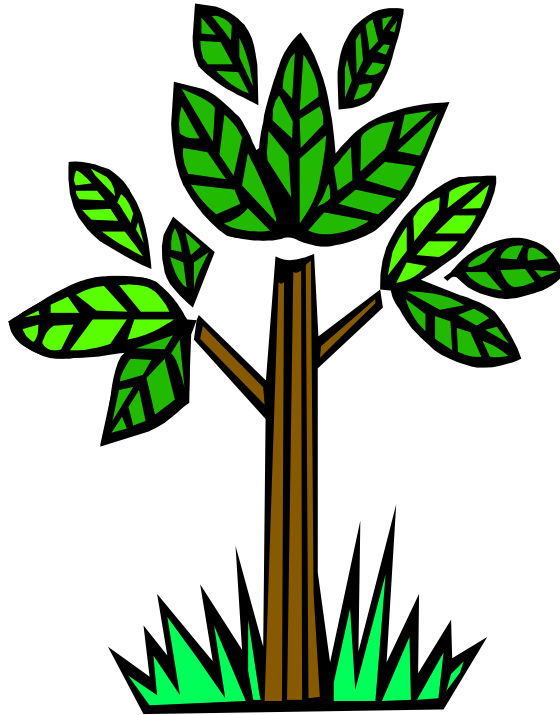


# CENTRAL PARK ACTION PLAN

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*Department of Development  
Strategic Planning Unit - November 2001*



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Central Park is the City's principal green space. For many years, the park has suffered from insufficient funding and is now in desperate need of a significant cash injection.
- 1.2 This Action Plan brings together in one document current proposals for the regeneration of Central Park. The proposals include improvements to Plymouth Argyle Football Club, the Mayflower Sports Centre and the green spaces as a whole as well as a new commercial leisure facility which will help to fund the improvements.

## 2.0 PURPOSE OF THE ACTION PLAN

- 2.1 The Central Park Action Plan provides the framework for future improvements to Central Park.
- 2.2 The plan sets out all current proposals for the park, but it is primarily concerned with the green areas of the park.
- 2.3 It includes priorities for improvement, how much they will cost, possible sources of external funding, when it is intended to carry them out and which departments will be responsible for delivering the project elements.
- 2.4 The plan will also be used to inform potential funding organisations of how the part they are being asked to fund fits within the overall plans to improve Central Park.

## 3.0 THE CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH THE ACTION PLAN IS BEING PRODUCED

- 3.1 The long-term decline in the condition and services in our parks and green spaces has become a topical issue nationally. The Environment, Transport and the Regional Affairs Select Committee report into town and country parks and its follow up report clearly identified the degree of the decline and the major issues affecting the use of parks and open spaces.
- 3.2 The Central Park Action Plan is set in the context of those reports and the following **national** strategic issues in respects of parks:
- 3.3 ***Urban White Paper 'Our Towns and Cities: The Future'***  
  
Identifies parks and open spaces as key contributors to the Governments proposals for an 'urban renaissance', and in particular the appointment of a ministerial Urban Green Spaces Task Force and the elevation of the Green Flag Award as a national standard. The Task Force's final report in April 2002 will have a significant influence on local councils' response to:
  - (1) ***Modernising and Best Value*** - Best value is an opportunity to deliver improvements to parks services and the cross cutting areas to which they contribute
  - (2) ***The Local Government Act 2000*** - Parks and open spaces could be an influential part of the council's promotion of economic social and environmental well being.
- 3.3 ***Planning Policy Guidance***  
  
PPG 17 gives guidance to local authorities on sport, open space and recreation

### 3.4 **Funding Announcements**

These set out the framework within which funding organisations distribute their grants

3.5 The Action Plan is also informed by **Plymouth City Council strategies and plans** including:

- The Corporate Strategy
- Plymouth City Council Capital Strategy
- Local Plan and Local Plan Review
- Local Transport Plan
- Greenscape Strategy
- Parks Service Plan
- Arts Plan 2020
- Sports Plan 2020
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Allotment Strategy
- Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Previous Central Park Strategies

## 4.0 DESCRIPTION OF CENTRAL PARK

- 4.1 Central Park is Plymouth's major recreational resource, located in the heart of the city just north of the City Centre and the main railway station. It is 94 hectares in area and is bounded by Alma Road to the south west, Outland Road to the north west, Pevereil Park Road, Barn Park Road, Lydford Park Road and Ford Park Cemetery to the east and Central Park Avenue to the south. Its area is defined in red on Map 1.
- 4.2 In landscape terms, the park comprises predominantly high ground and the landform is generally gently sloping to level, but steeply sloping to the south and eastern edge. Outstanding, panoramic views are available across the city and over to the sea. The park is surrounded by a mix of pre and post war housing though those at the western side of the park are effectively cut off from the park by main roads.
- 4.3 The western area of the park is dominated in visual terms by buildings or hard-surfaces. An extensive parking area is fringed by Home Park, the home of Plymouth Argyle Football Club, the Mayflower Sports Centre and Central Park Leisure Pool. The car park is currently used on a temporary basis for Park and Ride as well as match day parking for Plymouth Argyle and overflow parking for the other leisure facilities.
- 4.4 The park provides an intensively used venue for all forms of open air recreation, whether active or passive in an area where much of the surrounding housing has very limited private garden space. For this reason, it is often referred to as Plymouth's 'Green Lung'. Outdoor sports and recreation facilities include football, rugby, bowling and pitch and putt. There are also five children's playgrounds and four allotment sites located at various sites across the park.
- 4.5 To the north of the park is Pounds House, a large 19<sup>th</sup> Century Villa, popular for weddings and also housing a number of community sector organisations. The villas former stables have been converted into a doctor's surgery. Pounds House is set within attractive formal gardens.
- 4.6 As previously mentioned, Central Park, in common with many urban parks, has suffered from continuing cutbacks in provision for its maintenance and development and as a consequence much of it has now become mundane or run down.

## 5.0 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

5.1 In order to develop a series of aims for the development of Central Park it has been necessary to consider what the strengths and weaknesses of the park are and what opportunities and threats could face it in the future. The results of a public consultation exercise also influenced this process

### 5.2 Location and Transport

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Central position close to City Centre</li> <li>▪ 'Green Lung' in a densely populated area</li> <li>▪ Close to A38</li> <li>▪ Park and Ride</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lighting and surfacing of pedestrian/cycle routes inadequate</li> <li>▪ Poor pedestrian and cyclist links with Railway Station and City Centre</li> <li>▪ Alma Road and Outland Road are barriers to pedestrian access</li> <li>▪ Insufficient parking provision at north of park</li> <li>▪ Poor disabled access to and within the park</li> </ul>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reappraise structure and hierarchy of footpath/cycle network</li> <li>▪ Improve quality of routes through the park (lighting, surfacing, visual factors)</li> <li>▪ Improve linkages between the park and the Railway Station and City Centre</li> <li>▪ Improve pedestrian routes to nearby residential areas</li> <li>▪ Reappraise car parking provision</li> <li>▪ Improve appearance of park and ride</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased car parking demand not fully met by parking associated with new development</li> <li>▪ Insufficient funding to carry out works</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Landscape and Public Art

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large Area</li> <li>▪ Varied landscape character areas</li> <li>▪ Mature Trees (singles and groups)</li> <li>▪ High open spaces</li> <li>▪ Spectacular views across the City and The Sound</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of overall identity</li> <li>▪ Poor entrances and boundary treatments</li> <li>▪ Poor structure and layout</li> <li>▪ Parts of park windswept and exposed</li> <li>▪ Bleak in winter months</li> <li>▪ No horticultural excellence displayed</li> <li>▪ Few water features</li> <li>▪ Drainage problems</li> <li>▪ Poor architecture and spacing between buildings</li> <li>▪ Vandalised and poor quality park furniture</li> <li>▪ Lack of landmark features</li> <li>▪ Lack of public art features</li> <li>▪ Lack of signage, information and interpretation</li> <li>▪ Few meeting places</li> </ul>
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<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve entrances and boundary treatments</li> <li>▪ Create identity through strong landscape architecture/ urban design</li> <li>▪ Strengthen/create individually themed landscape areas</li> <li>▪ Ensure that new development integrates visually and that quality public spaces are created</li> <li>▪ Co-ordinate park furniture styles</li> <li>▪ Create landmark features</li> <li>▪ Make public art an integral part of the improvements to the park</li> <li>▪ Incorporate variations in topography</li> <li>▪ Create new, and improve existing, water features</li> <li>▪ Work towards high standards of horticultural excellence across the park</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poor quality development</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate loss of green space</li> <li>▪ Vandalism</li> <li>▪ Insufficient funding to carry out works</li> </ul>
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#### 5.4 Conservation and Heritage

