

	Agenda Item	3
Meeting	Plymouth Growth Board	
LSP Visionary Goal and Priority Objective	A wealthy city which creates and shares prosperity	
Responsible Officer	David Draffan: PGB Co-ordinator	
Title	Participation Review	
Purpose of Item	To provide members with the results of the Participation theme review of the LES.	
Recommendations	<p>Growth Board members are requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the contents of the report • agree the name change for this theme • agree the recommendations for amending the Action Plan 	
Date	23 May 2011	

Local Economic Strategy Review 4: Participation
23 May 2011

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Plymouth Growth Board (PGB), on the 28 February 2011 it was agreed to carry out a review of the Participation Theme of the Local Economic Strategy (LES) to ensure that the associated objectives and measures contained within the Action Plan are relevant and 'fit for purpose'.
- 1.2 It was agreed that Roger Pipe, the voluntary representative, take responsibility for the review of this theme. A small group was established of key partners to identify, through a meeting, the various changes required. This group consisted of Roger Pipe (Millfields/PGB Sponsor), Jacki Williams (JCP), Mark Looker (PCC Economic Development), Kathy McHugo (PCC Children's Services) and Candice Sainsbury (PCC Children's Services). Assistance has been provided to the group by Jeffery Kenyon (PCC Economic Development Co-ordinator).

2.0 Review Process

- 2.1 The LES was adopted in October 2006 and its Action Plan amended and updated in August 2009. The current Action Plan for Participation reads as follows:

4. Participation
4.1. Gaining a better understanding of the problem
4.1.1. Establish a 'City Observatory'
4.1.2. Establish and service a 'Skills Board'
4.2. Increasing the employability of adults and young people
4.2.1. Work with multi-agency teams in areas
4.2.2. Increase childcare provision
4.2.3. Create programmes to support carers
4.2.4. Create programmes to support lone parents into training and employment
4.2.5. Intermediate Labour Markets
4.2.6. Support the expansion of existing programmes
4.2.7. Helping people sustain employment
4.2.8. Encourage take up of work by local people
4.3. Use neighbourhood management to tackle exclusion
4.3.1 Extend neighbourhood management across deprived wards

Extract from LES Action Plan

- 2.2 The Participation Theme review is the fourth out of five with only Centres remaining. The themes and discussions around the reviews have all been interrelated and participation is no exception to this.

- 2.3 Through the small discussion groups that were held the purpose of the participation theme and the current actions were tested to establish whether they are still current and core to the PGB aim of delivering growth and slimming down the action plan to key activities that work towards this aim. Some were felt to now be irrelevant.
- 2.4 A number of broad themes were explored in the sessions:
- What is meant by the term 'participation'?
 - Different age groups and their issues
 - Different family structures and their issues
 - Provision of business support, and entrepreneurship and enterprise in the context of participation

What is Participation?

- 2.5 In order to clearly understand the activities encompassed within this theme and ensure any new actions are compliant, a clear definition needs to be set as to what is meant by 'participation'. There is felt to be some confusion over this term and given that the key focus of the PGB is now on economic issues, the term is now more closely related to this rather than being more broad. The term is felt to encapsulate seeking to engage all people within the labour market and refers to both people accessing employment and other opportunities as well as employers.
- 2.6 It is therefore proposed to amend the theme heading to 'Economic Inclusion'. This highlights the economic link of the theme as well as encompassing both employers and (potential) employees.

Age Groups

- 2.7 The current Action Plan is felt to be very adult focussed with few actions aimed at engaging younger people or providing for early interventions. Given the current levels of unemployment, with particular focus on the under 24s and over 50s, it was felt that actions needed to respond more to the needs across the age spectrum.
- 2.8 A number of the current activities in the Action Plan are statutory actions that the City Council needs to provide. As such their inclusion in the LES Action Plan may not be warranted. Actions such as childcare provision may be statutory but their provision is not necessarily a core activity for the LES; members need to be aware of this need as well as others, and push for it but the PGB does not need to assume the lead for this.

