

# Cabinet



Date of meeting:	13 October 2025
Title of Report:	<b>City brand repositioning strategy</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care, Culture and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	Glenn Caplin-Grey (Strategic Director for Growth)
Author:	Amanda Lumley, Chief Executive Destination Plymouth
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Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	Yes
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the committee following completion of the work to create a Brand repositioning Strategy for the city.

During 2024/25 good progress has been made on creating a new ‘Brand strategy’ for the city along with key brand and visual assets for widespread use. Supported by a ‘City Brand Development Group’ as a steering committee, a framework for the strategy has been completed, along with two other pieces of work to inform and guide decision making. This report provides an overview on those three areas of work and the strategy itself.

Oversight of this work is led by the Board of Destination Plymouth. In 2023 it was agreed that Destination Plymouth would extend its remit from strategic oversight of the Visitor plan and visitor economy growth to become a broader city place marketing and place brand leading organisation.

Recent international research by ‘Bloom consulting’ on the perception of ‘Place and destinations’ showed that ‘perception affects 86% of willingness to live, work, invest or visit in a destination or place’. The same report showed that if a city improves perceptions by one decimal point it would equal a 15% increase in receipts from tourism, 21% of talent attraction and 17.5% foreign direct investment. Perception is crucial to the growth of cities internationally.

Successful City Brand strategies are those which are adopted widely by multiple stakeholders and local communities for the long term. This report requests that Plymouth City Council adopts the City Brand Strategy formally to provide a consistent narrative for the city and to re-position Plymouth more positively regionally, nationally and internationally for future growth.

## Recommendations and Reasons

*That Cabinet agrees to:*

1. *Support the city-wide brand strategy and new narratives to position Plymouth as a place to 'live, work, study and visit'.*

*Reason:*

*To create positive external perceptions of the city and repositioning Plymouth as somewhere to live, work, study and invest. This in turn will support long term growth in the city particularly the work of 'Team Plymouth', Plan 4 Homes, and the Local Economic Strategy.*

2. *Adopt key components of the city branding work including narratives and visuals and 'main streams' them into key delivery programmes including 'Team Plymouth', Homes England housing development, recruitment initiatives and Plymouth Plan where consistent, positive city wide messaging is required.*

*Reason:*

*To ensure that consistent messaging reflecting the strengths, unique personality, character and positives of Plymouth are used widely both within the city and externally and are amplified outwards. This will help to change perceptions of the city over time.*

3. *Mandate Destination Plymouth to a broader remit as a city-wide place marketing organisation with strategic responsibility for leading the brand strategy and implementation, positioning the city's 'place' brand going forwards as well as continuing to drive the Visitor Plan.*

*Reason:*

*To provide strong and broad city leadership and focused support for the city's place brand.*

4. *Recognise the support of key city partners in funding and driving this work forwards.*

*Reason: The creation of the City Brand Strategy, research to support it, key city narratives and new visuals would not have been possible without funding from Babcock, Princess Yachts, University of Plymouth, The Box and UK shared Prosperity fund.*

## Alternative options considered and rejected

1. *Not having the Brand strategy - This will affect the city's reputation through fragmented and disjointed messaging and will not maximise opportunities through partnership working on similar objectives. This in turn will impact on the city's ability to attract talent and investment for the longer term.*

*Building on this the emerging new brand strategy will amplify the good work growing the city's brand and reputation to date and will start to position the city as somewhere to live and work as well as visit. The aim will be to enhance the city's positive reputation, act as catalyst for increasing and attracting talent and provide an overall direction of travel for the city's brand messaging.*

*Over the next ten years Plymouth has a regeneration pipeline of over £6 billion including an investment of £4.5 billion in the dockyard and defence. The Brand strategy will significantly support the need to attract new residents to the city to fill the 25,000 vacancies over the next*

decade alongside the ambitious Plan for Homes 4 which was launched in March 2024 with the overall ambition to deliver a minimum of 5,000 new homes in the city over the next five years. The strategy will also support the Local economic Strategy and 'Team Plymouth' programmes. Without a focused and consistent approach to external city branding and messaging the employment rate will continue to grow at its current rate which is too low to fill all the employment vacancies created over the next five to ten years.

