

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Adoption of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan
Committee:	City Council
Date:	26 March 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Coker
CMT Member:	Anthony Payne (Director for Place)
Author:	Richard Grant (Strategic Planning Manager – Joint Local Plan)
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Ref:	
Key Decision:	Yes
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

The report seeks the formal adoption by Full Council of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, and the Policies Map.

The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan has been produced in collaboration with South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council. The decision to produce a joint plan was taken by Full Council on 16 February 2016, enabling all three local authorities to work together on a single development plan that could set out a consistent and clear strategy for Plymouth and the surrounding areas of South West Devon.

Once adopted, the Joint Local Plan (JLP) will be the single development plan for Plymouth and South West Devon, setting out a single strategy, a single set of planning policies, and a complete set of site allocations, putting in place a spatial strategy to guide development and growth up to 2034. The JLP delivers on a number of critically important objectives for all three Councils:

- It meets the need for new homes in full across the whole plan area, providing for 26,700 homes to be built between 2014 and 2034, 6,600 of which will be affordable, and ensuring that all three Councils will be able to demonstrate a five year land supply of land for new homes.
- It provides for 375,200 sq m of new employment space across the whole plan area, sufficient to accommodate 13,200 new jobs.
- It sets a sustainable pattern of development across the plan area, focusing over 70% of the growth in new homes at Plymouth, and concentrating growth in the Thriving Towns and Villages of South Hams and West Devon in the most sustainable settlements of Tavistock, Okehampton, Totnes, Ivybridge, Dartmouth and Kingsbridge.
- It sets clear and comprehensive strategic policies for sustainable development, transport, the natural environment, and infrastructure.

In Plymouth, the JLP:

- Identifies land in the Plymouth Policy Area for over 19,000 new homes, including Sherford and a new extension to the City at Woolwell
- Plans for at least 291,400 sq m of new employment space, and in addition allocates Langage as a strategic employment site serving Plymouth and South West Devon.

- Identifies land for a new commercial heart for the north of Plymouth at Derriford.
- Safeguards the site of Plymouth City Airport for aviation uses.

The JLP has been subject to formal Examination in Public by the Planning Inspectorate. The Councils have now received the Final Report from the Inspectors, which confirms that the JLP is sound with main modifications and can proceed to adoption.

Corporate Plan

A GROWING CITY – the JLP has a strong focus on reinforcing and delivering Plymouth’s radical growth agenda.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

No new resource implications arise from this report.

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

The JLP provides a strategic policy framework for both people and place. The creation of sustainable communities, and the theme of providing quality of life for everyone in the city, runs through the heart of the plans, providing an effective and integrated strategic framework for addressing and responding to issues such as community safety, community cohesion, child poverty and equalities and diversity.

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?

An Equality Impact Assessment has already been undertaken for the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, and is included in the Final Sustainability Appraisal.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that, subject to South Hams and West Devon agreeing likewise, the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 – 2034, and Policies Map is formally adopted under section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as the statutory development plan for Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon (excluding land within Dartmoor National Park).

REASON: To bring the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan into force as the adopted development plan for Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council, at the point when the JLP has been adopted by all three Councils.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Alternative development distribution strategies, site allocations and development policies were considered and appraised as part of the plan process.

Published work / information:

[Joint Local Plan Webpages](#)

[Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan Inspectors Final Report \(March 2019\)](#)

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan – Final Version for Adoption.	X									
Joint Local Plan Final Sustainability Appraisal	X									
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan Policies Map	X									

Sign off:

Fin	pl.18. 19.21 9	Leg	LS/ 321 69/J P/M ar19	Mon Off	AL T/3 05 08/ 07	HR	n/a	Assets	n/a	IT	n/a	Strat Proc	n/a
Originating SMT Member Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure)													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 16 February 2016, the City Council agreed to collaborate with South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council on the production of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP). Each of the Councils agreed to roll the work they had already done on their own plans into a single Local Plan covering the whole of their areas.
- 1.2 Dartmoor National Park Authority were invited to collaborate with the JLP Councils, enabling the Joint Local Plan to look at the whole of the Plymouth Housing Market Area. The National Park, however, decided that they would rather produce their own Local Plan, which would nevertheless be very closely aligned with the JLP, its strategy and its evidence base.
- 1.3 Over the course of 2016, the Councils undertook work on the JLP, including updating the key elements of the evidence base, including on housing and employment needs and sites for allocation, viability, infrastructure requirements, natural environment and green spaces, and transport. Two consultations were undertaken on the emerging strategy of the plan, and on potential site allocations. 3,317 comments were received in total over the course of the consultations, all of which were used to inform the plan making process.
- 1.4 In early 2017 the Councils had produced a draft JLP which was ready for its final round of consultation. This was approved for Publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations, and subsequent Submission under Regulation 20 of the Regulations, at Full Council on 27 February 2017. Consultation was undertaken during March and April 2017 attracting a total of 2,482 comments. The JLP was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public on 31 July 2017.

