

# 142 Enviropark, North Harbour, Portsmouth



The Paulsgrove landfill site has blighted the entrance to the Portsmouth for over 30 years. However, with tipping and capping to be completed by 2008, there is now an unrivalled opportunity to create a landmark park at the gateway to the city.

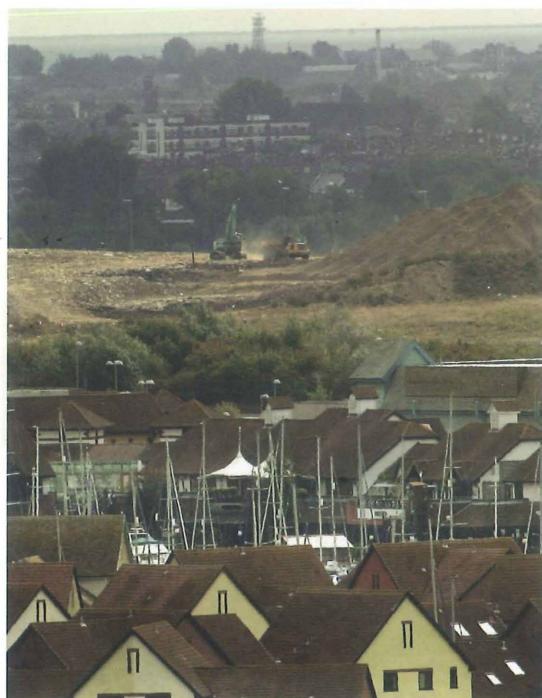
Under existing planning obligations, the landfill operator is to restore the area to grassland

with path routes and 30% woodland before handing the site back to Portsmouth City Council as public open space. The bold new landform's 'greening' can only be seen as an excellent improvement on the previous tip and will instantly provide a 5% increase to this densely populated city's open space. The scheme is, however, felt to be unambitious and could waste a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a project of far-reaching vision and benefit.

In early 2001 the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Partnership (an organisation set up specifically to link local businesses and local government in the pursuit of regenerating the city) turned its attention to the wider locality and the possibilities of a major gateway park with a vision to put Portsmouth on the map.

Early concepts envisaged innovative new technology and energy-efficient buildings for education and commercial uses, in a community parkland that could itself be a showcase for environmental sustainability and technology.

The ability to meet the needs of the local community and also aspire to being of wider importance is a key starting point to the Enviropark vision. The site is set out in the local plan as public open space and has to fulfill objectives for a multi-functional park allowing a variety of amenity use, nature conservation and help in reduction of social exclusion and poverty. Taking it up a notch to becoming a wider attraction must not exclude these objectives. The theme of environment and sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is appropriate to underpin such multilayered proposals, applicable as it is to all society. The options that then open up for such a theme become endless and provide opportunities for a massive variety of uses. A diverse landscape of hills, valleys, waterbodies, woodland and open fields provides a variety of habitat and opportunity for recreation, walks, trails and meeting and performance space. There are also opportunities for inspiration, education and research, woodland crafts, sculpture and art trails, wildlife trails, fitness trails, adventure





play, integrated sustainable energy and drainage systems, variously managed grasslands and outdoor educational and exhibition areas.

Built facilities within the park could offer points of arrival and major amenity hubs. Distinct opportunities for built elements offer the opportunities for exemplary state-of-the-art environmentally friendly technology buildings.

Although boundaries need to be secured in the interests of safety and management, entry should be free for all the purposes of both peaceful and active recreation, but it is felt there is no harm charging for the car parking in an Enviropark. Revenue would come from building uses, activities and special events. The park's position at the city gateway, and the water's edge ensures an aspect that