### **Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan**

The new Brand Strategy supports the city council's ambition to make Plymouth a fairer, greener city where everyone does their bit, making Plymouth a great place to grow-up and grow old, whilst minimising the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

In particular the Brand strategy supports one of the six priorities - green investment, jobs, skills and better education. Through supporting the attraction and retention of talent and investment in an environmentally and commercially sustainable way. The strategy also helps to support the city's overall growth and 'Building homes' priority by attracting investment and talent to the city.

The new brand strategy will help to inform the new Plymouth Plan to 2050 process setting out key narratives and a new positioning for the city as a place to live, study and work.

### **Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:**

Destination Plymouth Ltd. was formed in 2008 and incorporated in June 2010 as a private/public sector partnership and arm's length company of Plymouth City council. There is currently no provision for Destination Plymouth in revenue budgets going forwards which will leave a funding gap. UK Shared Prosperity Funding is currently supporting Destination Plymouth until March 2026. From 2026 to 2027 funding has been secured through 'enterprise funding'. A work stream to explore longer-term strategy and the future sustainable funding options will be prioritised over the next 12 months.

PCC also provides support for city marketing and advertising within the existing Economic Development team and revenue budget. A commitment has also been made to maintain this support going forwards at reduced levels to reflect current local authority budget pressures.

Over the past five years, Destination Plymouth Ltd has helped to leverage over £7.7 million income through grants alone for specific projects related to the visitor plan. This includes £1.62 million from Visit England for product development and international marketing activity and £132k for delivery of a 'Green Tourism' scheme from the Community Recovery Fund. In addition, Destination Plymouth is acting as 'lead body' for a £500k 'Data hub' project for Heart of the South West LEP.

In 2024 £25,000 was secured as match funding for UKSPF funds from private sector businesses across the city to develop a new brand strategy and narrative. We are very grateful for the support of Babcock, Princess Yachts, University of Plymouth and The Box for providing the funding to enable the strategy to be developed. No further implications are anticipated for the MTFS at this stage, resource implications are limited to member and officer time.

### **Financial Risks**

Current financial risks regarding delivery of the Brand strategy are as follows:

Post 2027 funding for Destination Plymouth is not secure.

Opportunities to secure and leverage grant and commercial funding are restrictive due to limited resources, high levels of competitiveness across the city and economic constraints in the business sector.

Waterfront Bid renewal due in 2026.

## Legal Implications

(Provided by AC)

None arising from this report

## Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Destination Plymouth Ltd. is accredited to 'Bronze Standard' by the 'Green Tourism' international accreditation scheme. The team are very proud of this achievement which sets standards in line with the UN Sustainability goals.

As the new Brand strategy for the city is developed a key strand running through it will be linked to environment, nature and sustainability.

A Climate Impact Assessment has been attached as Appendix C.

## Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The new brand strategy includes some activities that relate to the following:

Health and safety - Destination Plymouth as a limited company operates to health and safety guidelines as set out in UK Corporate law. Health and Safety is managed through the Peninsular 'Bright' Health and Safety scheme. Where projects are not led by Destination Plymouth, the Board will seek reassurance that the organisation delivering is compliant through their project governance procedure.

Risk management – Destination Plymouth runs its own organisational risk process alongside a higher-level strategic risk register for the overarching Visitor Plan strategy.

Where projects are not directly delivered by Destination Plymouth the Board will seek evidence that they are being risk managed through a formal project governance process. Destination Plymouth also acts as 'secretariat' to the city wide multi agency, Destination Operations group which runs a risk register to mitigate against impacts of large quantities of the general public at peak times across the city.

The new 'Brand Strategy' will include a risk register which will be developed over the next 12 months as delivery plans are created. The delivery plans will also have their own project risk registers as part of the development process.

Equality and inclusion – Successful delivery of the Brand strategy should help to attract over 25,000 jobs to the city over 10 years. These jobs will provide employment for the local community across a very broad range of roles and in a very accessible way. Destination Plymouth will review projects and activities in the brand strategy on an individual basis to ensure that they promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

A community wide approach has been taken to the development of the new brand strategy to ensure that it reflects the broader nature of our local community and is reflecting the increasingly diverse nature of our local population and culture.