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Original design of the park</li> <li>▪ Place where city dwellers can enjoy nature</li> <li>▪ Old agricultural features (Devon Lanes and hedgerows)</li> <li>▪ Historic Pounds House and Gardens</li> <li>▪ Varied wildlife habitats</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited significant wildlife interest (excluding hedgerows)</li> <li>▪ Fragmented habitats</li> <li>▪ Poor interpretation</li> <li>▪ Loss of features of historical significance</li> </ul>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase biodiversity and the ecological value of the park</li> <li>▪ Create specific wildlife areas and improve wildlife corridors</li> <li>▪ Review wildlife management</li> <li>▪ Involve local community in conservation work</li> <li>▪ Better understand parks wildlife interest and history</li> <li>▪ Enhance historic features</li> <li>▪ Provide better interpretation of parks history</li> <li>▪ Involve community in a local history project</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of public support/involvement</li> <li>▪ Insufficient funding to carry out works</li> </ul>

#### 5.5 Sport

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus of City-wide sporting facilities</li> <li>▪ Well used local sporting facilities</li> <li>▪ Informal exercise opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing sports centre, swimming pool and Plymouth Argyle Football Stadium in need of improvement</li> <li>▪ Some sports pitches receive limited usage due to open nature/ poor drainage</li> </ul>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build new regionally important sporting facilities</li> <li>▪ Consider restructure/improvement of playing pitches</li> <li>▪ Improve pitch and put facility and create a new crazy golf course</li> <li>▪ Increase provision for bowling</li> <li>▪ Provide new facilities for wheeled sports</li> <li>▪ Explore alternative forms of exercise provision</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient funding to carry out works</li> </ul>

## 5.6 Recreation

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunities for a wide range of recreational pursuits including passive recreation</li> <li>▪ Pleasant setting for play activity</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poor quality of play provision</li> </ul>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a regional scale adventure playground</li> <li>▪ Improve provision for toddler play at north and south of park</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient funding to carry out works</li> </ul>

## 5.7 Status and Image

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City's major green open space</li> <li>▪ Venue for community events</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Air of neglect</li> <li>▪ Poor supervision of park</li> <li>▪ Poor promotion of the park</li> <li>▪ Misuse and poor provision of public toilets</li> <li>▪ Few places to eat</li> <li>▪ Under-used resource</li> <li>▪ Poor public facilities (toilets, shelters, refreshments, telephones)</li> <li>▪ Fear of crime, especially in the evenings</li> <li>▪ Antisocial behaviour (vandalism, graffiti)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the park as a tourist attraction</li> <li>▪ Work towards nationally recognised standards of park excellence</li> <li>▪ Encourage greater use of the park by a wider section of the community</li> <li>▪ Focus for city-wide and community events</li> <li>▪ Involve the community in the future of the park</li> <li>▪ Dedicated revenue funding to manage the park</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued neglect</li> <li>▪ Insufficient maintenance</li> <li>▪ Bad publicity</li> <li>▪ Events may disturb local residents</li> <li>▪ Continued antisocial behaviour</li> <li>▪ Continued fear of crime</li> <li>▪ Perception by people that nothing gets done</li> </ul>

## 6.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

6.1 Between March and May 2000, extensive public consultation took place to find out local peoples' views on the future of Central Park. The consultation process had four main elements:

- **Questionnaire Survey.** A questionnaire was sent to 15,200 households within a half mile radius of the park. The questionnaire was also available in the Council's 'Plymouth People' publication and at the Mayflower Sports Centre. Over 3,800 questionnaires were returned, equating to a response rate of some 23%.
- **Schools consultation.** 116 students from four local primary schools and 52 students from 3 secondary schools took part in special workshops and trails round the park
- **Focus Group.** 80 city wide organisations were invited and 25 organisations represented at a day long focus group exercise
- **An exhibition.** Information was displayed in the Mayflower Sports Centre regarding the proposals.

6.2 In addition, as part of the current planning Local Plan review, an award winning consultation exercise was undertaken which culminated in the publication of Community Planning Studies for each of the City's 20 wards. During this process a number of comments regarding Central Park were made.



### 6.3 Key Outcomes:

- 81% of respondents supported the principles of the Central Park project. That is, a new future for the park area, new stands and facilities for Plymouth Argyle set around the existing pitch, new indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities and better and improved swimming provision, paid for by external grants and commercial development at Home Park.
- 72% of respondents supported the construction of a replacement Mayflower Centre.
- The consultation exercise revealed that 54% of respondents used the park at least once a week. 82% of respondents said that they would make better use of the park if its problems were addressed.

6.4 Many concerns and suggestions about the park were put to the Council. These have all been carefully considered and, where possible, addressed in this action plan.

6.5 Some key areas for concern were:

- *The loss of green areas space to development*
- *The safety of the park including inadequate lighting, the lack of a visible staff presence,*
- *The condition and misuse of public toilets*
- *Dogs which are not properly supervised, dog mess, dog bins*
- *Access to the park*
- *Inadequate parking provision and its safety*
- *Litter, vandalism*
- *Lack of positive publicity*
- *Neglected feel of park, including condition of landscaping and street furniture*

6.6 Some key aspirations were:

- *Park Wardens*
- *Facilities for all ages*
- *Better play facilities*
- *Better paths, suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs*
- *Better signage*
- *Food outlets*
- *Better landscaping*
- *Increased amount and safety of parking provision*
- *Events area and community events*

## 7.0 OVERALL AIMS OF THE CENTRAL PARK PROJECT

7.1 The Central Park Project aims to:

- *Support the continued role of the park as the focus for sporting facilities of city and regional importance*
- *Create a high quality, safe, accessible open space which everyone in the city is able to enjoy and be proud of*
- *Provide for the recreational and cultural needs of the City's residents by providing opportunities for formal and informal healthy exercise, sport and play, as well as the enjoyment of beautiful, well cared for surroundings, which respect the natural and historic importance of the park.*
- *Provide a park for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century using the best of contemporary design.*

- *To involve local people wherever possible in carrying out the improvements to the park*

## 8.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTRAL PARK PROJECT

- 8.1 The Central Park Project will have three specific elements:
- **The Mayflower Sports Centre** – *An extension to Central Park Leisure Pools to replace the existing Mayflower Centre*
  - **Home Park Football Stadium** – *A new all-seater football stadium for about 18,000 spectators*
  - **The Green Spaces** – *Improvements to the quality of the green spaces and the activities undertaken there.*
- 8.2 A commercial leisure development, possibly incorporate a multi-screen cinema, family entertainment centre, health and fitness centre, restaurant and other facilities could contribute to funding the proposed improvements.

## 9.0 CENTRAL PARK MASTERPLAN

- 9.1 Map 2 is the overall **masterplan** for the site. This map shows the respective locations of the three project elements, (including the main components of the green spaces element) and the location of the commercial leisure development.
- 9.2 This Action Plan focuses particularly on the Green Spaces element of the project, but details of the new sports centre, Home Park Football Stadium and the commercial leisure scheme are outlined first.

## 10.0 REPLACEMENT MAYFLOWER CENTRE

- 10.1 It is well recognised that the Mayflower Centre, even though it provides a large sporting venue, suffers from: -
- Under provision for fitness
  - Dilapidated squash and café facilities
  - Poor planning and design
  - Inadequate bowls provision
  - Uneconomic level of capital investment need (currently estimate in excess of £6m)
- 10.2 It is proposed to clear the site of the existing Mayflower Sports Centre, and construct a new purpose built facility which is physically linked to the existing swimming pool complex.
- 10.3 Outline planning approval for the combination of the existing swimming and new dry facilities was granted in August this year. This particular development proposal includes for: -
- Dry side diving training facilities including trampolines, diving pit and toddler area
  - Martial arts
  - Aerobics/dance studio
  - Large sports hall (8 court)
  - Large fitness area
  - 8 rink indoor bowls venue
- 10.4 The overall scheme will form part of a major Sport England Lottery Fund bid

- 10.5 Submission will be made in the near future to seek a significant level of funds from Sport England to assist in the delivery of the overall sports centre scheme. It is expected that the City Council will have to find a considerable financial resource to support their submission.
- 10.6 This particular development proposal aims to complement the existing plans for the redevelopment of Home Park and plans for the rest of the park (including the new play area next to the pool).
- 10.7 In addition to considering the replacement of the Mayflower Sports Centre, the City Council is examining new management models to deliver and support activities on site once the scheme is finished. This could be by way of charitable trust or private/public partnership.

