

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Adoption of North Prospect Area Planning Statement

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 15 January 2013

Cabinet Member: Councillor Vincent

CMT Member: Anthony Payne (Director for Place)

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Ref: DT

Key Decision: No

Part: I

Purpose of the report:

The report seeks to secure the formal adoption of the North Prospect Area Planning Statement (APS), to ensure that there is an up to date planning framework in place to manage the process of change in the area.

A large part of North Prospect is the subject of a substantial phased regeneration programme consisting of the demolition and redevelopment of large areas of housing, and refurbishment of other areas. Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) who own most of the housing in North Prospect has previously commissioned consultants to prepare documents to act as development guidelines for the area. Whilst these documents have been prepared in consultation with the public and interested parties they have no formal planning status and therefore can only be given very limited weight in guiding future development, or in the determination of planning applications. A workshop of stakeholders was held in February 2012, and amongst other matters it considered a range of options which would have some formal status and would help to help guide future development in North Prospect. It was agreed that in advance of the preparation of the Plymouth Plan that an Interim Planning Statement, now referred to as an Area Planning Statement, should be prepared for adoption by the City Council

The APS is attached as an Appendix to this report and incorporates the findings of the previous studies, along with additional information, comments and advice from stakeholders and the public, arising from a six week public consultation exercise that ended on 10 October 2012. It combines these sources to create a strategy to guide the regeneration over the life of the project.

Corporate Plan 2012-2015:

The report directly supports the Council's vision for the city as well as its priority for delivering sustainable growth. It directly responds to the new Corporate Plan proposal to prepare the Plymouth Plan.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Including finance, human, IT and land

There are no direct financial implications associated with the report other than minor costs of publication which can be met from the Place Department revenue budget.

If adopted as a material planning consideration, the document will provide a framework for the negotiation of planning obligations to ensure that community facilities and essential infrastructure is provided for, without which there will be financial pressures related to capacity shortfalls. It will also result in savings in officer's time in negotiating future development proposals.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

This decision supports the implementation of policies contained within the adopted Core Strategy.

It will assist in increasing the number of new homes, and improve the existing housing stock.

New and improved housing will have positive health benefits

Local employment opportunities will reduce worklessness and help to reduce child poverty.

It will help to reduce health inequalities and worklessness.

It will assist in timely planning for infrastructure and community facilities.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

1. Recommend to full Council that the North Prospect Area Planning Statement be adopted as interim planning guidance to be used in consideration of future development proposals in North Prospect.

Reason:

To assist in the consideration of future development proposals in North Prospect in the absence of other formal planning guidance on future development of the area.

2. Incorporate the principles of the APS into the Plymouth Plan which will be subject of public consultation in 2013.

Reason:

In order that the guidelines are accorded greater weight by their incorporation into a statutory planning document

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

Not to have any planning guidance over the lifetime of the regeneration project (which could run beyond 2020) could result in uncoordinated development and uncertainty for existing and future residents. In addition it would make planning provision of local services and facilities more difficult, and runs the risk of not achieving maximum benefits for local communities

At a workshop with PCH and other stakeholders in early 2012, eight options for the provision of strategic guidance were considered

- 1- Do nothing and consider each application in isolation
- 2- Use PCH Masterplan
- 3- An Area Action Plan
- 4- A Neighbourhood Plan
- 5- A Supplementary Planning Document
- 6- An Area Planning Statement (Interim Planning Statement)
- 7- Design Statement
- 8- Site Planning Statement

Points for and against each option were considered and the Interim Planning Guidance route, now re named Area Planning Statement (APS), was agreed upon as being the most appropriate way to deliver guidance which would have some planning status in advance of the production of the Plymouth Plan

Background papers:

Adopted Plymouth Core Strategy, the City Council (April 2007).

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/planning/planningpolicy/ldf/ldfcoresstrategy/csadoption.htm>

Development Guidelines SPD, the City Council (April 2010).

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/dev_guidelines_spd_first_review_consultation_draft.pdf

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD Second Review the City Council (July 2012).