See Equalities impact Assessment at Appendix B.

## Appendices

\*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	City Brand Strategy August 2025							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment							
C	Climate Impact Assessment							

## Background papers:

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Perception research report Jan 2025							
City narrative presentation April 2025							

## Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Glenn Caplin Grey (Strategic Director for Growth)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 02/10/2025											

Cabinet Member approval: *Cllr Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications)*

Date approved: 30/09/2025

## **APPENDIX A. City Brand Strategy**

### **SECTION 1: CITY BRANDING AND POSITIONING UPDATE**

#### **1. City branding and positioning:**

Plymouth's Britain's Ocean City branding was developed in 2013 and now nearly ten years later it has been a great success and helped to change perceptions of the city as a visitor destination regionally, nationally and globally.

Oversight of this work is led by the Board of Destination Plymouth. In 2023 it was agreed that Destination Plymouth would extend its remit from strategic oversight of the Visitor plan and visitor economy growth to become a broader city marketing and place brand leading organisation.

It is seen that the successful city brands market their history, quality of place, lifestyle, culture, diversity, and proactively formed partnerships between city and government in order to enhance their infrastructure and opportunities. Equally important is the role of positioning in the branding process, i.e., creating a distinct place in the market for the city to occupy. This is becoming increasingly important in relation to the government's 'growth' agenda and ensuring a strong 'place' brand for the city as part of this transition process.

Over the next ten years Plymouth has a regeneration pipeline of over £6 billion including an investment of £4.5 billion in the dockyard and defence. The Brand strategy will significantly support the need to attract new residents to the city to fill the 25,000 vacancies over the next decade alongside the ambitious Plan for Homes 4 which was launched in March 2024 with the overall ambition to deliver a minimum of 5,000 new homes in the city over the next five years.

It became apparent in 2023 that there were aspects of the brand that needed further development in order to continue to grow a strong 'place' perception and identity for the city and that the original Britain's Ocean City brand strategy needed to be reviewed to build on the good work to date.

Recent international research by 'Bloom consulting' on the perception of 'Place and destinations' showed that 'perception affects 86% of willingness to live, work, invest or visit in a destination or place'.

The same report showed that if a city improves perceptions by one decimal point it would equal a 15% increase in receipts from tourism, 21% of talent attraction and 17.5% foreign direct investment. Perception is crucial to the growth of cities internationally.

In 2023 the DP Board set out clearly that it should lead on the following:

- To be the custodian of and drive through the objectives for the City's place-based Brand narrative (Britain's Ocean City) improving perceptions of the city in the eyes of residents, visitors, workforce, students and potential investors
- To co-ordinate and amplify place-based activities (marketing, events, projects, fundraising, lobbying, digital) undertaken by Destination Plymouth, Plymouth Culture, National Marine Park, Plymouth

Waterfront Partnership, City Centre Company and the City Council into a single and coherent programme.

A city-wide brand perception study was undertaken in 2023 to enable an understanding of how stakeholders, businesses, residents and students perceive the city and the existing Britain's Ocean City branding. The results were very positive and were shared with scrutiny committee in November 2023. The report provided a series of next steps to enable successful 'evolution' and growth of the existing city brand going forwards over the next ten years. Since then, the following work has been undertaken:

- A multi stakeholder cross city brand development group has been set up.
- Multiple workshops have been held to develop brand strategy content and themes.
- An external perception research report has been completed in autumn 2024 and shared with Scrutiny in February 2025.
- Engagement has taken place across multiple city stakeholders and local communities.
- High level brand strategy and narratives have been developed and approved.

To start to implement some of the more priority areas of work identified by the Brand Development Group the Destination Plymouth Board agreed to focus on three key areas of delivery in the short term:

- Commissioning of a piece of external perception research to understand how the city is viewed externally and what our unique strengths are.
- Development of a new city narrative to re-position the city as a place to live and work with the aim of attracting new talent
- Using the narrative to design a new creative approach and brand toolkit to attract people to live and work in the city

The key aim being to position the city as a place to 'live, work and visit. With this as a priority, work has progressed over the past 18 months to develop a broader brand and city marketing strategy with a 10-year horizon to support this activity. This strategy will enable city businesses and communities to align their efforts and resources behind a strong brand narrative and specific objectives in a way which has not been previously explored. The strategy will support the recently refreshed Local Economic Strategy, Plan 4 Homes and 'Team Plymouth' work by repositioning the city and attracting talent using new narratives and highlighting the unique strength and opportunities that the city offers.