## 11.0 HOME PARK FOOTBALL STADIUM

- 11.1 A city of the size and importance of Plymouth ought to be able to support a football club in the higher reaches of the football league or even the Premier League. There is nothing the City Council can do to improve the performance of its Football Club on the pitch, but it can help with the pitch itself, and the quality of the Stadium in which it is situated. That is the intention at Home Park.
- 11.2 Home Park has been leased to Plymouth Argyle Football Club by the City Council for many years, and a long-standing debate about the future of the Club and its ground were brought to an end in 2001 by the agreement of the City Council and the Club about the redevelopment of Home Park for a new Football Stadium.
- 11.3 Home Park is an enviable site for a football stadium, already set in park land, and with easy access from the surrounding residential areas, the railway station, and main roads.
- 11.4 A new all-seater Football Stadium for about 18,000 spectators has been designed, planning permission has been obtained, and funding is being provided for the first phase of the redevelopment by the City Council, Plymouth Argyle Football Club and the Football Trust.
- 11.5 The lease of Home Park to Plymouth Argyle from 1962 was surrendered to the City Council in August 2001 and a new 125-year lease of the 10.6-acre site was granted on new rental terms. This will give the Club increased security in its new Stadium.
- 11.6 Redevelopment works for the site have been tendered, and the first Phase of the redevelopment scheme, which comprises a new "horseshoe" of three new football stands but not the Main Stand, was commenced in July 2001 by Barr Limited, the selected contractors. It is anticipated that this Phase will be completed by the end of the 2001 calendar year.
- 11.7 The £4.6m first phase will provide 12,626 seats including 126 for disabled spectators, and new catering kiosks and ancillary facilities. The second phase (the Main Stand) will incorporate 5,936 seats including 94 for the disabled, plus new changing rooms, control room, hospitality and corporate facilities. In addition the Main Stand redevelopment will be capable of being increased in size in the future by a further 7000 seats by adding an additional tier.
- 11.8 The new Stadium will be capable of hosting other sports, concerts, festivals, and corporate events, and Plymouth Argyle is keen to encourage more use of its facilities.
- 11.9 Funding for the second phase of the scheme, the redevelopment of the Main Stand, has not yet been secured but it is understood that the same sources of funding will be approached as for the first Phase.

- 11.10 Car parking for the Stadium will be provided, as at present, on the adjoining Park-and-Ride site and at Higher Home Park, although both sites can be used for public parking when the Stadium is not in use.

## 12.0 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- 12.1 The existing site of the Mayflower Centre, Pellows Field, and the Park-and Ride site are allocated for commercial development (either retail or leisure) in the current Local Plan, to enable a commercial return to be created which can be re-invested in the regeneration of Central Park as a whole.
- 12.2 In practice there is need for a balance to be struck between development and leaving green or open spaces, and commercial leisure uses were considered to be more in keeping with the other major attractions at Central Park, than a retail scheme.
- 12.3 Subject to planning permission, the City Council has therefore proposed to locate a commercial leisure development on the existing 4-acre site of the Mayflower Centre, which will be replaced by a new indoor sports facility on the eastern side of Central Park Swimming Pool. This is in accordance with the current Local Plan.
- 12.4 Discussions have been held with an associated company of Plymouth Argyle Football Club about the feasibility of developing a commercial leisure scheme on this site of about 100,000 sq. ft incorporating a multi-screen cinema, family entertainment centre, health & fitness centre, restaurants and other facilities. Some car parking is intended to be on-site, with additional car spaces on the Park-and-Ride site.
- 12.5 The timing for the implementation of the scheme is not known at present.
- 12.6 Subject to both parties wishing to go ahead, Plymouth Argyle's development associate will apply for planning permission and will undertake all necessary supporting studies relating to traffic and highway requirements, and the environmental impact of the project.
- 12.7 If planning permission and development funding are secured, the development is expected to take about 12 months to be completed and leased to the leisure companies that will take occupation of the various units.
- 12.8 However, due to the need to obtain Lottery funding for the new indoor sports centre it is unlikely that the existing site of the Mayflower Centre can be vacated and made available for redevelopment prior to mid-2003.
- 12.9 The value of the land for this scheme could possibly be used by the City Council to part-fund the improvements to Central Park. The Developer's return from the scheme could also be applied by Plymouth Argyle to improve the Home Park Stadium, should the Club so wish.

## 13.0 FORMAT OF THE GREEN SPACES PROPOSALS

- 13.1 The green space proposals all follow the same format which is as follows:
- 13.2 **Action Points** refer to the broad objectives of the project area. These are informed by:
- The objectives of relevant Council and external strategies and plans
  - Public consultation
  - The results of the parks strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis

- 13.3 The **Implementation** section explains what actions are proposed to meet the action points.
- 13.4 **Outputs** are what will be achieved by the proposed actions.
- 13.5 The **Timescales and Lead Department** section sets out when the work could be carried out and who will be responsible for it's delivery. It will be necessary to phase the proposed improvements to take into account:
- Priorities
  - Funding streams
  - Necessary sequencing to avoid abortive works (e.g. paving before laying new cables)
  - Staffing levels
- 13.6 **Costings** estimate how much the work will cost to carry out, and how it is proposed to pay for it where known. *Cost estimates are gross – costs to the City Council will be net of grants secured.*
- 13.7 Where additional funding sources may be possible but need further exploration, they are set out in the **Additional Funding Sources to be Investigated** section.
- 13.8 At the end of the Green Spaces section there is a summary table setting out the scheme breakdown, phasings, estimated costs, identified funding sources and lead departments.

## 14.0 TRANSPORT

### 14.1. FOOTPATHS AND CYCLE PATHS

It is proposed that footpaths and cycle paths be improved.

#### 14.1.1 Action Points

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | To improve the safety of footpaths and cycle paths in Central Park including enhanced lighting provision        |
| 2. | To improve surfacing of footpaths   |
| 3. | To construct further cycle paths within Central Park to complete the Strategic Cycle Network                    |
| 4. | To provide secure cycle parking facilities for users of facilities in Central Park                              |
| 5. | To support the improvement of pedestrian and cycle links between Central Park and the City Centre/Train Station |

#### Implementation

##### **Lighting**

- 14.1.2 Public safety was one of the major areas of concern arising out of the public consultation. Particularly in the winter months, many people (especially dog walkers and runners) use the park when it is dark. The lighting within the park is woefully inadequate. The existing lighting network is out of date with an insufficient number of mismatching lighting columns. It is necessary to replace the existing electricity cables to cope with the new lighting system. In places, due to the presence of mature trees of significant landscape value (some of which are the subject of a tree preservation order) it is necessary to carry out expensive hand digging to protect tree roots

- 14.1.3 It is proposed that as a matter of priority lighting be improved along the main arterial routes of the park. The lighting columns used should be designed as part of a co-ordinated scheme of street furniture.

Closed circuit television and the installation of help points along main arterial routes and an automated system for reporting lighting faults similar to that installed at Freedom Fields should be investigated.

### **Surfacing**

- 14.1.4 In tandem with improvements to lighting, it is also desirable to improve the surfacing of pathways within the park. The existing surfacing is of a poor quality, being uneven and unattractive. Improving the surfacing will enable greater use of the park to be made by people with disabilities. It is recommended that an access audit be carried out to identify any other aspects of the pedestrian network, which hinder use by persons with limited mobility. This would include people who use pushchairs and wheelchairs as well as people with visual impairments. Where reasonably practical, any recommendations for improvements such as reducing gradients and removing unnecessary obstacles should be implemented.

- 14.1.5 In section 17 of this plan, proposals for a Walking the Way to Health scheme are detailed. The scheme aims to encourage a wide range of people to make more use of the park, including people with special requirements of their walking environment. The improvements to the pedestrian routes set out above will enable more people to participate in the scheme, contributing to increasing the vitality of the park.

### **Construction of cycle paths**

- 14.1.6 A key objective of the Cycle Strategy is to link existing cycle routes. The City's Strategic Cycle Network includes an incomplete route into the City Centre from the north, which passes through Central Park. In order to complete the route, additional cycle paths need to be provided within the park and between the Central Park and North Cross Roundabout.

- 14.1.7 Funding is currently being sought to improve cycle paths City-wide, including £1million of European Funding, £1.5million Regional Development Agency, £1million of Local Transport Plan money and £0.8million of developer contributions. This money could potentially be available for the construction of cycle links between Central Park and the City Centre.

### **Cycle parking**

- 14.1.8 One of the aims of The Plymouth Cycle Strategy is to encourage the provision of secure and convenient cycle parking/facilities at trip destinations. The strategy advocates the provision of free and secure cycle parking in public places such as park and ride sites, commercial centres and leisure/sports facilities. Within Central Park, suitable cycle parking facilities should be provided for stays of at least two hours. The Cycle Strategy states that the detailed location of cycle stands will be considered against the following list of factors:

- They should be overlooked or in clear view of passers by;
- They should be close to destinations / building entrances;
- They should be in locations not accessible to vehicles;
- They should not pose a risk or obstruction to pedestrians or the mobility impaired, and should include where necessary a lower tap rail;
- They should be in keeping with the environment in which they are located.

14.1.9 The cost of providing cycle stands will be met from the budgets allocated to associated development within the park e.g. car parking, leisure centre extension.

### **Improved pedestrian and cyclist links with the City Centre and Train Station**

14.1.10 Improving links between Central Park and surrounding residential areas and the City Centre is a theme of the City Centre Precinct Urban Design Framework 2001 and a priority of the Local Transport Plan. This Action Plan supports policies and proposals which enable greater use of the park to be made by people who chose to travel by more sustainable methods or do not have access to a car.

14.1.11 The main north-south link into the City Centre from Central Park is via North Cross roundabout, and it runs close to the main railway station. Links with the City Centre are currently hindered by:

- The railway line which runs east-west bisecting Central Park and the surrounding residential areas from the City Centre
- The topography and layout of roads, pathways and buildings at and around North Cross roundabout which prevent direct, convenient, safe and attractive access to the City Centre.