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/mgInternet/documents/s39890/Local%20Development%20Framework%20Adoption%20of%20Planning%20Obligations%20and%20Affordable%20Housing%20Supplementary%20Planning%20Document,%2012072012%20Ca>

Sustainable Neighbourhoods Assessment, the City Council (November 2005)

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/planning/planningpolicy/ldf/ldfbackgroundreports/brsustainableneighbourhoodassessments/hamsna.htm>

Neighbourhood Pamphlets the City Council- consultation Version 2010

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/north_prospect_leaflet.pdf

North Prospect Design Code (Levitt Bernstein) 2012

<http://www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Design-Code.pdf>

North Prospect Spatial Strategy (Levitt Bernstein) 2010

<http://www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Spatial-Strategy.pdf>

Summary of responses to the consultation on the Area Planning Statement.

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/planning/planningpolicy/ldf/northprospectaps.htm>

Sign off:

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Originating SMT Member: Paul Barnard Assistant Director for Planning											
Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes											

I. Background

- 1.1 The present North Prospect Estate was built between the 1920's and 1950's along garden city principles, and is mainly comprised of semi-detached homes with generous gardens. When it was first built the area was known as Swilly, and was the first new build housing by the City Council, following The Housing and Town Planning, Act 1919. This Act was passed to allow the building of new houses under the banner of "Homes for Heroes" after the First World War. This marked the start of state-owned housing, which would much later evolve into Council Estates.
- 1.2 Until the 1950s, the area was described as prosperous, but subsequently suffered a downturn in fortunes. This led to a re-branding, and the area was renamed as North Prospect in 1969. The area's fortunes continued to decline throughout the 1980s and 1990s leading to a realisation that major intervention would be required to address the social problems, and the physical deterioration of the housing stock
- 1.3 In 2009, the Homes and Communities Agency and the City Council conducted an objective setting workshop which was followed by a scoping study report by consultants Levitt Bernstein and a business plan by Savills. The study undertook a review of the existing housing stock to assess the condition of the homes, and the extent of intervention that would be necessary to bring them up to an acceptable standard.
- 1.4 More than 400 homes in North Prospect have now been surveyed. Of these 90% are showing signs of major structural problems. This has led to a strategy incorporating both rebuild and refurbishment. Approximately 800 homes will be demolished, with around 1,200 new homes going up in their place. In addition, a total of 300 properties owned by Plymouth Community Homes will be refurbished. More than 300 owner occupiers will also have the option of joining the refurbishment scheme.
- 1.5 In 2009 The City Council transferred all of its social housing stock to the newly formed Plymouth Community Homes, who are now leading on the regeneration of the area. Following on from this a more detailed North Prospect Strategy Report (2010), and a Design Code (2012) were prepared by Levitt Bernstein. Whilst these documents provide valuable guidance, they have no formal planning status.

2. Where we are now

- 2.1 Planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of Phase I, and work is well under way. 140 dwellings have been demolished, and are to be replaced by 237 houses and flats. The first of the 80 new affordable dwellings in this phase were handed over to PCH for occupation in June 2012. In addition to the demolition and re building programme work has also started on refurbishment of existing homes, which whilst they are structurally sound they are in need of repair and modernisation.
- 2.2 Also as part of Phase I, PCH are developing The Beacon which will be the focal point of the community and be built on the site of the former flats at the eastern end of Cookworthy Road. Work on The Beacon is underway and scheduled for completion during 2013. The Beacon will provide space for the Lark Surestart Daycare Nursery, the Surestart Shop, North Prospect Community Learning, a new library, community space, a Healthy Futures kitchen/café, offices, and also retail units and offices.