The Board of Destination Plymouth would like to thank Babcock, Princess Yachts, University of Plymouth, The Box and Plymouth City Council as accountable body for Uk Shared Prosperity Funding for providing the funding support to enable the Brand strategy to be developed.

## **2. External Perception research**

This piece of work was commissioned to identify and explore external perceptions of Plymouth in the context of the Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City brand. The research has helped gain insights and intelligence into the current perceptions of the city by consumers and businesses as well as



understanding how the city is portraying itself outwardly. Specifically, a key element of this work has been to identify opportunities for Plymouth to attract new talent to the city to live, work and study. This research has been used to inform the development of a new brand strategy and a refreshed narrative and creative approach. The work considers how we can build on the existing brand equity and develop connections, engaging with new audiences relevant to our evolving city objectives. The new narrative and creative will be used across all city led and engaged stakeholder communications to support the positioning and marketing of the city as we move from a visitor led destination to a whole city brand led approach.

The 'External Perception Report' covers two specific areas of work:

- **Talent attraction research** — Evaluate the city's four growth sectors — Identify key assets within Plymouth — Size of the market demand and supply — Competitive clusters — Talent attraction and retention factors — Strengths, weakness and opportunities for Plymouth
- **Perceptions research** — Explore positive and negative perceptions of the city as a visitor and talent destination — Perceptions of its location, lifestyle, and opportunities — Understand differences between internal and external views — Use as helpful direction for brand refresh

As often is the case with perception research of this nature there were many positive aspects identified which we are aware of already, however, there were also a number of key findings which were less well known and can be used to build on specific aspects of the city's' potential.

The research revealed four key insights:

### **#1 The ocean is Plymouth's most recognisable and powerful asset, and its full potential is yet to be realised.**

Evidenced by:

- Home to the UK's first national marine park
- The largest naval base in Western Europe
- Supporting 38% of employment nationally in marine industries
- National centre for marine autonomy
- Plymouth Sound is one of the oldest continually studied marine areas on earth
- SMART sound is the world's first testbed for developing products and services for the marine sector.
- Largest marine scientists & technologists grouping in the UK
- University of Plymouth is home to 1 of 35 wind and marine renewables industry research and development centres in the UK

### **#2 Plymouth's quality of life is greater than other comparator cities, with the evidence to prove it.**

Evidenced by:

- Plymouth's wellbeing metrics score higher than peer cities like Bristol, Portsmouth and Southampton according to ONS data
- Plymouth ranked first in PWC's annual Good Growth for Cities Index, scoring especially well on world-life balance
- Natural England 2024 mapping shows 25% of the city (land, water and intertidal areas within the city boundaries) are important nature area.
- The city has 1,390 hectares of priority habitat, including over 800 hectares of woodland and 282 hectares of coastal habitat

- The city has planted over 50,000 trees in the last 5 years

Anxiety		Life satisfaction	
Plymouth	3.23	Plymouth	7.45
Brighton and Hove	3.31	Brighton and Hove	7.39
Portsmouth	3.38	Portsmouth	7.38
Bristol, City of	3.44	Bristol, City of	7.31
Southampton	3.81	Norwich	7.3
Norwich	4.37	Southampton	7.23
GB average	3.21	GB average	7.48

Happiness		Worthwhile	
Plymouth	7.71	Portsmouth	7.74
Portsmouth	7.37	Plymouth	7.72
Bristol, City of	7.2	Brighton and Hove	7.67
Norwich	7.07	Norwich	7.62
Southampton	7.07	Southampton	7.54
Brighton and Hove	7.03	Bristol, City of	7.33
GB average	7.41	GB average	7.77

