

theme 4

Participation

This theme area addresses the following critical success factors for Plymouth:

Participation

- Inclusion and access for all communities
- High levels of economic activity

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The new economic strategy for Plymouth is based, in part, on the simple principle that for sustainable growth to be achieved for the city there needs to be an 'uplift' in participation and income levels locally. This should be driven by a healthy and highly motivated workforce from all communities equipped to participate and contribute to the city's economy and to its quality of life more broadly.

In overall terms, the Plymouth Economic Strategy should seek to achieve a virtuous circle whereby...

...a more competitive city economy will bring about a significant improvement in the circumstances of those living in the poorest wards and this, in turn, reinforces economic growth through greater participation, higher skills levels and higher incomes...

This part of the strategy is based on a review of the quantitative evidence, in particular the Indices of Deprivation 2004 and a range of other secondary data assembled for other strategic and initiatives including; the Regional Economic Strategy, RISE (the Social Enterprise Strategy for the South West) The GOSW Business Plan, the City Council's Corporate Plan, the City Growth Strategy, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, the Devonport Regeneration Company Employment Strategy and, in particular, evidence accrued as part of Plymouth's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative bid. This analysis was augmented by a number of face to face consultations with key agencies and strategic stakeholders and a workshop with community and voluntary sector stakeholders.

As well as effective and unconstrained participation in the labour market, a competitive city is also characterised by participative characteristics more generally. These characteristics might include active involvement in community groups and in local democracy, healthy relationships between businesses and their surrounding communities, a strong and innovative community and voluntary sector, as well as successful social enterprises offering much needed goods and services onto the market particularly in relatively deprived areas.

Additionally, the effective design and delivery of **core services** for all communities is a key prerequisite for high levels of participation. A strong **social infrastructure** that is dynamic and evolves to suit the needs of communities over time is a necessity for resilient economic performance. Plymouth's public sector partners must ensure that individuals are not constrained in accessing core and essential services either due to location or to other socio-economic factors. Opportunities for effective integration of services, co-location of specific functions, as well as suitable models of neighbourhood management should be considered fully.

Social infrastructure also plays a key role in supporting community cohesion and integration. As Plymouth becomes more diverse ethnically and socially, partners must be conscious of the need to ensure that certain groups do not become isolated from the mainstream, increasing their risk of exclusion and worklessness. At present, Plymouth is less segregated on ethnic grounds than other

similarly sized urban areas elsewhere in the UK. Communities must continue to become more mixed in socio-economic terms promoting high levels of cohesion and integration.

It is also vitally important that economic development and regeneration efforts seek to maximise **aspirations** at the community level. Stakeholder consultation has raised a number of concerns around the 'internal' image within the City i.e. that many of Plymouth's residents do not hold a particularly positive view of their home town. This situation is considered to be partly a function of a lengthy economic restructuring process that has had a number of negative consequences, particularly affecting those industries that many communities feel in the past have been part of the City's social make up. Effective actions to create and raise aspirations are important in raising levels of participation and economic activity, generating a higher level of economic performance overall and the achievement of a more competitive city.

Plymouth's bid for Local Enterprise Growth Initiative is based around four building blocks specifically linked to increasing participation in economic activity from the City's most deprived neighbourhoods

- Tackling the inherent lack of aspiration and ambition amongst the residents living in deprived areas.
- Creating the next generation of entrepreneurs from these areas.
- Delivering tailor-made business support.
- Building on Plymouth's excellent reputation in the area of social enterprise and building capacity within the Social Enterprise Sector to increase the number and quality of Social Enterprises within Plymouth.

Economic Inclusion

COMPONENTS

The Economic Inclusion theme of the overall Plymouth Economic Strategy is structured around a set of three principles to guide our approach to tackling socio-economic exclusion across Plymouth. Three key objectives flow from the principles under which the proposed individual actions and measures are structured.

Inclusion Principles

- [1] The strategy is based upon a commitment to inter-agency working and local delivery at the city level, building upon existing efforts of the Plymouth 2020 Partnership.
 - [2] The strategy must facilitate the tailoring of national and regional initiatives to address the needs of Plymouth residents more directly.
 - [3] In order to be successful, the strategy should be based on sustained action over the long-term in order to make a significant impact
- Gaining a **better understanding of the problem**. This may seem obvious, but experience tells us that in order to be effective, measures to tackle economic inclusion must be highly targeted to meet the needs of individuals and must be delivered through intensive outreach. Any intervention must therefore be based on a thorough understanding of the local population.
 - **Increasing employability** of adults and young people across Plymouth. Two programmes of interventions are needed to tackle this: a) a programme directly tackling barriers to the labour market and b) a programme to create 'steps into employment' - a suite of programmes to help people re-enter the labour market over 3 to 5 years. **Worklessness**, including economic inactivity is much higher in Plymouth than the regional or sub-regional average, furthermore levels of worklessness are persistently high in specific neighbourhoods across the city.

- Using **Neighbourhood Management** to tackle economic exclusion. Neighbourhood Management serves to improve the 'liveability' of areas by improving environmental quality (litter, noise pollution), tackling anti social behaviour and most importantly, ensuring services are delivered in a way which meets needs on the ground. Neighbourhood Management is important as it improved the conditions in which people live and therefore improves their chances of successful participation in work or training.