14.1.12 Potential for a new access from Central Park to the railway station has recently been secured through negotiations in respect of a planning application for student accommodation north of the station. Investigations are taking place into the possibility of a viaduct linkage from Central Park directly into the railway station as part of a northern entrance into the railway station. It is likely that such a scheme would come forward as part of the major redevelopment of the railway station or funded through the Local Transport Plan or Rail Passenger Partnership Funding. Justification for this project revolves around increased patronage of the railway station.

## **14.2 CAR PARKING**

It is proposed to improve and increase car parking provision within the park.

### **14.2.1 Action Points**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To improve the visual appearance of the Park and Ride car park</li><li>2. To create a new car park at Peverell Park Corner</li><li>3. To improve the security of all car parks within Central Park</li></ol> |
|---|

### **Implementation**

#### **Park and Ride Car Park**

14.2.2 The Central Park car park has been a 'temporary' Park and Ride site for about a decade. It is acknowledged to have several drawbacks as a commuter/shopper car park. It cannot be used when Plymouth Argyle plays at home (alternate Saturdays and occasionally midweek during the football season), it is too close to the City Centre and it diverts people from other bus routes. It is intended that the park and ride facility will eventually be replaced by new sites at:

- The airport to the north of the City at the junction of Tavistock Road and Plymbridge Road which will help to ease congestion in the northern corridor into the city along the Tavistock Road (A386) and

- A second site yet to be identified west of the Tamar Bridge.

14.2.3 For the time being, the car park will remain in use as a park and ride site and will also be used by visitors to the park including football supporters. In the longer term it is expected to be heavily used by an increased number of visitors, for match day parking and as an overflow car park for users of the proposed leisure and commercial developments.

14.2.4 The car park is prominently located adjacent to Milehouse Road and forms the first impression of Central Park for many users. Unfortunately, its appearance is very unattractive and bleak with its large expanse of concrete and few trees or other planting. The backdrop to the car park is the Plymouth Argyle Football Stadium, which is currently being rebuilt. Visual improvements to the car park will complement the improved appearance of the stadium. The surface and lining of the car park are also ongoing problems with complaints being received from people who have tripped on the uneven surface or who have been blocked in by other drivers due to non-visible lines. It is a priority to improve both the appearance and functionality of this car park.

#### **New Car Park at Peverell Park Corner**

14.2.5 The existing City of Plymouth Local Plan First Alteration adopted 1996 contains a long standing proposal for a new car park adjacent to the local shopping centre at Peverell Park Corner (Proposal ATR14). This policy has not yet been implemented and is being considered again in the City of Plymouth Local Plan Review First Deposit Version December 2001 (Proposal 123).

14.2.6 The space where the off street car and cycle parking is proposed is part of an allotment site. The provision of the car park will necessitate the loss of six allotment plots. The loss of the allotment land can be justified on the basis that Peverell Corner provides valuable shopping and community uses adjacent to a busy road junction and the facilities have little off-street parking available to visitors. This reduces the viability of the local centre and causes inconvenience to the many residents living in adjacent streets. Consideration will need to be given to the appropriateness of providing replacement plots and/or the improvement of the quality of existing plots.

14.2.7 In order to use allotment land for the purpose of car parking it is necessary to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State. This is because the land would be permanently placed out of allotment use. When applying to the Secretary of State, it is necessary to detail the provision being made for displaced tenants and to have consulted with the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. Planning permission will also be required.

14.2.8 Consideration will also need to be given to the revenue implications of the future management and maintenance of this new facility.

#### **Improved Security – Secured Car Park Award Scheme**

14.2.9 There is much public and police concern about the safety of the existing car parks within Central Park. The planned improvements to the park and ride site and the creation of new car parks within the park offer the opportunity of addressing this problem. It is recommended that all car parks be improved or created to the standards required by the Association of Chief Police Officers, Secured Car Parks Scheme.

14.2.10 The scheme was launched in 1992 as part of the 'Secured by Design' initiative to encourage those responsible for car parks to improve security



standards as a means of reducing criminal activity, the scheme is supported by the Home Office and the British Parking Association and is administered by the Automobile Association. The award certifies car parks which have introduced effective measures to create a safe and secure environment which reduces public fears and restricts opportunities for crime to be committed. However, even car parks that possess the award can never be guaranteed crime free. The award is granted for one year and during the period of the award, standards must be maintained.

#### 14.3 TRANSPORT OUTPUTS

- All arterial routes to be lit
- Surface of all pathways to be improved
- New cycle routes within the park to close links within the Strategic Cycle Network
- Provision of new/improved cycle parking facilities
- Improved links with railway station and City Centre
- Appearance of park and ride site improved
- New car park created at Peverell Park Corner
- All car parks certified to Secured Car Park Scheme Standards

#### 14.4 TIMESCALES AND LEAD DEPARTMENT

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Lead Department
<b>PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PATHS</b>				
Lighting				Development (S.P.U.)
Surfacing (major routes)				Development (S.P.U.)
Surfacing (minor routes)				Development (S.P.U.)
<b>CAR PARKS</b>				
Park and Ride				Development (S.P.U.)
New car park				Development (S.P.U.)

#### 14.5 COSTINGS

	Estimated Total Project Cost
<b>PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PATHS</b>	
Lighting	£262,200
Surfacing	£590,940
<b>CAR PARKS</b>	
Park and Ride	£444,000
New car park	£180,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,477,140</b>

#### 14.6 ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES TO BE INVESTIGATED

- Plymouth City Council – Local Transport Plan
- European Regional Development Fund
- Regional Development Agency
- Developer contributions
- New Opportunities Fund – Sustrans Safe Routes to Stations

## 15.0 LANDSCAPING AND PUBLIC ART

### 15.1 LANDSCAPING

15.1.1 During the public consultation process, many people expressed concern that parts of Central Park were bland, lacking identity and distinctiveness. A common request was that landscaping be improved the park.

### 15.1.2 **Action points**

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To improve the visual qualities of the park, providing a welcoming, more sheltered environment, which offers a stimulating setting for formal and informal activity.</li><li>2. To address the problems of vandalism by providing well-designed, robust park furniture which is well maintained.</li><li>3. To address the problems of flooding by improvements to drainage and water management.</li><li>4. To address the problems of security with lighting, planting design and management</li><li>5. To improve entrances to the park</li><li>6. To install a comprehensive signage system</li></ol> |
|--|

### **Implementation**

15.1.3 The landscape proposals for the green spaces of the park collectively address the action points above, but each element is broken down below to illustrate specific areas of implementation.

#### **Planting**

15.1.4 A hierarchy of planting is proposed, from structural woodland, through formal tree planting complimenting new buildings, to ornamental shrubs and herbaceous planting for colour, texture and interest. The historical importance of Pounds House will be reflected in enhanced planting in this area.

15.1.5 **Woodland planting** - Much of Central Park is very windswept and to address this problem, broad swathes of woodland planting will be introduced to provide shelter. The planting will also help to break the monotony of bleak expanses of grass and create new wildlife corridors across the park, which will help to increase biodiversity. An application will be made for Woodland Grant Scheme/Community Woodland funding from the Forestry Commission to support this element. The Woodland Grant Scheme provides incentives for the creation and management of woodlands. The aims of the scheme include:

- the encouragement of new woodlands to improve the landscape and provide new habitats for wildlife
- the encouragement of good management and regeneration of existing woodlands.

Where possible, the community will be involved in tree planting.

15.1.6 **Formal tree planting** - The new buildings proposed for the park need to be sensitively incorporated, so that the park retains it's "green" feeling, and does not become dominated by the built form. It is intended that substantial formal tree planting will accompany the new buildings, to help to achieve this.

15.1.7 **Ornamental Planting** - Severe constraints on maintenance have resulted in minimum input into ornamental planting within the park. It is intended that new ornamental planting in the park should demonstrate horticultural excellence and incorporate low-maintenance planting styles and techniques that have proved very successful on the continent. This planting will be concentrated around the areas of greatest use, such as the new adventure play provision, and picnic area adjoining the new water feature.

- 15.1.8 **Pounds House** - The historic survey outlined in section 16 will inform the approach at Pounds House, but possibilities include planting in a style to suit the period of the house, along with the introduction of an arboretum.

### **Water Features**

- 15.1.9 Several areas of the park suffer from flooding or water logging, with some paths being swamped in the winter. The intention is to harness this water, along with surface run-off from the new buildings, to create ornamental water features. These will act as holding tanks for the excess water, with valves in place to control the flow back into the storm water drainage system.
- 15.1.10 Imaginative use of water features will provide a spectacular setting for the new sports building, with a series of pools designed to entice visitors out into the green spaces of the park.
- 15.1.11 Close liaison between the designers of the new buildings, the landscape and engineers will establish the best way forward for water management for the whole of the park.