Source: ONS Wellbeing Metrics

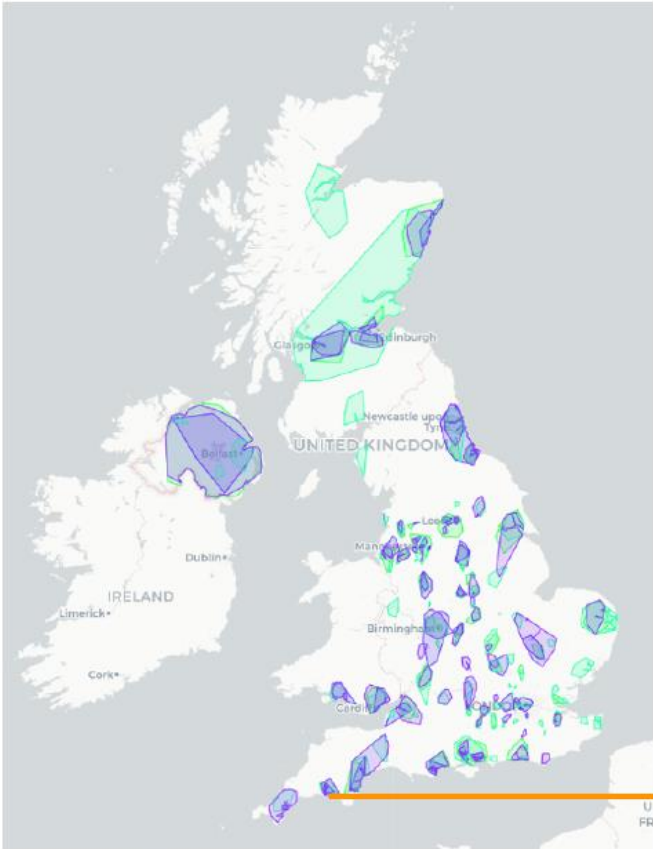
### #3 Talent is looking for career growth, but the city is not known for innovation.

Evidenced by:

- Across Plymouth's four key growth sectors, talent is looking for opportunities to progress
- Research found that perceptions of Plymouth as an innovative city are lagging behind
- Graduates cite 'lack of opportunities' as main reason for leaving the city

However,

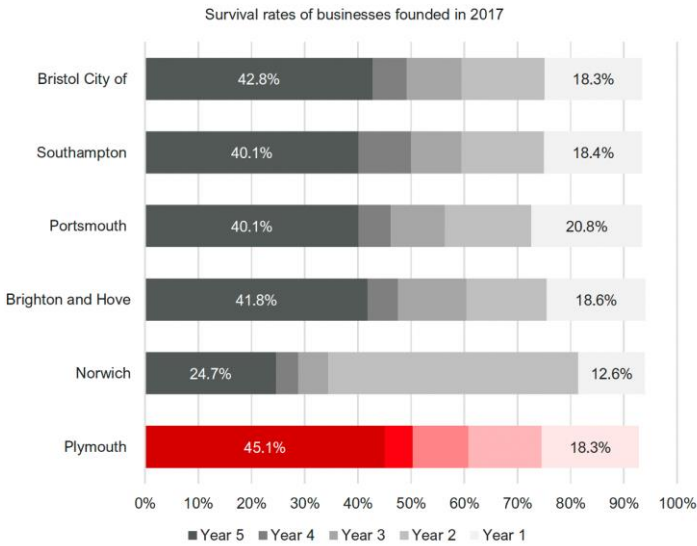
- Plymouth is an 'innovation' hotspot according to 'Innovate UK'
- Workforce specialisms are in engineering and technical professions, advanced manufacturing, defence and metalwork but constraints on labour market limiting sector development and potential
- There are established and expanding clusters in marine industries, autonomy, defence, health and life sciences and creative industries
- Plymouth was named as the National Centre for Marine Autonomy in 2025
- Business survival rates in the city are higher than comparator cities



