

TOWARDS PROSPERITY FOR PENWITH INTEGRATED AREA PLAN – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

This submission for financial support from Objective One is put forward by Penwith District Council on behalf of the 'Towards Prosperity for Penwith' (TTP) Steering Group, which is committed to securing the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the district as a whole, but particularly those areas of severe deprivation. The total value of funds sought from Objective One is £7.2 million over a three-year period.

'Towards Prosperity for Penwith' is focused on achieving a more integrated approach to the economic, physical and social regeneration of the district, based on a detailed analysis of need (defined both geographically and thematically).

Its aim is to produce and facilitate a strategy that will significantly contribute to the prosperity of the district for the benefit of this and future generations, generating wealth and employment in an area which suffers from persistently high levels of unemployment, low wages/skills levels and significant concentrations of both urban and rural deprivation.

Unemployment rates within the district in June 2000 stood at 6.1%, significantly higher than the rate for both Cornwall and the UK as a whole (4.1% and 3.7% respectively). The 2000 Index of Local Conditions ranked the district 25th most deprived out of the 354 English districts (based on an average ward ranking) and pockets of deprivation are evident at both ward and sub-ward level.

Analysis of deprivation across Cornwall to support the Single Programming Document (Atlantic Consultants, 1999) highlighted Penzance West, East and Central wards and St Ives North as among the ten most deprived wards, and analysis undertaken by Penwith Housing Association suggests a strong correlation between deprivation and residence in social housing.

2. CHALLENGE

The challenge faced within the district is to maximise the value secured from the 'once in a lifetime' opportunity presented by Objective One; to target resources where they are needed most; and to deliver a wide range of projects from which genuine benefits will accrue, both to individual residents and to the district and county as a whole. It is recognised that this requires strategic thinking and delivery based on a partnership approach: a philosophy that has already been embraced within the district.

Led by the district council, and its new chief executive, there is a growing appreciation of the need to challenge the tradition of historical parochialism that in part, at least, has had the tendency to encourage resources to be spread thinly with little impact. While sub-district foci have been identified within the IAP (Lands End Peninsula, St Ives Bay and Mounts Bay) and there is a general presumption to seek co-operative relationships with neighbouring authorities, the Steering Group is committed to capitalise on developing and thriving district-level networks; to ensure maximum beneficial interaction within and between its urban and rural communities; to capitalise on regeneration opportunities throughout the district; and to ensure that appropriate recognition is given to all facets of deprivation at all geographical scales.

Fundamentally, the justification for a district-wide approach is summarised as follows:

The district has a very distinctive economic base, much more focused on traditional industries such as fishing and agriculture, and on the tourism and cultural sectors than its neighbours (which have a more industrial character). It is furthermore relatively self-contained in employment terms, with relatively few commuting inflows/outflows;

While there are recognised pockets of deprivation within the district, deprivation is also thinly spread, reflecting relative poverty overall compared with county, regional and national indicators; organisational structures within Penwith are reflecting an increasingly strategic (and district-based) outlook. This trend needs to be reinforced and a return to parochialism avoided;

There are different levels of community development within the district, and it is important that there is the opportunity for different communities to learn from rather than 'compete' with one another.

3. AIM AND STRATEGY

Overall, the aim is to deliver a programme of measures that will address critical constraints and capitalise on unexploited potential arising from derelict/under-utilised land and buildings, environmental, cultural and heritage assets and human/community resources.

The foci of the IAP are those actions and priorities falling within SPD Priorities Two (specifically Measure 2.2) and Four (specifically measures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.8), but by definition the Integrated Area Plan will also contribute to and complement a wide range of other programme objectives. These will include those measures relating to the development of people and the support of SMEs, those pertaining to the development of strategic sites within the context of the district, measures focusing on the district's distinctiveness, and measures targeted towards the agricultural sector).

The IAP projects cannot be considered in isolation of the wide range of capital and revenue projects already being implemented within the district. Nor can they be considered in isolation from the major development opportunities which have been identified and for which Objective One funding will be sought through alternative mechanisms (e.g. the redevelopment of Hayle Harbour under Priority 2.1). Furthermore, it is anticipated that the IAP objectives and activities will inform and complement the wide range of projects that are to be delivered at a county level.

The 'Towards Prosperity for Penwith' partnership will lead the IAP programme, and will take responsibility for the strategic management of the regeneration programme. This partnership will be founded over the coming months from the foundations put in place by the existing IAP steering group. It is intended that a LEADER style approach to management will be adopted during the three years of the IAP, with consideration given to the adoption of an action plan approach in subsequent years when the partnership is more established, and has 'road-tested' its constitution and operational procedures.

4. CONSULTATION

There has been considerable effort made to ensure that the IAP has been subject to wide consultation during its formation. This has involved the use of existing networks where they exist via the input from representatives on the IAP Steering Group.

A number of meetings have taken place between May and September this year including two seminars and eight project surgeries. The IAP Steering Group was formed from the seminar held in May and has representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors. For those organisations not participating directly, copies of the minutes from each meeting were sent to them for information on progress.

Members of the steering group have already made a significant contribution to the development of this bid, in consultation with district residents and they are committed to the formal establishment of the partnership, and to the effective and efficient delivery of the plan.

In particular, the signatories to the plan are committed to securing the desired outputs in a timely and cost effective way, to ensuring the continued involvement of the local community and to ensuring that both the spirit and letter of European funding regulations are adhered to.

5. OBJECTIVES

The TPP IAP has identified five key objectives, which are:

- To facilitate and create sustainable quality employment opportunities that strengthen and broaden the local economy.
- To encourage, develop and aid the sustainability and vitality of the small towns and villages in the area, by strengthening the links between them, and improving their roles as local centres of economic and social activity
- To support, enhance, develop and promote the highly distinctive Penwith cultural, heritage, environmental and creative strengths through capacity building, encouragement of sympathetic development and appropriate facility provision.
- To facilitate, in partnership, opportunities for the development of people through capacity building, self-help and continuous learning, and to improve communication and infrastructure within the district, thereby significantly increasing social inclusion.
- To encourage effective protection of the natural and built environment and the prudent use of resources, as well as to enhance environmental awareness and opportunities for environmental improvements.

6. FINANCE

The overall projected expenditure profile for 2001 to 2003 is a total of £11,527,896.

It is anticipated that £5,082,605 will come from European Structural Funds through Objective One, £5,764,140 in public expenditure and £681,151 in private expenditure.

7. PROJECTED OUTPUTS

The estimated projected outputs for the IAP between 2001 and 2003 include:

- 1,600 square metres workspace developed
- 95 jobs created/safeguarded
- 3 learning centres improved/created
- 2 business facilities improved created
- 5 key locations improved
- 6 environmental improvement projects
- 45 residents securing employment
- 73 micro businesses supported
- 8 community groups supported
- 1 community enterprise established
- 5 community facilities provided or improved
- 2 transport initiatives supported

8. PARTNERSHIP SYSTEMS AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Management and Delivery Structure: The agreed structure is based on a partnership, representative of communities and activity sectors of the Penwith area.

A board, appointed from the partnership, will ensure local accountability in the management of the plan and assessment of project proposals. The partnership and its board will evolve and membership may change during the life of the plan, subject to circumstances at the time.

A delivery team will be responsible for project development, financial management and monitoring, IAP monitoring and the provision of technical advice to the partnership.

Each of these groups will follow the mission:

“To facilitate in partnership, a strategy that will significantly contribute to the economic prosperity, social and environmental well-being of Penwith for the benefit of this and future generations.”