### **Entrances/Gateways and Signage**

- 15.1.12 The entrances to Central Park and the signage within it are extremely poor. The park does not currently welcome its visitors, tell them what they can do there or indicate where help can be found if required. It is recommended that the entrances to the park are improved and a comprehensive and coordinated system of signage be provided. This signage will complement the nature conservation and heritage interpretation signage outlined in section 16 of this Action Plan.

### **Park Furniture**

- 15.1.13 Vandalism of street furniture is a big problem in the park. Seats and bins have been broken and defaced, which gives the park a depressed appearance, and undermines people's confidence in the park as a safe place to be. Provision of new, robust street furniture is therefore a high priority. Lighting, seating, bins, fencing, signage, shelters, bollards etc will all be improved. In order to provide the park with its own distinctiveness, artists will be involved in the design of many of these elements.

### **Security**

- 15.1.14 The City Council is working closely with the police to ensure that the park is a safe place to be. Whilst the fear of crime keeps many people from using the park. New lighting will be provided for the major routes through the park to help address this problem (section 14). A balance also needs to be struck between allowing surveillance of vulnerable areas, and planting for shelter, wildlife and aesthetic value. A high profile ranger and maintenance regime will also help to increase confidence in park users.

## **15.2 PUBLIC ART**

- 15.2.1 It is recommended that public artwork forms an essential component of the plans to improve Central Park. Public Art can be used to transform otherwise ordinary, functional spaces within the park into unique and visually stimulating environments. It can also contribute to enlivening and animating the park and giving it (and the spaces within it) a special distinctiveness and vibrancy. Quality environments send out positive messages about a place and how it is used and valued. A cared for environment is less likely to attract crime and vandalism and more likely to attract

visitors. Public art can have a role in humanising environments and creating a cultural legacy for the future.

### 15.2.2 **Action Points**

1. To carry out a strategy for public art within Central Park
2. To undertake a combination of artist and community collaborations and specific artist commissions
3. Where relevant, to use public art as a means of engaging the community in the projects set out in this action plan

### **Implementation**

15.2.3 **Public Art Survey** – A survey of opportunities for public art in Central Park and consideration of how public art can best contribute to the overall objectives of Central Park being a city/regional park for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century needs to be undertaken. It is essential that public artwork is integrated into the design process at the earliest possible stage to ensure that:

- It links with the park in a coherent way and is not simply an add-on
- Opportunities for public art are maximised
- Public Art is incorporated into the project in the most cost effective way

15.2.4 **Art Commissions** – The need for these are to be determined but could include links with other projects set out in this Action Plan. Ideas include:

- Landmark Feature
- Walking the Way to Health
- History projects such as Central Park Timeline
- Temporary artworks on building site hoardings
- Gateways
- Street furniture, paving, play
- Artists in residence
- Commemorative work for the Queen's Golden Jubilee

15.2.5 **Community Involvement** - Wherever possible the local community should be involved in developing projects that affect their park. Public art can be used as a valuable tool to engage people in the projects, to help people consider the issues involved and to express their views. Using the arts can empower people and help break down barriers to involvement such as age, physical and mental disabilities, education, and social standing. It can also contribute to the creation of public pride in, and ownership of, the park.

### 15.3 **LANDSCAPE AND PUBLIC ART OUTPUTS**

Could include:

- Areas improved
- Jobs created
- Artworks installed
- Trees planted
- Furniture installed
- Number of local people involved in the process

### 15.4 **TIMESCALES AND LEAD DEPARTMENT**

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Lead Department
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>				
Planting				Development (S.P.U.)
Arboretum				Development (S.P.U.)
Water features				Development (S.P.U.)
Entrances/Gateways				Development (S.P.U.)

Park Furniture				Development (S.P.U.)
<b>PUBLIC ART</b>				
				Development (S.P.U.)

## 15.5 COSTINGS

	Estimated Total Project Cost
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>	
Planting	£512,500
Arboretum	£205,000
Water features	£360,000
Entrances/Gateways	£300,000
Park Furniture	£420,000
<b>PUBLIC ART</b>	
Public Art	£300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,097,500</b>

## 15.6 ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES TO BE INVESTIGATED

### 15.6.1 Landscaping

- Landscaping work associated with development taking place within the park
- Return from commercial development scheme
- Sponsorship (creation and maintenance of planting)
- Section 106 obligations
- NOF – Doorstep Greens, Peoples Places

### 15.6.2 Public Art

- Regional Arts Lottery Fund
- Return from commercial development scheme
- Percent for Art Scheme
- Awards for All

## 16.0 CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

### 16.1 NATURE CONSERVATION

16.1.1 Many people living in the City value Central Park because it is a place where they can connect with nature. It is proposed to increase understanding of wildlife in Central Park and carry out practical nature conservation projects.

#### 16.1.2 Action Points

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | To carry out a plant, animal and habitat survey of Central Park  |
| 2. | To identify and implement specific nature conservation projects  |
| 3. | To improve public understanding and involvement in the conservation of the parks wildlife              |
| 4. | To ensure that all new development within Central Park contributes to improving wildlife opportunities |

#### 16.1.3 Implementation

##### **Plant, animal and habitat survey**

16.1.4 A survey of the nature conservation interest of Central Park is proposed to inform the content of interpretation boards and the development of specific nature conservation projects

### **Identify specific nature conservation projects**

16.1.5 These will be developed once the nature conservation survey is complete but could include:

- (1) Conserving and enhancing existing nature conservation features such as:
  - Renovation of existing ponds
  - Managing hedgerows
  - Modifying mowing regimes
- (2) The creation of new nature conservation features such as Nature Pocket Parks. Examples could be:
  - Wooded Valley adjacent to Ford Park Cemetery
  - Disused Allotments at the south of the park

### **Public Involvement**

16.1.6 Where possible the public will be given the opportunity to get involved in practical nature conservation tasks through for example

- The Green Gym (see section 17)
- Community tree and/or bulb planting events

### **Interpretation of wildlife**

16.1.7 Projects to increase public understanding of wildlife in Central Park could include:

- Nature Trails
- Interpretation/information boards associated with nature pocket parks and existing nature conservation features such as hedgerows and woodlands.

### **Increasing wildlife opportunities**

16.1.8 All plans for development should where ever possible include elements which are wildlife friendly and increase wildlife opportunities such as boundary Devon banks to parking areas, landscaping to include plants which encourage wildlife diversity.

## **16.2 HISTORIC CONSERVATION**

16.2.1 Central Park has much local history importance, it is considered that in creating a park for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, that the parks history is acknowledged and forms part of the parks future.

### **16.2.2 Action Points**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To better understand the heritage of the park</li><li>2. To improve the interpretation of the parks heritage</li><li>3. To conserve or restore important historic elements of the park</li></ol> |
|---|

### **Implementation**

#### **Historic Survey of Central Park**

16.2.3 It is proposed to commission consultants to carry out a historic survey to clearly identify, characterise and evaluate the historic interest of the park as it now stands. The survey will identify what is significant and indicate what

provisions may be necessary for the safeguarding and enhancing of those interests as part of any future development. This will entail:

- (a) An assessment of relevant existing documentary evidence relating to the history of the park
- (b) A careful and detailed site inspection to identify and evaluate existing and surviving historic elements within the park. This will include elements that pre-date the construction of the park as well as historic elements of the park itself, including landscaping and planting.

### **Community consultation and formation of Central Park History Group**

16.2.4 Following receipt of the Historic Survey of Central Park, it is intended to carry out a series of educational features in the local media based on Central parks history.

16.2.5 The purpose of this project is to stimulate interest in the park's history. Readers will be invited to write to the Council with their views of what aspects of Central Park's heritage are important and should be conserved for future generations. Once the series has finished, readers will be invited to form a Central Park History Group to develop community based local history projects in the park.

### **'A Peoples History of Central Park'**

16.2.6 It is proposed to run a series of community history workshops linking the experiences of Central Park of the oldest members of the community with those of the youngest and publishing a written record in the form of 'A Peoples History of Central Park'.

16.2.7 The project would be carried out by a partnership of schools, the newly formed Central Park History Group, and a respected local historian.

### **Local Heritage Initiative**

16.2.8 The Central Park History Group will be supported to develop a community based Central Park History Project for which funding from the Heritage Lottery Funds 'Local Heritage Initiative' will be sought.

16.2.9 The Local Heritage Initiative is a national grant scheme running to 2010 that helps local groups to investigate, explain and care for their local landmarks, landscape, traditions and culture.

16.2.10 In order to be eligible for a grant, the project must meet all of the following criteria:

- **Local** – started, supported and carried out by local people
- **Heritage** – Involving raising awareness of the richness and distinctiveness of locally important heritage assets and plans to investigate, explain or care for them.
- **Initiative** – Offer clear public benefits for the long term care of local heritage assets or future actions after the project has finished.

16.2.11 Details of the project will be determined by the Central Park History Group taking into account the results of the historic survey of the park and community consultation. The project could include public art, such as a Central Park timeline, as well as signs and interpretation boards. It may also be possible to do some small scale conservation/restoration projects.