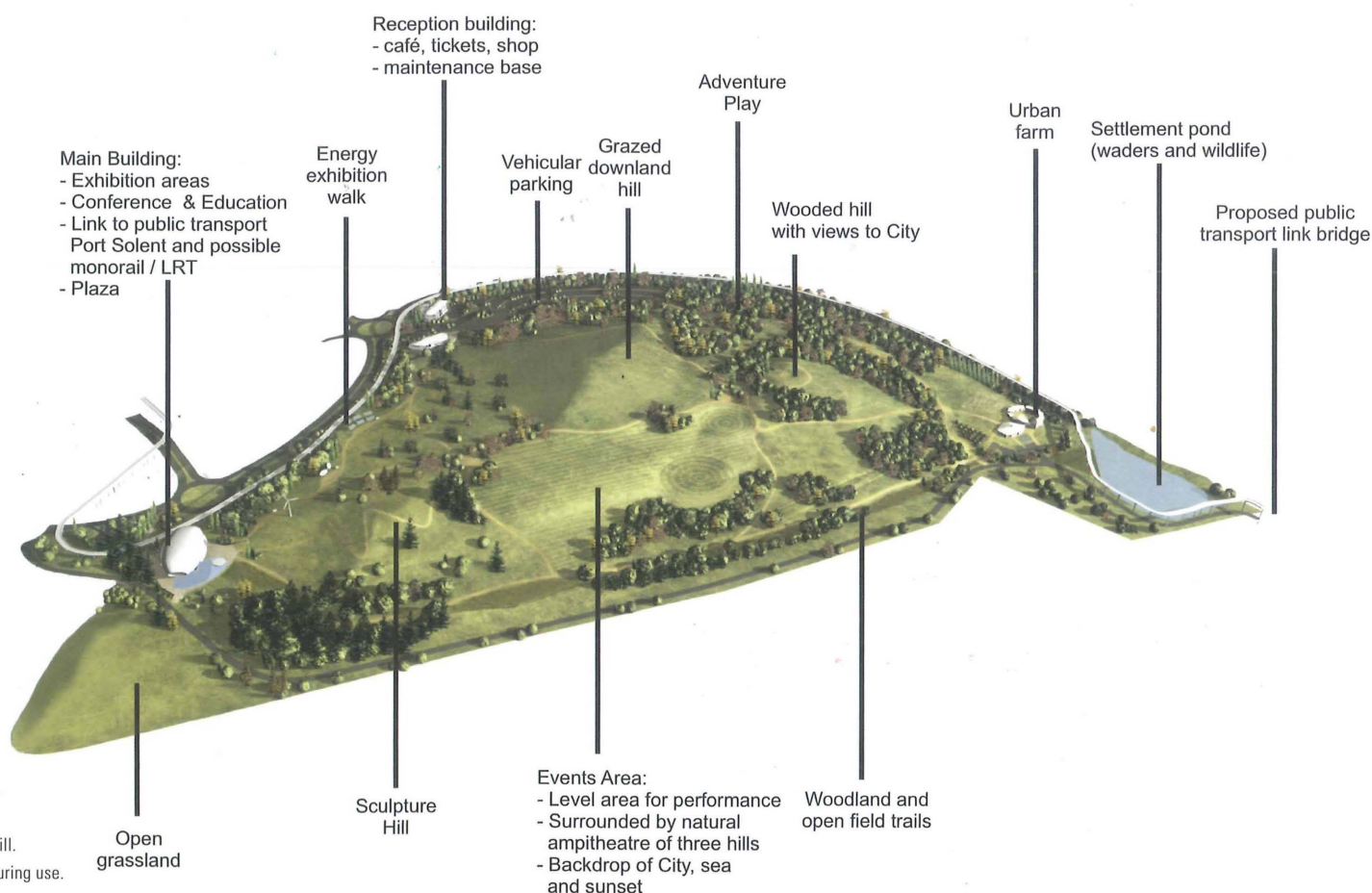
is bound to attract visitors. Its immediate proximity to the leisure hub of Port Solent, local hotels, industry and transport network can only enhance its location, giving a new focus to the northern part of the City balancing the recent southern harbour regeneration of Gunwharf, with the Spinnaker Tower.

The Partnership and the design team are committed to inclusive community involvement in designing, implementing and managing elements within the park and the Enviropark project has been through a long periods of consultation, with local authority officers, politicians, local community groups, schools, environmental interest groups and local press. Nearly all who are consulted are excited by the opportunity, and eager to back the scheme, with the MoD offer of increased access to the shoreline and a waterbody for occasional

aquatic events.

The main issue is funding. While there are numerous avenues for small amounts, this size of project requires substantial input. There is no money available from Council sources. The National Lottery Living Landmarks project, offering funding up to £25 million and keen to reward community consultation and outcomes, was announced in 2005 seemingly fitting the scale and aspirations of the Enviropark well. However the bid was unsuccessful despite a strong, robust presentation.

This has been disappointing and other funding sources will need to be pursued with equal vigour. The scheme could have a significant effect on the landscape of one of the south's leading cities and financial backing must be generated elsewhere to turn vision into reality.



(left top) Photomontage top of hill.

(left bottom) Image of landfill during use.

(this page) The new park.