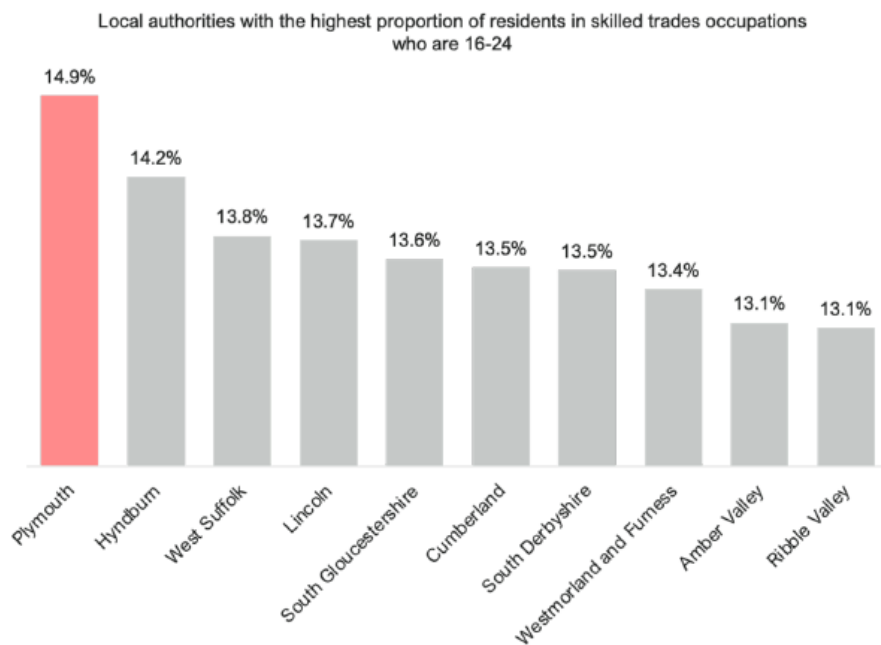
Specialisms: physical sciences & engineering, advanced manufacturing & materials, life sciences, photonics

There are a high proportion of start-up and SME companies, but also a significant number of established businesses

Source: Innovate UK



Source: ONS Business Demographics



**Plymouth is in the top 20% in England and Wales for the proportion of workers in skilled trades occupations – 12.8%**

#### **#4 Plymouth's cultural offer and creative industries have the potential to shift perceptions of the city.**

Evidenced by:

From the 'The Box' to Theatre Royal, TR2 and Arts University Plymouth, the city is emerging as a city of creativity and culture

Perceptions research found that people were surprised about Plymouth's exciting cultural offer

University of Plymouth, including i-DAT, immersive media lab, digital fabrication, screen printing, film studios, immersive dome are all growing creative organisations

Plymouth is growing co-working spaces that support the creative industries, including Ocean Studios, Eat Work Art, Alma Yard.

The creative industries provide Plymouth with over 5,000 jobs – plus nearly 4,000 more creative jobs in other industries contributing at least £134.9 million GVA

From these insights and the research as a whole a number of key opportunities to re-position the city as a place to attract talent to live and to work were identified:

#1 Celebrate the ocean's all-encompassing benefits: from creative inspiration to scientific discovery

#2 Make Plymouth synonymous with greater quality of life

#3 Showcase Plymouth's available opportunities and how innovation threads the city's past, present and future

#4 Define creativity's USP: combination of maximum access and production

In addition to the key opportunities, the research identified specific themes to be considered in the brand going forwards:

- Plymouth's economic specialisms contribute to national security, from defence to research
- Capture the friendliness and community feel as a welcoming city
- Show full family support to ease talent's decision to move to Plymouth

- Proactively connect young talent with existing opportunities within the city
- Reflect Plymouth's future story: £6 billion pipeline investment from public/private sector into the city will be transformative to attracting talent

The report suggested 10 key opportunities that we can move forwards as a city to re-position our brand and grow our reputation nationally and internationally. This formed the basis of the second piece of work which was to develop a new narrative for the city that reflects the contemporary place we are today.

- Tell an evocative story that captures how the ocean makes you feel
- Make the city synonymous with greater work-life balance
- Elevate Plymouth's defence and scientific specialisms by making them nationally significant
- Showcase the business ecology so talent can see themselves grow
- Close young people's perception gap around available job opportunities
- Use innovation to thread the city's past, present and future
- Provide full family support to help talent choose Plymouth
- Give culture a bigger platform
- Create a stronger location message than "end of the line"
- Let Plymothian personality shine

See supporting Perception Research presentation in the appendix for this paper.

