development would therefore be restricted to enabling development only.

Suitability

In terms of creating sustainable communities, any new residential development should ensure that it is well connected to existing local and neighbourhood facilities (as well as district and city ones) and that, where they are lacking, new facilities such as local shops and primary schools would need to be considered. These local and neighbourhood facilities should ideally be within 3-5min / 250-400m walking distance from housing areas for local facilities and 5-10min / 400-800m walking distance for neighbourhood facilities. In addition, housing densities would need to be high enough to ensure that these facilities could be economically supported.

Subject to creating sustainable communities, residential uses could be located within areas of the site with steeper topography that would be unsuitable for other, larger floor plate uses, although any development would need to ensure that any development does not increase the visual impact into the rural landscape to the north.

There are likely to be some changes to landscape character and visual impact since residential use is likely to include a more urbanised feel due to the increase in hard surfaces (roofs and roads) that are likely with higher density development. These changes are not considered to be significant.

Access to any new residential development should be through the existing housing areas as access through a bulk retail use would be difficult to market, and options would need to be explore in consultation with Highways for access to the site via one or all of the existing three access points. It should be noted that there might be Fire Brigade restrictions on the number of dwellings (150no max) that can be accessed from a single access point.

Potentially suitable neighbours could include some aspects of waste management; office/employment uses; small scale retail and recreational uses.

4.5 Permanent Gypsy Sites

1 ha

Grants are available from the ODPM for the creation of new sites and the Coypool site is under consideration as a potential “Permanent/Residential Gypsy Site”. Government advice is that Gypsy sites “should not be developed in areas where bricks and mortar housing would not be considered”. This means that sites and especially “permanent sites” should be established in attractive locations where there is good access to local and neighbourhood facilities including shops, schools, statutory facilities (water, electricity etc). The sites should though, be capable of being fenced off to form a discrete unit.

Based on information provided by PCC, a residential/permanent gypsy site is likely to comprise a maximum of 20no pitches giving a site area of 0.39ha (at 195m² per pitch), which, with ancillary uses such as amenity block, play areas and access would give a land requirement of approximately 1ha.

Suitability

The suitability of permanent gypsy sites in this area are the same as those for traditional residential uses described above.

4.6 Employment

The ‘Employment Land Review’ Final Report Nov 2005 by Baker Associates has recently been completed. The study will be formally released in April/early May
when it will become a public document as part of the LDF evidence base.

It concludes that Plymouth currently has more employment land than is needed in terms of land area but that these are not necessarily in the right place. In summary, the city needs to find more sites in the city centre and waterfront areas and at sites concentrated along the eastern and northern corridors with other, more peripheral locations being less important. One conclusion is that the location, quality and nature of employment provision is perhaps a more important matter than the quantum of land provided. It found that there is an oversupply of traditional employment sites in locations near to the A8 and A79 and therefore that some sites should be de-allocated. The report does not specifically mention the Coypool site.

Suitability

The site is currently an employment use and so is deemed suitable for future employment use and if no other uses are identified for this site, then this would be assumed to be the default use. Given the proximity to residential areas, there could be opportunities for live work uses or small business uses allowing people to work locally. Changes to landscape character and visual impact are likely to be insignificant. The more remote areas of the site to the north would be suitable for industrial type uses that are potentially bad neighbours. The site would not be considered suitable for any major office type use given its isolated location and potential impacts on road capacity at peak hours (subject to investigation).

Potentially suitable neighbours for industrial uses could include some aspects of waste management; RCV Depot and Bus Depot. Potentially suitable neighbours for office use could include retail; residential and recreational uses.

4.7 Retail Demand (Shopping)

Plymouth is currently undertaking a Retail Needs Study in line with the new PP6 which requires that not only is predicted demand set out over the next 5 years but that sites are identified now, to meet that demand. The study will be formally released in April/early May and will also identify predicted demand beyond the 5-year period to 2016 and further ahead.

