

Natural Infrastructure and Growth Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 12 February 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Darcy, in the Chair.

Councillors Bannerman, McCarty, McLay, Moore, Noble (substitute for Councillor Allen), Raysford, Ricketts, M.Smith and Sproston.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Allen and Holloway.

Also in attendance: Councillor Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change), Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships), Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications), Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Tina Brinkworth (Head of Skills and Post 16), Hannah Chandler-Whiting (Democratic Advisor), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Paul Fieldsend-Danks (Chief Executive, Arts University Plymouth), John Green (Net Zero Delivery Manager), Toby Hall (Funding and Partnership Manager), Hannah Harris (CEO, Plymouth Culture), Karime Hassan (Interim Strategic Director for Growth), Amanda Lumley (CEO, Destination Plymouth), Tom Lavis (CEO of YMCA Plymouth and Discovery College), Emmanuelle Marshall (Net Zero Delivery Officer) and Victoria Pomery (CEO, The Box).

The meeting started at 2.02 pm and finished at 5.11 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

29. Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Reason	Interest
Councillor Josh McCarty	33	Had worked on climate with organisations mentioned	Private
Councillor Josh McCarty	35	Member of the Plymouth Waterfront Partnership	Private

30. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

31. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

32. **Refresh of Skills4Plymouth Plan**

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) introduced the report and highlighted:

- a) The Skills for Plymouth Plan had been developed in 2020/21 and the report showed the progress made across a number of measures, but a refresh was required;
- b) There had been a reduction in the number of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) young people, although the language had changed to 'Seeking Education, Employment and Training' (SEET);
- c) There had been an increase in the number of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabled) young people in employment and training from 72% in January 2023 to 90.4% in December 2024;
- d) Gaps had begun to close in attainment rates at both GCSE and A-Level with Plymouth achievements getting closer to the national average;
- e) Plymouth's unemployment was lower than the national average by 1%;
- f) Skills Launchpad Plymouth had supported almost 1000 young people and over 900 adults, furthest from the labour market, with almost 500 having entered employment and over 350 into training;
- g) On Course South West had supported over 5,000 adults and young people in 2023/24;
- h) It was important to refresh the Skills for Plymouth Plan to ensure it incorporated and aligned with the latest developments in the city, including the new Plymouth Economic Strategy, the MOD (Ministry of Defence) investment, and the formation of the Growth Alliance Plymouth, and the Council would work with partners to do so.

Tina Brinkworth (Head of Skills and Post 16) added:

- i) It was important that people had the skills they needed now and in the future to access employment and progress their careers, as well as ensuring that employers and individuals invested in skills and lifelong learning, and that employers had the right skills to grow their businesses;
- j) The refresh would be done in close partnership with the Plymouth Employment and Skills Board which was made up of organisations from the business community, employer representation groups, and higher education

institutions;

- k) There would be 15,000 new jobs in the city within the next 10 years across all sectors but particularly in construction and engineering;
- l) Plymouth currently had 7,000 unique vacancies advertised monthly and this was growing each month, there was a considerable amount of movement of people across businesses;
- m) The model being used was 'Demand, Supply and Pipeline';
 - i. Demand was business need;
 - ii. Supply was education providers;
 - iii. Pipeline was future generations;
- n) 12-18 months previous, one in 10 young people were NEET, but at the time of the meeting that was only one in 20;
- o) There was more work to do with care leavers, young carers and those in the criminal justice system, but a program was in place and the team were working hard to ensure it included the right support and interventions.

Tom Lavis (CEO of YMCA Plymouth and Discovery College) added:

- p) Discovery College had been working closely with partners as part of the Plymouth Education Partnership Alliance;
- q) NEET/SEET levels in Plymouth had been above the national average before this work and Discovery College had worked as a partner to improve this;
- r) Discovery College supported young people aged 16 to 19 who had disengaged from the education system by providing them with opportunities to re-enter education and access pathways for future progression;
- s) SEN (Special Educational Needs) had been a recent focus for Discovery College as these young people were some that were the furthest from employment;
 - i. A pilot supported internship program had been trialled last year with this group in partnership with China Fleet Country Club and Plymouth Active Leisure to give the young people opportunities at mainstream recreational facilities;
 - ii. They needed more 1:1 support and guidance;
 - iii. These internships had been successful and the program was being expanded into tourism and hospitality and this was an area where there was a labour shortage, but also landscaping as being outdoors

whilst working was a real benefit to most SEN young people;

- t) Welcomed Panel members to visit Discovery College.