Family Structures

- 2.9 Current changes to welfare benefits will mean that more people will be deemed able to work; this is especially so for Lone Parents and those claiming a health related benefit. The provision of help, support and information to these people is key.

- 2.10 There are also a small number of families who have multiple barriers to employment and who have persistently not engaged in the workplace. Whilst it may be beyond the scope of this review to tackle this underlying problem the key issue will be to engage with the children to ensure that they break this cycle and take part in work. This will only happen over the longer term. Some work to embed this could start to take place.
- 2.11 A final group who may also require additional help and advice are individuals and families who have never been unemployed in the past. They may be unsure of who to contact or how to access the system. Many of them may find jobcentres threatening. Careful thought should be given of how to provide information to this group in appropriate ways as this is likely to be a group that will increase in number due to the threat of job losses in the public sector where people have generally felt more secure.

Business Support and Entrepreneurship

- 2.12 There is a strong push currently for business start-up and growth, which is reflected in the LES. Similarly, the Government is rolling out a number of initiatives related to enterprise and entrepreneurship as a way of creating new jobs (e.g. Regional Growth Fund, Enterprise Zones, Enterprise Clubs and the New Enterprise Allowance. Through discussions a number of issues were raised about this.
- 2.13 It is acknowledged that Plymouth has been poor at creating business start-ups. This has been helped by initiatives such as ERDF Urban Enterprise which has this as one of its strands. This is also enhanced by its inclusion in the LES.
- 2.14 Although the whole agenda was welcomed and there are mechanisms in place - be they through central government or more locally (through Urban Enterprise) - it was felt that there is a disconnect between some of the institutes offering support in Plymouth and the people who may wish to access such services. For example, the University of Plymouth provides business support but how inclusive is this for smaller businesses? Does the UoP signpost to other organisations and similarly do organisations such as Outset Plymouth signpost relevant businesses to UoP? There was a feeling that as the University by its nature is academic that this may make people feel excluded from accessing support that they may offer. Work into who provides what information, an ability to access this at any of the organisations and to be directed to the correct type for your business would be essential in ensuring that those people looking to start-up are able to access facilities relevant to them. We do have a very active First Steps to Self Employment Network in Plymouth, who have mapped out all the support available. This information is housed on Plymouth City Council

website¹, and we have also put on four events in the city in partnership and have an enterprise marquee at event 12 May.

- 2.15 This issue of disconnect has been previously raised as part of the Business Theme review with corresponding actions.

Current Initiatives

- 2.16 There are also a whole range of activities and initiatives currently underway to help people back into work offered under the 'Get Britain Working' initiative which are overseen by Jobcentre Plus. Different schemes are also open to different people depending on their length of time out of work. The Work Programme, details of which are yet to be published (in terms of what it means in Plymouth) in the main starts when people reach 9 or 12 of unemployment. All out of work benefit claimants will be eligible at some point of their claim, including many who have been without support to get back to work for many years. Plymouth has a good track record of getting people back into employment before this deadline.
- 2.17 Prior to a person moving on to the Work Programme the following activities are available to job-seekers. Once unemployed for longer the Work Programme activities, provided by external providers as yet to be identified, are deployed.):

Work Clubs and Enterprise Clubs – informal groups of people who get together to encourage each other and share advice and techniques for accessing jobs and starting businesses respectively. There are a number of these in Plymouth at present.

New Enterprise Allowance – This is to help unemployed people to start up a new business. There will be an element of flexibility with regard to benefits payments.

Work Together – volunteering by the unemployed to gain and maintain skills.

Work Experience – offering 18-24 yr olds the opportunity to undertake work experience for a period of 2-8 weeks. This gives them an insight into what is expected in the world of work. There is also the option to morph a work placement into an apprenticeship.

Service Academies – these are still to be determined but will provide for sector-based pre-employment training and placements.

¹ Self Employment Provision - <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/selfemployment>

Mandatory Work Activity- Customers will be referred when they have demonstrated that they require support to gain work related disciplines and re-engage in their search for work.