The Draft Study highlights the need for a co-ordinated approach to planning for the city’s retail provision, to ensure that local and district centres are economically viable.

The study suggests that in the short term (to 2011) there is a low demand for new retail space. There is a current demand for ‘bulky goods’ provision outside of the city centre, although approval for sites for this use must be carefully considered in the light of their impact on the city centre. The report does not specifically mention the Coypool site.

Suitability

The flatter parts of the site would be suitable for large unit retail use, and would link to the existing bulky good retail area to the south. Changes to landscape character and visual impact are likely to be insignificant.

4.8 Recreation - Suitability / Opportunities

The site has the potential to offer excellent city and district wide facilities for recreation given its location adjacent to the Plym Valley trail and near other recreational uses including the ski slope and proposed golf course as well as good access to the wider rural landscape. Given the site’s fairly unique situation in terms of being reasonably separated from residential areas but with good access, it could contain recreation types that are considered “bad neighbours” such as motorised sports. In addition, the park and ride could be used for visitor parking on Sundays. Opportunities exist for the character of the landscape and views to the site to be improved.

4.9 Conclusions

There appears to be a clear demand for waste management, bus depot, RCV depot and permanent gypsy uses. There is a less clear demand for employment, retail or recreational uses. There does not appear to be a demand for residential uses.
5.0 KEY OBJECTIVES & DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

5.1 Aims of the site

Any change of use of the site should ensure that it is compatible with surrounding land uses and should not be detrimental to the surrounding character or visual impact of the existing site. Issues that would need to be considered include noise, pollution and additional traffic movements and it is likely that any change of use would require an EIA. If there is to be a mix of uses there will need to be careful consideration of methods of access / egress, particularly the separation of rail / road routes. Land uses that would bring positive change to character or visual impact should be encouraged. Whatever option is taken forward, the principle of retaining the green wedge into the city should be retained and the recreational opportunities of the Plym valley trail should not be compromised.

The site appears to divide into two key areas with potential for development. The southern section, which lies within what is considered the urban area of Plymouth; and the northern section where the precedent is set for employment / industrial use although it extends into the rural landscape. It will also be important to protect the character of the long distance cycle and pedestrian route (NCN27) which runs along the western boundary of the site, from Plymouth northwards, through Dartmoor to Barnstable.

One option would be to only develop the southern section of the site. Suitable land uses could include housing (including Gypsy sites), subject to the addition of local and neighbourhood facilities; bulky-goods retail; employment; bus depot and / or RCV depot; or recreation. Access to housing should only be from the existing housing areas and other uses should only be accessed from the south. The northern section could then form a recreational function that would be more in keeping with the surrounding landscape.

The alternative option would be to respond to the site’s fairly unique combination of remoteness from residential areas combined with good access links to the city and to locate the waste management uses here. These would be focussed in the northern section of the site and other uses such as retail, housing (including gypsy sites) or recreation could be located to the southern areas. Any new housing would need to be outside the 250m standoff zones.

5.2 Conclusions

We consider that the preferred option is a compromise solution that would meet the demands of both Plymouth CC and Imerys. This is for the northern section of the site to be developed for waste management uses, with the more sensitive operations located furthest north. The central section within the 250m standoff zone could comprise a mix of uses including RCV depot, bus depot or recreation uses. The southern section that lies within the natural extent of the urban area could comprise residential/ gypsy use plus employment/ office use and would include a transition zone between the potentially bad neighbour uses and the existing housing comprising a buffer landscape zone that could contain
1. waste management uses to northern section of site
2. urban land uses to southern section of site.
3. potential land area divisions.
POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS AREAS

1. waste management (5ha)

2. prince rock depot / bus depot / employment (8ha)

3. recycling centre / small business (1ha)

4. permanent gypsy residential / recreation (1.5ha) including greenscape / additional area beyond development boundary

Total gross development area: 16.6ha (including rail land / 0.7ha greenscape / 0.4ha additional area beyond development boundary)