Supported by Toby Hall (Funding and Partnership Manager), in response to questions the following was discussed:

- u) The team used data from modelling but also from the local business community to build intelligence which was shared with providers as well as at the Employment Skills Board, but the process was able to adapt as required, for example with monthly meetings beginning with strategic partners across the city to discuss skills and demand;
- v) The team valued the voice of young people and worked with a subgroup of the SEND Employment Forum as well as with schools and through significant outreach as part of the pipeline element;
- w) It was important to inspire the next generation and raise their aspirations;
- x) It was important that the schools program had diverse representation from employers across the city;
- y) Skills Launchpad Live was an annual event run by Discovery College on behalf of Plymouth City Council, which was the largest showcase of careers across the South West, and teams ensure it had diverse representation;
- z) There was a diverse range of mentors in the mentorship program;
- aa) Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) was an important annual event;
- bb) Primary School children needed to be engaged with so they could be aware of the opportunities available to them at an early age and this was being done in part through the National Marine Park Schools program;
- cc) Discovery College had a very limited marketing budget, but most of the young people they worked with came through referrals;
- dd) There were over 2,000 apprenticeship starters each year in Plymouth with 16% of all school and college leavers going into an apprenticeship, compared to just 10% nationally;
- ee) There had been a shift into offering more level three, four and five apprenticeships and a shift to more flexibility from providers, which made apprenticeships easier to access;
- ff) There were some supportive national reforms that would allow more flexibility around the apprenticeship levy;

- gg) There was a gap in supported apprenticeships for SEND young people, but the team were working with partners to increase the spaces available;
- hh) The program at Discovery College was aimed at 16-19 year olds as that had been the skills gap identified, and young people with EHCP's (Education, Health and Care Plan) up to the age of 25, but there was support for people aged 19+ through On Course South West;
- ii) One in four learners declared a learning disability, high need learners had increased from 3.4% to 6.8% in the last year and there had been a significant increase in young people with EHCP's;
- jj) 30% of learners were from ethnic minorities, 60% of were from wards of deprivation, and 70% of courses were delivered in community spaces;
- kk) Funding was increasing, as were audiences;
- ll) Connect to Work hoped to be in contract shortly, and would support 650 people into paid employment from vulnerable backgrounds such as care experience, young carers and those from the criminal justice system;
- mm) Information would be provided on the industries people went into once they had completed their apprenticeships
- nn) Businesses in Plymouth were focused on encouraging people into "blue" jobs;
- oo) It was important to get into schools and explain the opportunities available so children could 'be what they could see';
- pp) It was important to ensure that educators knew about the training and employment opportunities available in the city so that they could share this with students;
- qq) Upcoming Government changes suggested a more flexible approach to education, rather than a focus on just university degrees or apprenticeships;
- rr) The team focused on working with years five, six, seven and eight before they chose subjects to study for GCSE and further;
- ss) There was more space in Plymouth for vocational qualifications at schools, similar to what was run at UTC Plymouth which fed students straight into engineering roles or Scott Medical School which did the same for medicine roles;
- tt) Career Southwest which had been commissioned to do Plymouth careers advice and guidance was closing down, but the staff were being moved into the team at Plymouth City Council and so the work could be connected up and they would be able to better embed outreach work into schools;

- uu) Manchester had developed a bachelorette specific to the needs of the city with the inclusion of media and IT, which could be adapted for Plymouth where it would, for example, include marine.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

33. **Draft Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP) 2025-28**

Councillor Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) introduced the item and highlighted the following:

