

Chapter 11 Development Principle 8: Improving education for all

Primary and secondary schools serving the St Peter Ward have to contend with much higher levels of social deprivation (as indicated by free school meal eligibility), pupil mobility and special educational needs than schools in other parts of the City. Such factors have been shown to have a negative impact on pupil attainment. Consequently, in Key Stage 2 SATs and at GCSE level, pupil attainment in local schools is generally well below that of others in the City and the national average, with the exception of St Joseph's RC Primary School, which takes pupils from a wider area.

All local schools are part of a wider Education Action Zone, which aims to address school performance and pupil attainment. Initiatives include setting up after school clubs and the creation of the Music Zone at Brickfields.

Further education opportunities are provided nearby at Plymouth College of Further Education, where there are links into community initiatives, and at Plymouth College of Art and Design. Building on such links to improve adult education is an important part of the overall education strategy. Currently one in four adults has low or very low numeracy and literacy, which is above the UK average. Improving support services is also a key area for attention. At present there are approximately 200 nursery places in the area. There is also a library facility located in Devonport Guildhall, but it is considered inadequate.

A range of education-related issues have been highlighted by local people for attention, as summarised below.

Education issues identified by local people

(source: PCM Theme Day)

- Poor communication across the Devonport community and negative perceptions limit joint working and undermines local business opportunities
- Exceptionally high level of need in relation to entry level attainment and high numbers of children with special educational needs
- Lack of out of school activities for children and young people
- Lack of appropriate careers guidance
- Lack of opportunities for parental involvement - influenced by lack of adult skills and limited access to childcare and classroom volunteering
- Few opportunities for people of all ages to get involved in a broad range of cultural/leisure activities
- Local services not always geared to residents' needs
- Inconsistent access to pre-nursery support inhibits the development of children
- The BME community feel under-valued and language difficulties create barriers to accessing services
- Lack of awareness of equal opportunities
- Little knowledge amongst the community of the history of immigrants
- Value of celebrating success is not recognised

The DRC has set a series of objectives for tackling these and identified Key Stage 2 as an education target for focused attention.

DRC Objective

- To improve involvement in and performance of educational provision for children, young people and adults
- To improve access to, and the provision of training for young people and adults
- To improve the availability and provision of support services, such as childcare and care provision, that enables a flexible approach to both employment and training
- Provide incentives and goals for the individual development of young people in the area

DRC target

To improve performance at Key Stage 2 amongst Devonport schools to a level above the Plymouth average

(DRC Key Outcome 1)

Key education proposals

Within this context, there are four principal ways that the Development Framework provides the physical setting to facilitate this improvement:

1. By providing the framework for improvement to existing schools, such as the refurbishment of Mount Wise Primary School;
2. providing a series of options for extended schools provision (discussed below);
3. Building in a series of potential support services, linked to training and skills development (see Chapter 12), including
 - A potential 'incubator centre' or 'enterprise centre';
 - A potential new library or 'Ideas Store', which could embrace IT, a performance / arts centre, local studies centre, a community café etc. This could involve the merger of Devonport and Stoke libraries into one more significant resource centre. Different locational options should be considered as part of the asset management review (see Chapter 7). In principle is recommended that this facility form part of the critical mass of activities earmarked for the Storage Enclave; and
 - Expanded childcare provision, which could include a new exemplar neighbourhood nursery building;

4. demolition and redevelopment of Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre in line with recent community consultation. A new youth centre and community centre is required. Consideration should be given to these being mixed-use projects, with flats above where compatible to enhance natural surveillance and potentially aid funding. A potential solution could be to establish a dedicated youth centre alongside the primary school on the former brewery site and replace the existing Neighbourhood Centre with a much higher quality facility as part of a mixed-use scheme.

5. Improving the range, quality and accessibility of sports and recreational facilities (see Chapter 10).

Improving educational facilities

Work is ongoing between the Local Education Authority (LEA), local schools, the DRC and other partners to determine the most appropriate range of measures for improving educational attainment in Devonport. This should be considered in relation to not only existing needs, but within the context of projections to increase Devonport's population and over time re-balance its demographic profile.

As part of this review the LEA will need to assess the spatial requirements that flow from the different educational models that could be considered. This has yet to be confirmed and so the DDF needs to retain the flexibility to incorporate a range of outcomes.

The LEA has advised that the Government is promoting the 'extended schools' initiative. This envisages the creation of a new type of educational resource - one that is open from perhaps 7:30am to 7:30pm - and potentially delivers education through a variety of inter-linked facilities, which could be located on several sites across the area. Importantly, the concept embraces wrap around care and skills development, and so also has a major part to play in achieving DRC job creation and skills development targets. Wrap around care would provide for the educational and training needs of 0 to 16 year old children, as well as adult education classes and vocational training for school leavers. Strong connections between schools and further education providers nearby would be established. To realise the concept of a 'federation of educational facilities' in Devonport would require extensive discussion with the schools, governors, parents, teachers and pupils.

The range of partners involved have yet to confirm whether they wish to pursue the 'extended schools' concept and the range of planning and design issues that different models could raise. It is therefore clear that the DDF needs to:

- a) provide the ability for the upgrading of existing school sites, should this be preferred; and
- b) enable the option of developing additional sites for expanded educational provision to be considered. In this context, the community asset management review should consider the suitability of the range of existing and proposed community facilities (including the potential re-use of Listed Buildings) to incorporate smaller educational uses such as a nursery. The DDF should also incorporate sufficient flexibility to enable new larger educational facilities to be provided, should it be determined that this is the most effective way of achieving DRC education targets. With this in mind, it is recommended that the MoD Mount Wise site be given a 'mixed use' planning designation, including potential educational use.



Priority Actions for Applying Principle 8

- *Undertake detailed investigation into the potential for applying the 'extended schools' concept to Devonport and implications for land use planning*
- *Confirm the potential funding and delivery of a new library or 'Ideas Store'*
- *Pursue proposals for redeveloping Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre with regard to the potential for integrating this into a new mixed-use project*