

# INTEGRATED AREA PLAN FOR THE ST AUSTELL BAY AREA

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The St Austell Bay Area, covering approximately the Southernmost third of the borough of Restormel, is a diverse area containing ten parishes and the unparished area (including St Austell) with populations ranging between 70 (St Michael Caerhays) and 20,835 (St Austell).

Overall it suffers from the expected problems of a predominantly rural area, depending on many declining industries i.e. poverty and deprivation. Wards in the St Austell Bay area feature in the list of the most deprived wards, in particular against measures of: low incomes, individuals on income support and illness ratio.

The area does, of course, also have its strengths with excellent education, with very good achievement records in secondary and primary schools and a major Further Education college in St Austell. In addition, the ports of Fowey and Par, proximity to the A30, and the main line train station in St Austell (on the Paddington to Penzance route) give strength to the area as a commercial centre.

There are many features of the area which offer potential for future development. In particular, there are major tourism gems in Fowey, Charlestown and Mevagissey. There is also potential to develop niche tourism around the 'gardening' tourist (particularly with the area's proximity to the Eden project), the 'boating' tourist, and the 'cultural' tourist (building on the area's arts festivals and art galleries).

This plan, therefore, attempts to tackle the difficulties of low incomes and high unemployment, by building on the strengths and potential of the area for commerce and tourism.

The plan sets out a vision for the St Austell Bay area as:

"Bustling, distinctive towns and villages, accessible and welcoming to all, offering a full range of cultural, leisure, community and economic activities".

The plan has strategic objectives to:

- Improve the area's natural and built environment, capitalising on the potential for the area to become a major focus for commerce and tourism
- Build local capacity and raise skills levels
- Develop and enhance employment opportunities within the area
- Encourage the development of the social economy of the area
- Develop the role of culture and media in the area
- Improve access to employment, training and community services for socially excluded groups
- Improve opportunities for young people

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

### **Infrastructure development**, focusing on

- Improvements to the natural and built environment – to increase pride of place amongst local residents and attract additional visitors

- Transportation infrastructure - to address the local issues of rurality as well as developing the rail/port infrastructure to support commerce
- Industrial, cultural and archaeological heritage – particularly providing opportunities for niche tourism
- Tourism support infrastructure – improving accommodation and other facilities for all tourists to the area
- **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
  - Technology support – particularly developing a network of village based computer terminals offering remote access
  - Support for arts and cultural industries - particularly building on events such as the du Maurier festival to raise the area's profile and encourage visitors

**People development**, focusing on:

- Vocational training – improving basic skills as well as industry specific (tourism, marine, agricultural, film and media development)
- Special measures for socially excluded groups.

**Community development**, focusing on:

- Facilitation and access to appropriate physical resources and training
- Engaging the local community through small scale environmental projects
- Local parish or village based appraisals (currently only taken place in Fowey and Mevagissey)
- Feasibility research, action plans and support staff to underpin local regeneration activities
- Development and support of local community enterprises

The Area Plan envisages a stepped programme with increase spending year on year - the profile in years 1, 2 and 3 being £355K, £490K and £620K. 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 Newquay and its Rural Hinterland Area IAP
- The China Clay Area 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.