- a) The NZAP (Net Zero Action Plan) 2025-28 built upon the successes made during 2024;
- b) The e-bike network expansion had been completed, reaching 26,000 registered users;
- c) Free access to e-bikes through social prescribing;
- d) 40 rapid electric charging points had been constructed and £2.4 million had been received to install further points for those without access to off-street car parking;
- e) Decarbonisation of the Council's estate;
- f) Retrofitting of 207 social homes;
- g) Climate connections events reach of over 2,700 and social media post reach of over 40,000;
- h) Worked to produce a city-wide climate action plan, inviting them to publically share their plans, and over 110 business had taken part;
- i) Importance that every department within the Council felt they were actively playing a part in the Net Zero Action Plan;
- j) The new NZAP was more strategic and data-led;
- k) Three focuses were in areas where there was potential for the greatest impact for decarbonisation: Transport, Buildings and Behaviour Change;
- l) Important to enable and encourage sustainable travel options;
- m) Exploration of possibility of emissions-based parking charges;
- n) Application for an E-scooter trial;
- o) Expansion of the EV (Electric Vehicle) car club;

- p) 50 electric double decker buses in Plymouth;
- q) Delivery of the 400 million externally funded heat networks would begin shortly and Plymouth had been shortlisted nationally as one of six towns and cities to form the first heat network zones;
- r) Innovative data centre to heat the swimming pool at the Life Centre;
- s) Retrofitting for more social homes;
- t) Employment of recycling officers;
- u) Recycling plant of electric vehicle batteries;
- v) Thanks to Councillors Luggar, Bridgeman and McLay for cross party working on the preparation of the NZAP;
- w) Having restored the Climate Emergency Investment Fund ratchet in last year's budget, this had been increased as part of the review process for budget setting to support future Net Zero projects and initiatives.

In response to questions, supported by Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), John Green (Net Zero Delivery Manager) and Emmanuelle Marshall (Net Zero Delivery Officer) the following was discussed:

- x) Food waste collection was expected to roll out in Spring 2026, external change funding and the importance to raise awareness of the benefits;
- y) Funding to stimulate demand for jobs within the green economy through the allocation of levelling up funding was listed as 'at risk' because the funding had been secured but was not yet with the Council, once received this rating would be removed;
- z) Net Zero changes such retrofitting might cost but came with financial benefits;
- aa) Net Zero would be difficult to achieve for the city and for the Council. But was important in reaction to the climate emergency declared by the Council years earlier;
- bb) The plan was developed on a rolling three year basis, receiving a refresh each year allowing flexibility and time to achieve goals;
- cc) Development of a citywide Net Zero Route Map with clear milestones;
- dd) Polling on co-benefits of net zero showed there was public support;
- ee) Improvement and increase in available data for modelling which aligned with what was being done nationally and internationally;

- ff) Mileage claimed by officers through HR system and mileage of the Council's fleet could be used for modelling;
- gg) Income from renewable energy sales and building efficiencies made savings for the Council;
- hh) There would not be a car parking charge hike, there would be an exploration of possibility of emissions-based parking charges to encourage behaviour change;
- ii) Data centres required significant volumes of water as coolant, and Council's were struggling to heat swimming pools, so building a data centre next to the Life Centre was a mutually beneficial opportunity, which would reduce gas consumption;
- jj) Promoting the benefits of net zero action to the public was more effective;
- kk) The team were using funding to look into ways of reducing the challenges of some communities being able to have electric vehicles;
- ll) Recent launch of the youth climate ambassadors program and engaging young people with net zero work in the city;
- mm) Climate Connections website gave a user friendly summary of what the Council and businesses across the city were doing;
- nn) Pavement channel connecting homes to EV charging points on-street;
- oo) Carbon assessments;
- pp) Climate Impact Assessments.

The Panel agreed to:

1. Support and endorse the Plymouth City Council Net Zero Action Plan 2025-2028;
2. Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change develop a Climate Communications Plan to include making information more accessible via the Plymouth City Council Website;
3. Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change seek to secure ratchet funding in future years and to ask Finance to review any future caps to ensure the money was set aside and could be added to.

For (10)

Councillors Bannerman, Darcy, Holloway, McCarty, McLay, Moore, Noble, Raynsford, Smith and Sproston.

Abstain (1)

Councillor Ricketts.