- 2.18 As well as these activities, which can be tailored to meet the local circumstances, there are a number of other activities that JC+ supply and signposts to people not in work.

3.0 Discussion

3.1 From this issues raised in Section 2 above it may be seen that a number of revised actions and focus could be employed to ensure that the Participation theme Action Plan is fit for purpose. In doing this work it became apparent that a number of action areas are already encapsulated within actions identified through the Business and Skills reviews. All the actions within the Action Plan should strive to achieve the aims of the LES so this situation is understandable.

3.2 Actions under this theme need to relate specifically to the person and their ability to find and enter into work. It should also be recognised that there will be additional activities undertaken by other services on a statutory basis that will aid this but that these are not specifically included as actions here. Work will continue to ensure that Council services work better together and are aware of these areas of overlap.

3.3 The actions identified below are therefore new actions specifically for this theme (the rationale has been italicised; the suggested deliverer is in bold):

4. Economic Inclusion
4.1. Increase employability for all
4.1.1 Develop Worklessness Plan for Plymouth area <i>PCC Worklessness Co-ordinator to write a plan, with the aid of a steering group, and co-ordinate with business to provide for opportunities for those furthest from the labour market to gain experience, skills and positions with local businesses and organisations. This work will help to re-engage people and provide them with relevant skills to successfully enter employment.</i>
4.1.2 Ensure appropriate information available of how to access services available to those unemployed or at threat of unemployment <i>Information about how to access services, such as enterprise and work clubs, jobcentre support, PCC services as well as others, needs to be made easy to access and unthreatening. These sorts of services are provided by a number of partners.</i>
4.2 Inclusivity
4.2.1 Ensure the inclusion of local opportunities for local people when preparing funding bids, assessing planning applications

*Access to funding and other sources of investment are currently limited. However, there are a number of sources – such as RGF, EZs, Plymouth Growth Fund – that are designed to help people start-up businesses and get into employment; these should be exploited and efforts made to ensure that the benefits are felt for Plymothians, especially in the needier communities of the city. Bids have been co-ordinated through **PGB, PCCI, LEP and PCC**. **Businesses** applying for these funds, such as RGF, should also bear this in mind.*

*With respect to Planning Applications, efforts should be made to encourage developers to use local labour and sourcing where this is practically possible. **Jobcentre Plus** are able to provide services to developers to recruit locally: this should be encouraged.*

4.3 Co-ordination

4.3.1 Greater co-ordination and input is required into the Actions identified thus far

As has been identified a number of relevant actions are encompassed by actions identified through the review process. Links therefore need to be made into the following pre-existing actions:

Business Review

1. New start businesses

The need and indeed desire by Government to start new businesses fits well with this theme. The Participation review similarly identified the need to make this option available to people by providing sufficient support and help. There is a need, however, to clearly identify the partners involved, get them to communicate in order to allow potential new businesses to access any of the partners and be correctly signposted.

2. Existing businesses

Through the aftercare programme opportunities to influence businesses to take on new workers from more difficult backgrounds could be pursued to highlight the talent already within Plymouth. This ensures that opportunities are available to local people.

Skills Review

1. Young people offer

There is a strong relationship between the need to catch people young and engage them in the workplace. This action fits well with the need identified in the Participation review. The Worklessness Plan will also pick up these activities

2. Jobseekers and those made redundant.

This fits in well with the need to signpost provision and stop duplication.

3. Adult workforce

Provision of support to the adult workforce and employability skills links through to developing people at all ages to take part in the workforce.

4. Skills in support of economic growth and inward investment

This sits well with the need to start-up and grow businesses (as identified in the Business review).

Recommendations

It is recommended:

1. That the name of the theme be changed to Economic Inclusion
2. That it should be recognised that a number of actions are cross-cutting with other themes
3. To adopt the Action Plan as set out above

Roger Pipe

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Jeffery Kenyon

Economic Development Co-ordinator, PCC support

4 May 2011