

Health and Wellbeing Board



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Date of meeting:	15 January 2026
Title of Report:	City Brand Strategy
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)
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Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Health and Wellbeing Board following completion of the work to create a Brand repositioning Strategy for the city. Board members and partners are encouraged to utilise the City Brand Strategy messaging and tools which will aid with recruitment, retention and perception.

Recommendations and Reasons

Following its adoption by Plymouth City Council Cabinet in October 2025 that the Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board:

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

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 positively over time.

2. Aligns with key components of the city branding work including narratives and visuals and 'main streams' them where appropriate into key delivery programmes where city wide messaging is required.

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 for example, 'Team Plymouth', Plan 4 Homes, Plymouth Plan and the Local Economic Strategy.

3. Recognises Destination Plymouth has a broader remit as a city-wide 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. Recognises 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 via Plymouth City Council.

Alternative options considered and rejected

1. 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, study 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.
Not having the Brand strategy 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.
2. 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, Plymouth Plan 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:

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board considering this report.

Background: 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

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board considering this report.

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

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 completed see link

[Assessment - Climate Impact Assessment Tool](#)

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.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
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.								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Perception Report							

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)													
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.														
Cabinet Report City Brand Strategy Oct 2025	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Perception research report Jan 2025	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
City narrative presentation April 2025	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Equalities impact assessment Oct 2025	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							

Sign off: