

# SOUTH EAST CORNWALL REGENERATION INTEGRATED AREA PLAN - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. BACKGROUND

South East Cornwall has an economy dominated by small businesses combined with a high reliance on the tourism sector. The industries that have provided its traditional activities (agriculture/horticulture, mining/extraction and fishing) are all in decline or have ceased to exist. Access to higher educational facilities is limited.

The area does not have the obvious and visible unemployment found in the west, but has very persistent pockets of social exclusion and severe actual deprivation in rural settlements and market towns; this is concealed by other factors. There is a frustrating lack of specific data that seriously impedes remedial action, and much of the deprivation in rural parishes is masked by current methods of data collection and analysis.

Small business failure rates are high due to inadequate management skills, under-financing and constricted trading activities.

Poor public transport provision - arguably the worst in Cornwall - reduces access to employment and training, restricts trading potential in local towns and isolates rural communities.

The local retail trading pattern is weakened by intense competition from Plymouth, which offers access to all of the major supermarkets and national chain stores, and is a larger shopping centre with aggressive promotional policies.

On the other hand, the area has opportunities that can be exploited:

- geographically, South East Cornwall is better placed to attract inward investment than many of the more western districts and the eastern end of the district has reasonable road links
- the district has a diverse and highly attractive natural environment, offering many opportunities for high quality tourism development
- the local heritage content is considerable, offering further opportunities
- the small business sector is diverse and combative, providing a firm foundation for trading expansion, sectoral nucleation and self-help networks
- the district has traditionally enjoyed success with festivals, small specialist exhibitions and closely targeted seminars - this sector can be built upon
- there is much variety in primary food production, this offers the opportunity to further develop the processing sector, particularly in the context of tourism and specialist consumer markets
- proximity to Plymouth provides access to a range of enhanced business facilities (research, freighting, education, etc)

The cross cutting themes run throughout the proposed activities and form, metaphorically, a 'central nervous system' to complement the 'backbone' of the strategy.

## 2. STRATEGY

In order to achieve this (the opportunities above), the IAP seeks to:

- support appraisals across the IAP area to ensure an accurate understanding of all local aspirations, needs and assets and to secure accurate data relating to local socio-economic conditions
- identify persistent pockets of disadvantage and exclusion and target them for specific action
- provide pilot programmes to facilitate inclusion for the young unemployed community

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- facilitate the creation of a 'skill acquisition pathway' enabling beneficiaries of the foregoing actions to progress from exclusion to self-sufficiency
- encourage, and where necessary provide, skill enhancement for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) across all sectors with particular emphasis upon superior quality and Total Quality Management
- work with local SMEs and education providers to facilitate the provision of employee training relevant to local needs and provide gap-filling skills where necessary
- provide skill training and post start-up mentoring for new SME's
- stimulate, encourage and support initiatives which strengthen local retailing, such as town centre management programmes, local produce markets, etc
- encourage and support initiatives which stimulate the processing, utilisation and consumption of locally produced raw materials in all forms
- stimulate all viable forms of diversification within local agriculture and horticulture, and ensure that adequate support, training and advice are locally available to maximise the success of such ventures
- encourage and support local community initiatives which employ local physical and intellectual resources to improve the economic functioning and well-being of the community
- support, develop and professionalise local festivals, trade shows and exhibitions and symposia of various kinds to diversify the visitor base and increase trade to local high streets
- support the formation of local co-operatives and social businesses
- support the development of local centres of excellence and good practice for community regeneration, such as community development trusts and credit unions

To achieve the aims of the IAP it will be necessary to work closely with a range of partner organisations at district, county and regional level to ensure a seamless service without unreasonable duplication.

We will, by definition, act both as a signposting agency and a local provider and will seek to generate new solutions which can be transferred to other local environments and, where relevant, to run pilot schemes on behalf of partner agencies.

### 3. DELIVERY MECHANISM

The IAP will be delivered by the same route, and essentially, the same team that delivered the Caradon LEADER programme. This is:

- A professional core team of 3/4 permanent staff for project development and support. This may be supplemented by specialist facilitators with limited duration tasks (community capacity building; town centre management; festival organisation, etc.).
- Voluntary Management Board of 6/8 members elected by the Local Development Group (LDG);
- A LDG comprising representatives of all active durable local groups and organisations with an interest in economic regeneration. The LDG will be the ultimate authority in operational priorities and project selection.
- A company limited by guarantee will be formed to provide the financially accountable body.

The small business sector (which includes the land-based industries and the tourism sector) is a major factor in the economy of South East Cornwall and therefore holds a primary role in the IAP process. It requires support to meet its full potential as an economic driving force, but it has the capacity to provide employment for the socially excluded, once appropriate skills have been provided.

The voluntary sector in all its guises will be vital to the successful delivery of the IAP. It is a crucial interface with the community and a provider of skills and experience in an accessible form. It is also the major factor in the field of social capital and social enterprise and voluntary organisations therefore enjoy a prominent place in the IAP.

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Skill acquisition will be a major factor in producing the results that the IAP seeks to achieve. It will be necessary to undertake basic confidence building measures to assist the most persistent elements of social exclusion, whilst at the other end of the spectrum, innovative approaches to e-trading will require sophisticated training techniques. The IAP aims to work at the most local level to meet specific needs and ensure equality of access.

These factors are addressed in the form of four **Strategic Drivers**: *Small Business Development; Tackling Social Exclusion; Working through the Natural and Cultural Heritage and Development or Acquisition of Skills*. The Strategic Drivers incorporate the cross cutting themes.

The Strategic Drivers are developed into ten specific areas of activity in the **General Action Plan**, which once again incorporates the cross cutting themes throughout. The General Action Plan provides detailed information on the activities that will be pursued, the beneficiaries and the prospective partnerships. It also covers general outputs and outcomes.

The IAP works in all priorities, but does not cover all measures. Because the area is extremely rich in both natural and built heritage, there are significant opportunities to tackle regeneration through the regional distinctiveness approach, and Priority Five is therefore increasingly used as delivery of the IAP programme progresses.

The programme spend, at £8.554 million over three years is considered to be realistic and reasonable. It reflects the needs and assets found in the area. The principal threat to delivery is the problem of sustaining match funding, the second is the relatively small staff content.

The initiative enjoys substantial support. Sixty-two organisations have already formally taken up membership of the Local Development Group, and a number of others are awaiting periodic meetings to formalise their position.

Ultimately, the IAP is intended to serve the community as a regeneration tool. The aim is to be flexible and accessible and, in the manner of the LEADER programme, to assist local communities to define their own future, and through that, to become more independent in the economic sense.

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