- 2.3 An application has been submitted for Phase Two of the redevelopment, and preparation for site clearance for this phase is underway.
- 2.4 There are a further 3 planned phases of development to go which will extend to 2020 and beyond. The APS is therefore needed to help to secure a consistency of approach, ensuring that each phase of development contributes to a clear vision for the future of the area, avoiding uncoordinated development and uncertainty for existing and future residents. The absence of planning guidance would make planning provision of local services and facilities more difficult, and runs the risk of not achieving maximum benefits for local communities

3. Purpose of the Area Planning Statement

- 3.1 The Area Planning Statement (APS) sets out to guide future change within North Prospect., and suggests priorities for allocation of resources from planning obligations or other sources of finance. It draws upon the previous work undertaken by Levitt Bernstein on behalf of PCH. It also takes into account previous community engagement and work with the City Council and other stakeholders.
- 3.2 It is important that the regeneration of North Prospect is seen as more than a building project, so that in addition to setting out clear planning and design principles for the housing, the APS also considers the wider regeneration goals which will help to transform North Prospect into a new vibrant sustainable community. It sets out a number of objectives such as making the best use of land, reducing inequalities, and developing sustainable linked communities etc, and demonstrates how they link to the planning policies in the adopted Core Strategy:
- 3.3 The APS considers the existing character and opportunities of the area, and makes recommendations that should be taken into consideration when considering future development. These include:-
- Design guidelines
 - Housing quality, delivery type and tenure mix
 - Sustainability issues such as maximisation of natural site features
 - The place of street trees in the development
 - Surface water drainage
 - Highways and traffic matters
 - Open spaces
 - Implications for community facilities such as schools health care library, and other potential development opportunities.

4. Consultation & Changes to the APS

- 4.1 The Draft APS was published for consultation purposes on 29 August 2012, and the views of stakeholders, the existing community and future residents were sought as part of the consultation process. An online notification, and hard copy notification was sent at the start of the consultation to over 5,000 stakeholders and individuals who are on the Council's consultation database
- 4.2 An online consultation on the Council's website, and paper copies of response forms were made available between 29 August and 10 October 2012. In addition displays were placed in the Halcyon Centre and at North Prospect Community Learning Centre (NPCLC) for the duration of the consultation exercise for consultees views, and on which they could leave their comments.

4.3 In total 171 comments were received from 23 contributing consultees, which include 16 comments posted on the local displays. The comments were generally positive, but there was some division of opinion over the merits of retaining street trees. On balance it was felt that street trees are important in defining the local character of the area and should generally be retained, or losses replaced wherever possible. All comments have been considered and summarised and a response made. The consultation summaries and responses have been placed upon the City Council web site and hard copies placed at the Halcyon Centre and NPCLC.

4.4 Some of the most frequently expressed views include:-

- Concern over potential loss of the Halcyon Centre.
- Future tenure mix resulted in mixed opinions, some thought there should be more rented properties, whilst others were happy with increasing the number of private houses.
- The need to address parking issues.
- Divided opinions on the need to retain as many street trees as possible.
- Support for environmental and highway improvements along Wolseley Road along side North Prospect.
- Support for improved access to Titchy Park.
- Mixed views as to future use of Library site. There was support for both housing and open space.
- General support for need to reduce traffic speeds.

4.5 As there was a good degree of support for the report, it has not been necessary to make any significant changes to the content of the APS. A number of representations related to non planning matters such as the management of the regeneration process, and the future use of the Beacon. A copy of the summary of all of the representations has therefore been passed on to PCH for their information and consideration. The summary of representations and responses is available as a background paper to this report.

4.6 Members attention is drawn to the 'Summary of Key Principles' and a table on 'Summary of priorities for infrastructure mitigation and community benefits in relation to North Prospect development phases'. These can be found at the end of the APS. These sections provide a useful summary of the key content of the APS and how the APS will help to ensure that development proposals in North Prospect contribute positively to the building of a sustainable community.

5. Next steps

5.1 Subject to the approval of the City Council, the APS will become a material consideration in the determination of future development proposals, and assist in the prioritisation of planning obligations for the provision of local infrastructure and facilities. It will subsequently be reviewed and incorporated as appropriate into the emerging Plymouth Plan which is due to be subject of public consultation summer 2013, thus increasing its weight in decision making as it becomes part of the statutory development plan process.