## Your Heritage Initiative

16.2.12 This project will entail the conservation/restoration of important elements of the park heritage.

16.2.13 Details of the project will be developed and an application for funding submitted to the Heritage Lottery Funds 'Your Heritage' Initiative, once the results of the historical survey and community consultation are available.

16.2.14 In order to qualify for a grant, the project must either:

- (a) Care for and protect the Park's heritage or;
- (b) Increase understanding and enjoyment of the parks heritage

16.2.15 Projects must also:

- (a) Give people a better opportunity to experience heritage by improving access
- (b) Help to improve peoples quality of life by benefiting the community and wider public

16.2.16 This project will be complementary to the Local Heritage Initiative.

## 16.3 CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE OUTPUTS

- Historic Survey of Central Park complete
- Features on Central Parks history carried out in local press.
- Central Park History Group formed
- Community history workshops carried out
- 'A peoples history of Central Park' published
- Funding bids submitted
- Signage and other explanatory material provided within the park
- Conservation or restoration of historical features carried out (details to be determined)
- Local community involved

## 16.4 TIMESCALES AND LEAD DEPARTMENT

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Lead Department
<b>Nature Conservation</b>					
Survey					Development (S.P.U.)
Projects					Development (S.P.U.)
Interpretation					Development (S.P.U.)
<b>Historic Conservation</b>					
Survey					Development (S.P.U.)
Projects					Development (S.P.U.)
Interpretation					Development (S.P.U.)

## 16.5 COSTINGS

	Estimated Total Project Cost
<b>Nature Conservation</b>	
Survey	£3,600
Wildlife Projects	£20,400
Signage and Interpretation	£36,000
<b>Historic Conservation</b>	
Survey	£3,600
Peoples History of Central Park	£6,000
Conservation and Restoration Projects	£31,578
Signage and Interpretation	£120,000



<b>Total</b>	<b>£221,178</b>
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**16.6 ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES TO BE INVESTIGATED**

To be identified.

**17.0 SPORT AND RECREATION**

**17.1 SPORTS PITCHES (football and rugby)**

17.1.1 Central Park has twelve playing pitches (excluding those used by Plymouth Argyle Football Club). Of these, ten are used for football (including two for mini soccer) and two for rugby.

17.1.2 According to the Plymouth playing Pitch Strategy, the future requirement for football pitches in the city is expected to increase, with demand being greatest for pitches in central locations and on flat, non-exposed sites. This has been concluded because:

- Many pitches are currently over used with too many teams playing on any given pitch and extended football seasons being commonplace.
- Participation in football is expected to increase in the next three to five years, especially for women’s and girl’s teams and less so for veteran teams.

17.1.3 Improvements to playing pitches and associated facilities in Central Park are a City priority.

**17.1.4 Action Points**

1. To commission a Playing Pitch Survey for Central Park
2. To upgrade and rationalise football and rugby facilities as appropriate including drainage improvements, changing accommodation and site security

**Implementation**

**Playing Pitch Survey**

17.1.5 The Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy does not contain sufficient information to determine precisely what improvements are required to the pitches and associated facilities within Central Park. As such, it is proposed to commission a playing pitch survey to independently assess:

- What works are required to bring all pitches into optimum use
- The adequacy of supporting facilities e.g. changing rooms, parking
- Whether the available pitches should be rationalised
- Cost estimates and feasibility of improvements
- Recommended priorities for improvements

17.1.6 It is important to obtain this information to:

- Inform and justify the decision making process
- Justify requests for external funding

**Improvement of playing pitches and associated facilities**

17.1.7 Consideration of the improvements to the sports pitches and timescales need to take account of the playing pitch survey, the views of the Football Forum and other playing pitch users.

17.1.8 Likely priorities for improvement are:

- Improving surfacing/drainage of pitches
- Improvements to changing facilities
- New ball catch fencing
- Improving security

## 17.2 GOLF

17.2.1 It is proposed to improve the existing pitch and putt facility and create a new crazy golf course.

### 17.2.2 Action Points

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | To improve the standard of the existing pitch and put |
| 2. | To provide a new crazy golf course                    |

### Implementation

#### **Consider the future management arrangements for the pitch and put.**

17.2.3 The current pitch and putt operator is on a short lease due to uncertainty over the future management arrangements for the pitch and putt facility.

17.2.4 Two alternatives are being considered.

1. Operation by Plymouth City Council.

The advantage of this approach would be that the revenue generated by the facility, which would reasonably be expected to increase following improvements to the park, would be retained by the City Council, and could potentially go towards park maintenance costs. The disadvantage would be the need for the Council to invest its own money in raising the standard of the facility.

2. Operation by a private company on a long lease with a requirement to invest money in raising the standard of the facility.

The advantages of this approach would be that the Council would not need to dedicate significant Council expenditure to improving the facility and that subjecting the facility to competition could create a more exciting facility. The disadvantages of this approach would be that the potential for revenue generation by the Council is much lower.

#### **Improve Pitch and Putt facility**

17.2.5 As part of the landscaping planting proposals, it is intended to improve the pitch and putt facility. A future leaseholder may be required to contribute financially to planting proposals. The pavilion proposed in section 19 of this Action Plan could house the future pitch and putt operator.

#### **New crazy golf course**

17.2.6 Public consultation indicated a desire for crazy golf facilities in the park. This would link well with the proposed adventure playground and help to further consolidate the park's leisure function.

17.2.7 This facility could be provided by the Council or by a future pitch and putt operator and will need to be the subject of negotiations with potential future leaseholders.

### 17.3 BOWLING

17.3.1 It is proposed to improve the management increase the number of bowling greens in Central Park in response to the rationalisation of bowling greens elsewhere in the City

#### 17.3.2 Action Points

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|--|
| 1. To increase outdoor bowling provision from two greens to four |
|--|

#### Implementation

17.3.3 This proposal involves creating two new bowling greens east of the existing ones. There will also be a need to remove the existing septic tank on this site and connect the bowling pavilion to the mains services.

### 17.4 SKATEBOARDING, BMXING AND IN-LINE ROLLERSKATING

17.4.1 Wheeled sports are often dismissed as a passing phase, but after 40 years, the sport is as popular as ever, with young people from across the city lobbying the Council to provide localised facilities close to where they live as well as a central city wide indoor facility.

#### 17.4.2 Action Points

- |  |
|--|
| 1. To provide a new wheeled sports facility, kickabout area and meeting point behind Plymouth Argyle Football Club.  |
| 2. To investigate whether there is private interest in constructing and operating a commercial indoor extreme sports facility catering for skateboarders, in-line skaters and BMXers within Central Park |

#### Implementation

##### **Outdoor Facility**

17.4.3 It is essential that the plans for Central Park include provision of recreational facilities for teenagers and young people. Consultation and direct approaches from this group demonstrate that there is a demand for wheeled sport facilities such as skateboarding, BMXing and in-line rollerskating as well as general kickabout facilities and a meeting point. A site at the rear of Plymouth Argyle Football Club has been identified for these facilities. Prior to the redevelopment of the Plymouth Argyle Football Stadium, this site was a well used informal BMX track.

17.4.4 To ensure that young people take ownership of facilities provided for them, it is crucial that meaningful consultation takes place with local youngsters and that they are involved in designing the facility. The process should draw upon the experience already gained by officers and other relevant people working with young people elsewhere in the city to provide localised wheeled sports facilities, kickabout areas and meeting points as well as best practice from other authorities.

##### **Indoor City-wide Facility**

17.4.5 Following the recent closure of the Flatspot Centre in Cattedown (which catered for skateboarders, BMXers and in-line rollerskaters), the former operators and users of the facility approached the Council for help in providing a new one. As the Council is supportive of the provision of recreation facilities for young people, a skateboarding group was set up to consider how the Council could help.

17.4.6 An investigation took place into whether there were any existing buildings or land close to the City Centre which were suited to being converted or developed for use as an Extreme Sports Centre. No suitable conversions were identified. However, it was agreed that a site at North Cross roundabout would be suitable for a small outdoor facility and work is progressing on its design. A permanent indoor site is still required, preferably to be either built or converted and then operated by a private company. A site within or adjacent to the existing leisure core of Central Park could be suited to a new build project. The advantages of locating the facility within the park include:

- Its proximity to the City Centre
- The further consolidation of the parks role as the focus for City-wide leisure facilities
- The minimal impact it would have on local residents e.g. noise or other disturbance
- The possibility that the value of the land could be donated as a Council contribution to the cost of the project.

17.4.7 Further work needs to be carried out to establish whether any companies are interested in providing and operating this type of facility within the park, or indeed elsewhere. Once this information is known the project will need to be reviewed and any suitable site may need to be included in the Local Plan Review.

## 17.5 ALTERNATIVE EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES

17.5.1 It is recognised that the existing range of organised exercise opportunities within Central Park does not meet the needs of everyone and many have barriers that may prevent access such as:

- The cost of taking part in the activity or the requirement for expensive/specialist equipment/clothing
- The requirement of a minimum level of fitness or participation primarily by particular gender/age groups.
- Many people are not the 'sporty type' and do not feel comfortable in formal sports settings. They may be concerned about not 'fitting in' or of being the 'wrong shape'

17.5.2 Two complementary national initiatives are being developed to provide alternative exercise opportunities to meet the needs of such people and it is proposed to develop local schemes within Central Park. The initiatives are:

***Walking the Way to Health*** – An initiative of the Countryside Agency and the British Heart Foundation which aims to get people out walking in their communities both independently and/or on a programme of regular volunteer led walks.

