

INTEGRATED PLAN FOR THE CHINA CLAY AREA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The China Clay Area is in the geographical centre of Restormel Borough, to the north of St Austell. It is an area where clay extraction has a major impact on land use, employment and the environment.

Mining, energy and water provide employment for over 19% of those economically active within the China Clay Area (compared to 2.2% of the population of Cornwall). In one of the wards, they account for over 40% of employment. Income levels are generally low in the area, with more than half of households having an income of less than £15,000 per year and more than 30% having an income of less than £10,000 per year. Skills and qualifications are also poor, with only 2.4% of residents of the area holding a degree (compared to 5.2% for Cornwall). Wards in the China Clay Area feature very heavily in the list of the most deprived wards.

The China Clay Area has an important landscape and environment, the extent and coverage of which is reflected by various designations including some: Areas of Great Landscape Value, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Areas of Ancient Woodland, National Nature Reserves, Regionally Important Geological or Geomorphological Sites and Nationally Important Historic Parks and Gardens.

The area has strengths on which it can build, particularly its experience of partnerships and community working through involvement with the China Clay Area LEADER programme. It has a strong cultural identity and a strong community spirit amongst local people. Opportunities are obviously provided through the location of the Eden Project in the area. In addition, the massive volume of china clay waste provides opportunities for added value initiatives, and the landscape provides opportunities for sporting and heritage tourism.

The area plan, therefore, attempts to tackle the difficulties of low incomes, dependence on a declining industry and low skill levels, whilst building on the opportunities outlined above.

The plan sets out a mission for the China Clay Area which is:

To stimulate community led, sustainable actions by harnessing the existing resources of the people, the culture, the identity and the environment of the China Clay Area, focusing on:

- Building the capacity of local people
- Reducing social exclusion, by improving the accessibility to employment, training and appropriate goods and services for local people
- Improving prosperity, leading to an improved quality of life for those living and working in the China Clay Area.

The plan has strategic objectives to:

- Improve the area's natural and built environment, capitalising on the opportunities presented by the legacy from local extractive industries

- Develop and enhance employment opportunities within the area
- Build local capacity and raise skills levels
- Enhance the cultural identity, image and distinctiveness of the area, through the development of the arts and cultural industries
- Encourage the development of the social economy of the area
- Improve access to employment, training and community services for socially excluded groups
- Improve the opportunities for young people and to engage them in the community development process.

The actions that are proposed to achieve these objectives are outlined under four general headings:

Infrastructure development, focusing on

- Removal/re-use of china clay waste and land restoration and re-use
- Improvements to the natural and built environment – to increase pride of place amongst local residents and attract additional visitors
- Transportation infrastructure – particularly developing the rail infrastructure to provide increased business and employment opportunities
- Industrial heritage and tourism support.

Business development, focusing on:

- Small business support - reflecting the area's heavy dependence on micro-businesses
- Support for the agricultural sector - and particularly in adding value to food processing
- Support to encourage local sourcing
- Support to develop e-commerce and ICT – particularly a network of village based computer terminals providing remote access
- Support for arts and cultural industries - particularly focusing on events to raise the area's profile and encourage visitors
- Film and media sector development – particularly taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the unique landscape.

People development, focusing on:

- Vocational training – improving the skills levels of local people
- Special measures for socially excluded groups.

Community development, focusing on:

- Capacity building - to develop the networks required to deliver projects
- Local appraisals and feasibility studies – to enable parish or village based projects to progress
- Local recycling initiatives – particularly creating a locally based community business in this area
- Improved community facilities - to underpin training and capacity building measures
- Community enterprise development.

The Area Plan forecasts a relatively flat profile of spend over the three year period - the profile in years 1, 2 and 3 being £655K, £576K and £620K. This is because the infrastructure is largely in place due to the China Clay LEADER project and the area will therefore be able to “hit the ground running”. Of this, administration is expected to account for £50K per annum on average.

The Integrated Area Plan will be delivered using the LEADER model, involving a broad based Local Development Group in key decision making.

The delivery of the programme will be linked to the delivery of a broader strategy for the borough, also including:

- The St Austell Bay Area IAP
- The Newquay and its Rural Hinterland IAP.

The Restormel Regeneration Partnership (a company limited by guarantee) will ensure a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of these three plans, as well as employing all staff required to deliver the IAP, liaising with GOSW regarding approval of the IAP and overseeing the strategic direction of the Objective One Community Regeneration Programme.