The Examination in Public

- 2.1 Two Inspectors were appointed by the Planning Inspectorate to examine the JLP. In September 2017 they gave the Council their initial set of questions and arrangements for the Examination, leading to the publication of their list of matters to be examined during Public Hearings, and arrangements for the Hearings to take place from January to March 2018.
- 2.2 Hearings commenced on 31 January 2018, and took place over a total of four weeks during February and March, with the final session finishing on 22 April 2018. The Inspectors finished the Hearings by stating that the JLP was a plan that could be made sound through some modifications – which was a particularly positive end to the Hearings as it indicated that the Inspectors were not going to find the JLP unsound.
- 2.3 In August 2018 the Inspectors published their Post Hearings Advice Note. This note set out the changes to the JLP that the Inspectors considered were necessary to make the JLP sound. The most significant change for Plymouth was that the Inspectors did not consider that the Local Green Space Designations were sufficiently justified by evidence, and so did not consider that the JLP could go forward unless the Local Green Space Designations were removed. More positively, the Inspectors did not propose any changes to some of the most important elements of the JLP – for example the overall requirement for new homes and affordable homes, the fundamental strategy for a sustainable distribution of development across the plan area, the employment, transport and infrastructure policies, and the policy to safeguard the site of Plymouth City Airport for aviation uses.
- 2.4 The Councils consulted on the Main Modifications to the Joint Local Plan (alongside Additional Modifications to the JLP and Policies Map that did not need to be considered by the Inspectors) between October and December 2018 – receiving a total of 1,337 comments. However, a large number of these comments were received on a limited number of modifications. For example, around 1,000 comments related to policies and allocations for housing in Dartington, many of which were not subject to Main Modifications. A further 100 comments were received in connection to changes made to the policy allocating Woolwell as a new urban extension to Plymouth.

- 2.5 All the comments received on the Main Modifications were sent to the Inspectors in December 2018. The Inspectors did not consider that any further hearings or changes to the JLP were required.

The Inspectors' Final Report

- 3.1 The JLP Councils received the [Inspectors' Final Report](#) on 18th March 2019 and subsequently published the report on the Councils' websites. The Report confirms that the Inspectors find that the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan is sound, subject to the modifications set out in Appendix One of the Report. These modifications comprise the Main Modifications that were consulted upon between October and December 2018, to which the Inspectors have added the following three further changes:
- They do not believe that we need a specific policy dealing with the process of designating Local Green Space designations, because this is set out in detail in the NPPF and the NPPG. This policy is therefore deleted.
 - They have noted that Policy PLY61 includes a point referring to "Western Park and Ride (in Cornwall)". Their conclusion is that a local plan is unable to include policy relating to another local authority, and therefore will be deleting this reference in the policy. Instead they will insert a reference to the park and ride in the supporting text to the policy with a reference to the emerging Cornwall Site Allocation DPD, which includes the park and ride.
 - They have made changes to MM52 which relates to DEV29 – Green and Play Space.
- 3.2 These changes set out in Appendix One of the Inspectors Report have been made to the JLP, and the final adoption version of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan is appended to this report.
- 3.3 Therefore, and in accordance with the Inspectors' findings, this report recommends that the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan is adopted as the development plan for Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council. Section 28(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act makes clear that all of the JLP Councils must adopt the plan in order for it to come into force – hence the legal adoption of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan is subject to the decision to adopt being taken by all three Councils.

Concluding Comments

- 4.1 Adoption of the JLP marks the end of a ground-breaking and exemplary piece of work for the three Councils. Officers were set a very challenging timetable to produce the JLP – the plan was submitted just 18 months after the decision to collaborate on the production of the JLP was taken. Evidence had to be updated, consultations held and fundamental elements of the strategy agreed between three Councils on very short timescales in order to achieve this timescale – none of which would have been possible without the help and support of the Joint Local Plan Member Steering Group which was set up to oversee the process. The JLP is the first full joint plan that has been produced by Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council, and it has been achieved through collaboration between officers and Members at all levels, showing how local authorities can work together to achieve their aims in the most efficient and cost effective ways.
- 4.2 The JLP also represents national best practice. It is one of the only joint plans in England to include a full set of strategic policies, site allocations to ensure that needs are met in full, and development control policies to guide development. It sets out a consistent and sustainable strategy for the Plymouth Housing Market Area, setting a principle of plans being produced for meaningful functional areas. It has been produced on a particularly fast timetable – many local plans spend over three years in the Examination part of the process – the JLP has taken three years to prepare from start to finish. And finally, the JLP sets out a robust framework

for delivery, ensuring that needs for homes, jobs and infrastructure will be met in full, when measured using Government standards, for the life of the plan.

- 4.3 The production of a local plan inevitably uses a significant amount of resources. Nevertheless, by collaborating on a single joint plan rather than three separate plans, the three authorities have produced a ground-breaking plan – one that has achieved the aims of the three Councils; one that has produced a more coherent and sustainable strategy across the sub-region than any Council could have achieved independently; and one that has already been recognised by Royal Town Planning Institute South West as representing excellence in spatial planning. The adoption of the Plymouth and South West Devon therefore represents a very significant milestone in the transformation of the City and its neighbouring districts.