***The Green Gym*** – An initiative of the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) which offers people the opportunity to improve their fitness by involvement in practical conservation activities such as planting hedges, creating wildlife gardens or improving footpaths.

17.5.3 Both schemes encourage social contact and support and the appreciation and enjoyment of the environment. The activities have a positive impact upon quality of life by providing interaction between the participant and their environment.

17.5.4 The initiatives aim to create specific community groups which will run themselves thus ensuring sustainability of the projects in the long term. For both schemes participants

will receive all the relevant training and support they need so that, after approximately 18 months they should be in a position to run the schemes themselves.

#### 17.5.5 **Action Points**

- |   |
|---|
| 1. To develop Walking the Way to Health and the Green Gym in Central Park |
|---|

#### **Implementation**

##### **'Walking the Way to Health' Scheme**

- 17.5.6 A partnership comprising the following organisations has been formed to develop this project.
- Plymouth City Council
  - Plymouth Primary Care Trust
  - Healthy Plymouth Alliance
  - British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
  - Plymouth Heartbeat
  - The local community
- 17.5.7 Students from Devonport High School for Girls recently devised 4 demonstration walking routes in the park for different target groups.
- 17.5.8 The scheme will probably be part of a larger programme of health walks across the city. It will be open to anyone to take part but in its first year will particularly target:
- People with or at risk of heart disease
  - Young people
  - People with sight impairments
  - Sedentary people using Peverell Park Surgery
- Target groups will be reviewed regularly.
- 17.5.9 The scheme in Central Park could potentially include:
- The provision of an 'independent walking pack' of self-help information to enlighten and motivate people about opportunities to walk in the park either on their own or with family and friends
  - Regular programmes of short led walks designed for small groups and led by volunteers and park rangers, to provide company, boost confidence and encourage people to walk on their own
  - Sign posted walking routes in the park
  - Public art commissions (artist community collaboration) to promote walking, make walks more attractive and to engage the local community in the project
  - GP encouragement to get patients walking.
  - Incentive schemes to reward people for doing more walking
  - Community events involving local people in activities which stimulate interest in walking and in their health.
- 17.5.10 In addition, improvements to pathways and lighting detailed elsewhere in this Action Plan will help to make walking safe accessible and attractive to all.

#### **BTCV Green Gym**

- 17.5.11 The Green Gym activities will be based at locations throughout the City

17.5.12 BTCV to draw up a list of suitable works in conjunction with Plymouth City Council's Nature Conservation Officer.

**17.6 SPORTS OUTPUTS**

- Improved playing pitches
- Redundant pitches brought into league use
- Number of postponed matches due to water logging decreased
- Number of matches played on Central Park playing pitches increased
- Number of matches played by specific target groups on Central Park playing pitches increased
- Number of teams having Central Park pitches as home pitch increased
- Improved pitch and put
- Provision of a crazy golf course
- Increased bowling provision
- Producing a health walking information pack
- Provision of sign posts/walking information/artwork associated with health walking
- Community involvement in practical conservation tasks through the Green Gym

**17.7 TIMESCALES AND LEAD DEPARTMENTS**

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Lead Department
<b>Playing Pitches</b>					
Pitch Improvements					Community Leisure & Learning
<b>Golf</b>					
Pitch and Put Improvements					Community Leisure & Learning
Crazy Golf					Community Leisure & Learning
<b>Bowling</b>					
New bowling greens					Community Leisure & Learning
<b>Wheeled Sports</b>					
Local Facility					Development (SPU)
Commercial Facility					Community Leisure & Learning C.L&L.
<b>Alternative Exercise Provision</b>					
Health Walking					To Be Determined*
Green Gym					BTCV

\*This project was initiated and has been led by the Council's Development Department. However, a more appropriate lead organisation needs to be agreed to take this project further.

**17.8 COSTINGS**

	Estimated Total Project Cost
<b>Playing Pitches</b>	
Pitch Improvements	£360,000
<b>Golf</b>	
Crazy Golf	£40,000
<b>Bowling</b>	
New Greens	£48,000
<b>Wheeled Sports</b>	
Local Facility	£120,000
Commercial Facility	£250,000
<b>Alternative Exercise Provision</b>	
Health Walking	£12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£830,000</b>

## 17.9 ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES TO BE INVESTIGATED

- Sport Action Zone money, should Plymouth achieve that status
- Football Foundation
- Sport England
- Foundation for Sport and the Arts (Football Pools)
- County Playing Fields Association
- Sponsorship           Wrigleys  
                                  Plymouth University

## 18.0 RECREATION

### 18.1 PLAYGROUNDS

18.1.1 Given the current poor condition of playgrounds in Central Park, improvements to playgrounds are a priority.

#### 18.1.2 Action Points

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|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Install a new regional scale adventure playground (including dry and aquatic play facilities) next to Central Park Leisure Pool</li><li>2. Create new toddler play facilities at the north and south of the park</li><li>3. Remove all existing playgrounds</li></ol> |
|--|

#### Implementation

##### **Adventure playground**

18.1.3 The Council made a commitment to installing an adventure playground in Central Park at its 31<sup>st</sup> July 2001 Executive Committee Meeting. A competition was held this summer to find a theme and the winning theme was 'the Seven Continents'. It is proposed to locate the playground adjacent to the swimming pool and the target date for installation is summer 2002.

##### **Toddler play**

18.1.4 It is proposed to create two new toddler facilities north and south of the park.

##### **Removal of existing playgrounds**

18.1.5 It is proposed to remove the existing playgrounds as and when new play facilities are installed.

### 18.2 ALLOTMENTS

18.2.1 The objectives of the Council's Allotment Strategy are:

- (a) Full and fruitful occupation of existing allotment plots
- (b) Encouragement of increased use of allotments by disadvantaged and under-represented people in the community
- (c) Improvement of allotments as a facility
- (d) Improve communications with users and interested parties
- (e) Promote and encourage sustainable methods of gardening
- (f) Promote and encourage accommodation and appreciation of wildlife
- (g) Maximise alternative sources of funding and ground work assistance

18.2.1 At Central Park there are four allotment sites offering a total of 229.5 plots. The sites are centrally located in areas of high density housing where access to cultivable

private garden space is limited. However, there is poor vehicular access to the sites which hinders many allotment tenants and makes maintaining the sites expensive.

18.2.2 The allotments are well used with an average occupancy rate of 84.5%. However, some sites still appear untidy and under utilised, which contributes to giving them a poor reputation. This could be explained by the fact that whilst interest in taking up allotments is demonstrably high, turnover on some plots is also high and some plots are underused by tenants. There is an opportunity to address this by the provision of smaller more manageable plots. Also, poor security provision resulting in shed break-ins, shed fires and the theft of crops could deter people from cultivating their plots. There is an urgent need to improve the security of the allotment sites and in particular, the Central Park and Peverell Park Road sites where most incidences of vandalism have taken place.

18.2.3 The take up of allotments is still primarily by older men. There is an opportunity to widen the use of allotments by under-represented and disadvantaged sectors of the community.

18.2.4 During October 2001 an Allotment Tenants Survey was sent to all allotment holders across the city and 45 Central Park allotment holders put forward suggestions for improving the allotments, the most common of which were:

- Improved security
- Improved vehicular access
- Better maintenance
- Clearing unused plots, cutting back hedges
- Manageable plots for older people, people with disabilities and new plot holders
- Equipment hire
- Bulk manure, organic recycling dump
- More gardening advice
- Promotion of allotments

#### 18.2.5 **Action Points**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To improve site security</li><li>2. Improvement of allotments as a facility</li><li>3. To improve the management and general upkeep of the allotments</li><li>4. To increase the take up and retention of allotments, particularly by disadvantaged and under represented people in the community</li><li>5. Promote and encourage sustainable methods of gardening</li><li>6. To promote and encourage the accommodation and appreciation of wildlife</li></ol> |
|---|

#### **Implementation**

18.2.6 To develop and address the action points, funding will be sought from the New Opportunities Fund (Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities) Social Economic and Environmental Development (SEED) Grant Programme. Projects will be developed in partnership with the allotment holders and will need to demonstrate strategic links with local partners and plans.

18.2.7 The projects could include:

- (a) Security improvements such as new fencing and the development of an allotment watch scheme
- (b) Increased vehicular access to allotments, new water taps
- (c) The development of allotment associations at the Central Park, Barn Park and Peverell Park Road allotment sites and equipping all allotment associations with the necessary skills to take on the day to day management of the allotments themselves, should they so wish.