### **3. Development of a new narrative and creative approach for the city**

Following on from the perception research key themes and city strengths have been developed as a new narrative to re-position the city building on the successful Britain's Ocean City' branding. The narrative and creative is now available for use by engaged stakeholders and city partners for communications to support the positioning and marketing of the city as we transition from a visitor led destination to a whole place brand led approach. A creative approach to developing an overarching city narrative with supporting themes was a core element of this brief as it was felt that the city's story needs be curated in a way that is appealing and compelling to our target audiences. This includes ensuring that the narrative reflects our own Plymouth personality and engages with the community through authentic content and stories.

The results of these two pieces of work have been shared across multiple stakeholders and tested with local communities through co-creation week series of workshops and open sessions in the city. This included student representatives and diverse community groups. Over 2000 hours of meetings took place over 18 months including:

- 250 public creative responses from our residency at Drake Circus
- 100 survey responses from all over the UK
- 100 interviews, on-street conversations and workshop attendees
- 35 Plymouth businesses, organisations and institutions took part in the process

The aim of the work was to build on the perception research findings to create a narrative: capturing Plymouth's strengths in a compelling story and then use this to develop a striking new visual identity: true to the city and stands out against peers.

Our existing city branding 'Britain's Ocean City' has stood the test of time well and has built up valuable brand equity over a period of time. In a survey conducted towards the end of 2023 there was overwhelmingly positive support to maintain and build on the Britain's Ocean City concept but also to develop a narrative which moves the city forward into the future and does not rely just on our significant heritage assets.

'Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City' branding represents the following key strengths of the city:

- Britain: nationally important, significant global marker
- Ocean: big, evocative, captures the imagination
- City: dynamic, opportunities, urban

However, we need to expand this and consider new narratives. We need positive statements that override some of the negative external perceptions of the city which were discovered in the External Perception Research work.

#### **Negative external perceptions**

"Just about the navy"  
 "Has no opportunities"  
 "Is far away"  
 "No culture"  
 "Not diverse"

#### **Positive counter positioning**

"An Innovative city"  
 "Career growth"  
 "Lifestyle location"  
 "Creativity is all around"  
 "Empowering community"

So, we worked with our creative team, key stakeholders and our local community to create new narratives for the city to reflect the strengths and opportunities highlighted above.

A number of key themes were identified:

- **Over 500 years of innovation**
- **The horizons are bigger here**
- **A city wild about nature:**
- **Plymouth creativity has no bounds:**
- **A community that goes beyond:**
- **We're charting an exciting future:**

These themes have now been refined and developed and created into a new 'Brand toolkit' with visuals and assets, proof points and research data for multiple stakeholders across the city to use.

See link to Brand home page here: [Plymouth: Brand home](#)

#### **4. Brand strategy**

Over the past 18 months a wide-ranging group of city stakeholders has been working on the projects above and has also created a Brand Strategy for the city. The Stakeholder group includes:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Company</b>
Paul Fieldsend-Danks (Chair)/Jacqui Moore/ Lauren Taverner-Brown and Senior leadership team/student cohort	Arts University Plymouth
James Smith/Lisa Brammer/Brendan Staniforth	Babcock

Richard Stevens/Clare Baker	Chamber/PABC
Richard Davies/ Jane Chafer/Clare Martin and Senior leadership team/student cohort	University of Plymouth
Jackie Grubb/Pauline Hands/Lee McQueen/Louise Greenleaf and Senior Leadership team/student cohort	City College
Claire Taylor/student cohort	Marjon University
Dave Briggs	Nash and Co/Building-brands.co.uk
Jabo Butera	Diversity Business Incubator
Pamela Badham/Cristina Artico	Four PR
Amanda Nash/Kim Cazaly/Stuart Windsor	NHS University Hospitals Trust
Elaine Hayes	Plymouth Sound National Marine Park
Elinor Firth/Richard Longford/Sarah Lloyd, Nina Sarlaka/Catherine Gledhill	Plymouth City Council
CLlr Jemima Lang	Plymouth City Council
Stephanie Lewis/Rhys Jones	Plymouth Active Leisure
Jonathan Cowie/Mary O'Leary	Plymouth Community Homes
Hannah Harris/Lindsey Hall	Plymouth Culture
Simon Clare/Adrian Bratt	Princess Yachts
Ian McFadzen	Ocean Conservation Trust/Plymouth Science Park
Victoria Pomery/Abigail Netcott	The Box
James McKenzie Blackman/ Jennifer Thomas/ Savanna Myszka	Theatre Royal
Gemma Selley/Lee Crocker	Plymouth Manufacturing Group