Against (0)

(At the conclusion of this item, the Panel took a five minute break)

34. **Creative Industries Plan Overview**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the item and highlighted:

- a) As a city and a Council, Plymouth had been a constant champion for culture against a backdrop of national cuts and continued to invest in culture, recognising its value and significant contribution to the city, and to society;
- b) The strategic approach had been very successful in securing external partnerships and investment, including Arts Council funding of over £4 million each year in eight cultural organisations, and had allowed the development and growth of culture infrastructure, including projects such as The Box and Market Hall;
- c) There was an identified need and opportunity to apply the methodology or tailored strategic partnerships and investment to creative industries;
- d) The cultural sector and creative industries were connected, but were not the same and required separate strategies;
- e) There were 648 registered companies in the creative industries, employing around 5,000 people and a further 4,000 in the wider economy, accounting for 2.1% of employment in Plymouth and contributed nearly £135 million in GVA (gross value added);
- f) The sectors growth had plateaued and was not growing at the same rates seen in the wider South West or nationally;
- g) Plymouth Culture had been commissioned to create a Creative Industries Plan to define the scale of the opportunity and the interventions needed to achieve growth, aligned to the cities ambition.

Hannah Harris (CEO, Plymouth Culture) added:

- h) Growth in creative industries had been quite stagnant since 2015;
- i) There were a number of creative jobs in non-creative industries, quite unique to Plymouth;
- j) Similar to other places Plymouth had very few anchor organisations, but a plethora of smaller, micro businesses in the sector;

- k) If Plymouth's creative industries job share were boosted to the national average, the city would gain over 3,000 high-skilled jobs, £165-230 million GVA and 1.9 additional jobs in leisure and retail generated by each creative job;
- l) The greater South West had the joint fastest creative industries jobs growth of any British region between 2019-2022 and Plymouth could be the urban capital for creative industries in Plymouth and Cornwall;
- m) Plymouth had a foundation of anchor institutions, a high proportion of young people aged 18-34, affordable house prices, good digital connectivity and a higher proportion of people in further education to build upon;
- n) The Creative Industries Plan recommended that the Council embed creative industries in all Council policy areas so the plan for its growth could be linked with other priority themes in Plymouth;
- o) It also recommended the designation of culture and creative clusters (CCC's) and support through policy, space, skills and business support and, community engagement and socially inclusive places;
- p) Four CCC's had been identified:
 - i. The Culture Cluster (The Box and universities);
 - ii. The Performance Cluster (Guildhall, TRP, Millennium, Reel and Athenaeum);
 - iii. The Createch Cluster – Market Hall;
 - iv. Plymouth Production Park Cluster (in Cattedown to increase TR2's production capacity)
- q) There was a need to build a business pipeline to provide support at each stage of business growth;
- r) An action plan with implementation deadlines would be developed;
- s) Importance of developing external collaboration opportunities.

Supported by David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development) and Victoria Pomery (CEO, The Box), in response to questions, the following was discussed:

- t) It was important to ensure the activity in Plymouth was stimulating economic growth;
- u) Development opportunity at Tavistock Place for a creative space;

- v) Opportunities to link with national partners;
- w) Connecting opportunities through further education, especially the Arts University and retaining graduates;
- x) Ministerial invitations to see activity in the city;
- y) Branding the city well and encouraging people to have their businesses in Plymouth was very important;
- z) TwoFour had been considered in the north of the city for a cluster, but their aim was export, rather than growth within Plymouth;
- aa) It was hoped clusters would help students identify where they could work within the city once they had graduated.

The Panel noted the report.