- (d) Smaller, more manageable starter plots, modifications of plots to cater for people with disabilities.
- (e) The sustainable use of resources, including the development of a tool sharing scheme, community composting, the promotion of the wise use of water and general awareness raising literature and events
- (f) Practical conservation tasks to raise awareness of and enhance local biodiversity including:
  - The development of a community wildlife garden on unused allotment land south of Swarthmore allotments
  - The construction of beetle banks
  - The planting of dense shrubbery fencing around allotment sites (would also have security benefits)

### 18.3 RECREATION OUTPUTS

- Regional Adventure Playground to be installed
- Two new informal toddler play facilities installed
- All play equipment within Central Park to be kite marked to European Playground Safety Standard EN 1176. Kickabout to be installed
- All Playground surfacing in Central Park to comply with BS EN 1177:1998
- Allotments to be improved

### 18.4 TIMESCALES AND LEAD DEPARTMENT

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Lead Department
<b>PLAYGROUNDS</b>					
Adventure Play					Development (S.P.U)
Toddler Play (North)					Development (S.P.U)
Toddler Play (South)					Development (S.P.U)
<b>ALLOTMENTS</b>					
Improvements to Allotments					D.S.D (Street Services) Parks

### 18.5 COSTINGS

	Estimated Total Project Cost
<b>PLAYGROUNDS</b>	
Adventure Playground	£400,000
Toddler Play (North)	£60,000
Toddler Play (South)	£60,000
Playground removal	£37,200
<b>ALLOTMENTS</b>	
Improvements to Allotments	£150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£707,200</b>

### 18.6 ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

To be identified

## 19.0 PARK FACILITIES

### 19.1 TOILETS AND PAVILION

19.1.1 It is proposed to improve toilets and construct a new pavilion

### 19.1.2 **Action Points**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | To improve the quality of toilet provision |
| 2. | To construct a new pavilion                |

### **Implementation**

#### **Demolition of existing toilet blocks**

19.1.3 The existing toilet blocks are in bad repair, poorly sited and have been subject to abuse. It is considered preferable to demolish the toilets and re-site them elsewhere. New toilets are proposed in the new pavilion next to the adventure playground, in the proposed car park at Peverell Park Corner and at a location in the south of the park possibly near, or within, the existing sports pavilion. To prevent future misuse of the toilets, consideration is being given to the provision of 'super-loos'.

#### **New Pavilion**

19.1.4 It is proposed to construct a new pavilion adjacent to the proposed adventure playground.

19.1.5 The pavilion has the potential to include:

- A base for the supervisors of the playground, the park ranger service, and the pitch and put operator.
- An outdoor café facility
- Toilet facilities
- First aid facility

### 19.2 **FACILITIES OUTPUTS**

- Improved toilets
- New pavilion

### 19.3 **TIMESCALES AND LEAD DEPARTMENT**

	2001/2002	2002/03	2003-04	2004-5	Lead Department
Toilets					DSD (Street Services)
Pavilion					Development (SPU)

### 19.4 **COSTINGS**

	Total Project Cost
Toilets	£300,000
Pavilion	£180,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£480,000</b>

### 19.5 **ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES**

To be identified.

## **20.0 STATUS AND IMAGE**

20.1 Central Park is highly regarded by the people of Plymouth. However, in common with many urban parks across the country, it has suffered from continuing cutbacks in provision for its maintenance and development. As a consequence, much of it has now unfortunately become mundane or run down. There is now an opportunity to turn the fortunes of the park around, given the priority the Council has given to

improving the park and the significant capital it is prepared to spend on it. It is important that the improvements to the green spaces are carried out to a recognised high standard, that visitors to the park are better informed about what they can do there and that the park is properly supervised and maintained.

#### 20.1.2 **Action Points**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To ensure that the improvements to the green spaces are carried out to a recognised high standard</li><li>2. To ensure that the park is adequately supervised</li><li>3. To promote and market the park as a leisure and recreational facility of regional significance.</li></ol> |
|---|

#### **Implementation**

##### **Green Flag Scheme**

- 20.1.3 The Green Flag Park Awards scheme was launched in 1996. It was designed to recognise and encourage good quality public parks, children's play spaces and open spaces. The award is now the national benchmark by which the quality of public parks can be measured.
- 20.1.4 The Government in its Urban White Paper backs the development and expansion of the Green Flag Park Award as part of its increased commitment to improvement of the public realm and green spaces, which is a cornerstone of the Urban White Paper.
- 20.1.5 The Green Flag Park Award is managed by the Civic Trust. It sets standards for management and promotes the value of parks as social spaces as well as places for walking, play, for informal sports and for contact with the natural world. It is entirely compatible with national and local government focus on 'Best Value'.
- 20.1.6 The key criteria against which applications for the Green Flag Park Award are judged are:
- A Welcoming Place
  - Healthy, Safe and Secure
  - Clean and Well Maintained
  - Sustainability
  - Conservation and Heritage
  - Community Involvement
  - Marketing
  - Management
- 20.1.7 Wherever possible, actions to meet these criteria have been included in this Action Plan.
- 20.1.8 The award is given for 3 years, but renewal needs to be applied for each year. A new application will be required after three years.
- 20.1.9 Recipients of the Green Flag Park Award are entitled to fly an official green flag as a visible mark of success. The green flag logo can also be used on promotional material and other relevant items such as vehicles, uniforms, stationary etc. for the duration for which the park holds the award.
- 20.1.10 It is recommended that all improvements to the green spaces of Central Park be carried out paying due regard to the requirements of the Green Flag scheme where appropriate and that once the improvements are complete, Green Flag Status be sought.

### Expansion of the park ranger service

- 20.1.11 During public consultation, the most common request was for increased policing of Central Park, preferably by a team of dedicated park rangers.
- 20.1.12 The City already has a park ranger service in place, formed from the merging of the park attendants and the foreshore service. It consists of eight permanent park rangers, six seasonal rangers and one ranger working on various projects relating to schools and community groups. However, this service is spread very thinly across the City's 28 parks, 35 playing fields and 170 playgrounds.
- 20.1.13 It is recommended that Central Park has its own workforce of three or four dedicated park rangers. The responsibilities of whom could include:
- To be a security force and a presence in the park
  - To be a contact point for help or advice
  - Liaison with dog wardens and the police where necessary
  - To supervise park facilities such as the proposed adventure playground
  - Litter picking and general maintenance
  - Graffiti removal
  - Guided walks

### Closed Circuit Television

- 20.1.14 In order to improve security within certain danger 'hot spots' it is proposed to include an element of CCTV. This could link with CCTV facilities proposed for the new buildings within the park

### Marketing and promotion of the park

- 20.1.15 Once the improvements proposed in this Action Plan are put in place, Plymouth will have a park of regional significance which is capable of attracting visitors from across the City and beyond. It is recommended that the park be promoted as a City tourist attraction. This will require the production of a marketing strategy for the park.

## 20.2 STATUS AND IMAGE OUTPUTS

- Green Flag status for Central Park
- A dedicated team of Central Park Rangers
- Production of a marketing strategy
- Promotion of the park, resulting in additional visitors to the City
- Improved signage within the park

## 20.3 TIMESCALES AND LEAD DEPARTMENTS

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Lead Department
Green Flag				D.S.D(Street Services)
Wardens				D.S.D(Street Services)
CCTV				Development (SPU)
Promotion				Development(EDUR)

## 20.4 COSTINGS

	Total project cost
CCTV	£180,000

## **Revenue**

- 20.4.1 Achieving and maintaining Green Flag Award status will require the park to be maintained to a high standard. It is inevitable that the improved park will have a higher maintenance burden than is currently the case. However, it is not possible to determine the additional level of maintenance until the projects outlined in this Action Plan are further developed. A report will need to follow on this matter. Opportunities for business sponsorship will be explored e.g. of planting beds, the ranger service.
- 20.4.2 Subject to the principle of a dedicated Central Park Warden Service being agreed, a separate report to Committee will follow outlining further details of the proposed ranger service and the likely revenue implications.

## **20.5 ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES TO BE INVESTIGATED**

To be identified

## **21.0 SURVEYS**

21.1 A number of surveys not mentioned above will need to be carried out

### **Action Points**

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|---|
| 1. To carry out required surveys to inform the design process |
|---|

### **Implementation**

20.3 Required surveys will include:

- Topographical Survey
- Tree Survey
- Contamination survey/trial pits/bore holes for sports centre and adventure playground
- Playing pitch survey
- Arts survey

## **22.0 MANAGEMENT**

22.1 The future management of Central Park needs to be carefully considered if the value gained by the improvements proposed in this Action Plan are not to be eroded.

### **Action Points:**

- |   |
|---|
| 1. The development of a Management Plan for the park          |
| 2. To create a dedicated Central Park maintenance budget      |
| 3. To increase to revenue generating capabilities of the park |

20.3 The above action points require further consideration during the project development.

## **23.0 NEXT STEPS**

23.1 It is proposed that the following steps take place to allow the delivery of this project:

- Inform public of the contents of the Action Plan through public exhibitions in the area and encourage active involvement of local people in its implementation
- Pursue external funding sources to supplement the City Council's own commitment to the Action Plan proposals

- Develop each of the proposals in detail in consultation with the relevant agencies and interests as outlined in the Action Plan