A city brand strategy creates a single brand story for the city and extends it to all its offerings and interactions. From a consumer's point of view, this creates a unique picture of the city at every level of interaction. This also helps in removing the need to present a case-by-case picture of the city for each of its offerings to the customers. A city brand is its promise of value, a promise that needs to be kept. Good branding can assist in making cities desirable, just as bad branding can assist in making cities undesirable. Some examples of well-branded cities are New York City, San Francisco and Paris. It is seen that the successful city brands market their history, quality of place, lifestyle, culture, and diversity, and proactively formed cooperative partnerships between local authorities and government in order to enhance their infrastructure. Equally important is the role of positioning in the branding process, i.e. creating a distinct place in the market for the city to occupy.

The high-level brand strategy sets out a direction of travel for the city over the next ten years with our vision, mission and aims along with high level objectives, target audiences and how we will deploy our brand messaging across them.

## **2. Factors affecting Destination Plymouth Brand delivery:**

### **i. Reduced capacity of Destination Plymouth and future funding**

Destination Plymouth currently employs 3 full time staff and hosts the National Marine Park (NMP) CEO. In addition, the organisation contracts additional support from two contractors for specialist work including cruise and travel trade/ (MEET Plymouth) conference activity. The two contracted staff and one of the permanent staff are self-financing through the Destination Plymouth Membership scheme, Cruise and Conference partnerships and the NMP CEO is funded through Mayflower legacy and Horizon project funds until 2026 at which point it is anticipated that alternative funding will be secured.

Funding was reduced in 2023 by £100,000 per annum, however, UK Shared Prosperity Funding has been secured until March 2026 which will keep Destination Plymouth viable until then. Post March 2026 'Enterprise Funding' has been secured to cover 'Core costs' to March 2027. Resources remain tight and a work stream to explore a longer-term funding strategy will be prioritised over the next 12 months.

It is anticipated that some of the government funding linked to the 'Team Plymouth' programme can be identified and used specifically to attract talent to the city as part of a wider programme of work including skills development and education. A step change in positive perception of the city will be required to drive the growth in employment numbers required to support 'Team Plymouth' growth.

### **ii. Adoption of city brand messaging**

The success of a city brand is judged on a number of key criteria, one of which is adoption by city partners of the brand narrative and assets. A key element of feedback from initial research into the Britain's Ocean City branding in 2023 highlighted that key city partners, businesses and communities felt that although they were very positive about Britain's Ocean City being used they felt that the brand was 'not for them' and they were not able to use it. To overcome this a city brand development group was formed and this group has been instrumental in creating the brand strategy, scoping the initial external perception research and developing the new narrative and creative approach working with agency partners. This process has been very positive and successful with lead partners Babcock adopting the new approach for their Devonport Open Days event in August 2025, Plymouth Culture adopting key visual elements for their new 'Creative Industries Strategy 2025' and other key stakeholders including City Bus providing assets to promote the new approach going into the autumn.

The brand home page, toolkit and assets has been specifically designed to be flexible and to allow interpretation by organisations across the city in terms of usage whether it is just the consistent narratives, the imagery or some of the visual and logo components, including footprints, colours and pattern designs.

The toolkit and new media hub sit on digital platforms which have back-end systems to check registration, usage and monitor it so that adoption can be measured over a period of time.

The 'brand home' page toolkit, image library and film all went 'live' w/c September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and have been incredibly well received. The film has had over 119,000 views on Facebook and over 3,200 on LinkedIn to date with predominantly positive feedback. A full analysis of impact, reach and engagement across all social channels and including links back to the brand home site and media hub will be undertaken after the first month's activity.