35. **Visitor Plan 2030 and Brand refresh progress report**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the report and highlighted:

- a) The Visitor Plan 2030 set a strategic direction for growth of the visitor economy and would continue to act as a key strategy in growing and positioning the city's place brand;
- b) The emerging brand strategy would amplify the good work that had taken place to date and would start to position the city as somewhere to live, invest and work, as well as visit;
- c) The city's reputation would be enhanced and act as a catalyst for increasing and attracting talent and provide an overall direction of travel for the city's brand messaging;
- d) The visitor economy had been relatively stable post COVID19 pandemic up to 2023;
- e) The teams continued to deliver events that reached over 500,000 people in 2024, including the British Firework Championships, which delivered a direct economic impact to Plymouth of £2.8 million;
- f) The city continued to have good marketing activity and coverage as a visitor destination;
- g) Social media channels and website saw increases in reach and engagement;
- h) Plymouth had attracted a number of notable conferences;

- i) 13 cruise ships visited the city with over 13,000 passengers total in 2024 with more planned for 2025;
 - i. Expressed thanks to the cruise ship ambassadors/volunteers who helped welcome passengers to Plymouth;
- j) A development manager to support the sector was recruited to in Spring 2024 and within seven months of the 18 month contract, had exceeded the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) contract;
- k) Perception was crucial to Plymouth's growth;
- l) The brand strategy aimed to:
 - i. Enable Plymouth businesses and communities to align their efforts and resources behind a strong brand narrative and specific objectives;
 - ii. Support the work of Growth Alliance Plymouth by repositioning the city and attractive talent using new narratives and highlighting the unique strength and opportunities the city had to offer;
- m) The Board of Destination Plymouth expressed their thanks to Babcock, Princess Yachts, University of Plymouth, The Box and Plymouth City Council for providing funding support to enable the brand strategy to be developed.

Paul Fieldsend-Danks (Chief Executive, Arts University Plymouth) added:

- n) The brand development group had been engaged with stakeholders for over 2 years;
- o) A perception report was commissioned to identify the internal and external dialogue of the city, as well as what it would take for Plymouth to attract talent and be a destination for people to work, live and remain in;
- p) The talent attraction research attempted identify key assets within Plymouth and establish the size of the market, demand and supply in terms of jobs and where the cities strengths weaknesses were;
- q) The perception research looked at how the city was perceived by visitors, workers and residents, of which mixed views were received;
- r) Key areas identified were:
 - i. Celebrating the oceans all-encompassing benefits;
 - ii. Making Plymouth synonymous with a greater quality of life;
 - iii. Showcasing Plymouth's employment opportunities and to narrate how innovation threads through the city's past, present and future;

- iv. Define Plymouth's unique selling point (USP);
- s) Important to capture the friendliness and community feel of Plymouth as a welcoming city;
- t) Full family support to allow talent to come to the city and stay in the city was also key;
- u) Important to proactively engage with young talent;
- v) A city brand toolkit would be developed to allow businesses to promote the city.

Amanda Lumley (CEO, Destination Plymouth) added:

- w) Engagement with the local community and businesses on branding Plymouth had been inspiring;
- x) Britain's Ocean City would be remaining as part of the brand.

Supported by David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), in response to questions, the following subjects were discussed:

- y) Need for further representation from businesses in the North of the City and the officers would connect with Councillor Sproston to discuss suggestions for further engagement with the north of the city;
- z) Plymouth had a high number of volunteers;
- aa) Plymouth had claimed the phrasing 'Britain's Ocean City' as it had developed over the centuries because of the positioning next to the sea;
- bb) Plymouth had leading research institutes and marine industries that were not promoted enough;
- cc) Need to develop a brand strategy that the people of Plymouth were proud of and could 'own';
- dd) People were integral to Plymouth and needed to be included in the strategy;
- ee) Access to funding from Visit Britain had changed considerably.

The Panel agreed to:

- I. Continue to support the work of Destination Plymouth to lead delivery of the Visitor plan and emerging new brand strategy working with wider City stakeholders and partners;

2. Support the continuing transition to a broader remit growing and positioning the city's 'place' brand going forwards;
3. Recognise the continued significant achievements of the Destination Plymouth, Plymouth City Council, BID and partnership teams in supporting the sector and moving the brand strategy forwards;
4. Endorse the adoption of a city-wide brand strategy and new narratives to position Plymouth as a place to 'live, work and visit';
5. Asked the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications to continue supporting Destination Plymouth by lobbying government for continued funding.

36. **Work Programme**

The Panel noted its work programme.

37. **Tracking Decisions**

The Panel noted its tracking decisions document.