

Plymouth Report Summary



General observation

9 The growth agenda makes Plymouth distinct and touches all aspects of partnership activity, which is not surprising given its scale. For example, it interweaves with health as both a vehicle for planning healthy communities, with better quality housing, services and improved access to specialist facilities, which can help reduce inequalities and prevent poor health; and, is a means of attracting more high value jobs and companies to the city, with the development of the medical sciences, hospital and university. It can, therefore, be the thread that binds a range of activities together in a highly focused way.

The city and its customer

10 Although residents feel positive about Plymouth as a place, the city is near the average across a number of service satisfaction areas. There is no shared single contact point or customer management strategy across agencies evident. Some services, like health care, are provided to a single customer in many different settings by many organisations. The city is perceived as being comparatively isolated and lacking in a dynamic image, despite its discovery heritage, though these are issues that are being addressed. Visitors within its catchment area have a reasonably good view of the city and there is scope to build on the existing visitor base.

Wealth

11 The city is successfully implementing a spatial framework and developing the infrastructure to meet its very ambitious vision of becoming one of Europe's major waterfront cities. Many major schemes and investments are already delivered or in progress and the changes to the city are visible. There are clear strategies in place around the economy, health, housing, transport and culture. Annual monitoring of the Local Development Framework shows that it is progressing strongly and it is seen as a national exemplar. However, the city's current profile does not meet that level of ambition, as the population is in the main not yet sufficiently entrepreneurial or skilled in the right areas. For instance, self-employment is significantly lower than the regional and national average; occupationally the city is under represented in managerial, senior official, professional and associate occupations, as well as in the finance, IT and other business industrial classification; there is an over-representation in public sector employment, while

Key challenges

- The growth agenda is what makes Plymouth distinct and it can be the thread that binds a range of activities together.
- The city is successfully implementing a spatial framework and developing the infrastructure to meet its very ambitious vision, but its current profile does not match that ambition as in the main it is not sufficiently entrepreneurial or skilled in the right areas.
- Health is improving but health inequalities are wide and are linked to a range of other inequalities that tend to converge around the western edge of the city.
- Educational attainment is improving well, but entry to higher education is relatively low when compared to other cities and performance around vocational qualifications could be better.
- The voluntary and community sector in Plymouth is not as large as in comparable cities at a time when there is likely to be increasing demands made on it.
- The same customers are often dealt with by many agencies in many places, but there is no shared contact point and customer management strategy across agencies.
- There is currently no resource plan for the LSP covering people, finance and assets, while there is growing pressure on how more limited resources can be used across the partnership and risks and impacts assessed

recent employment growth has been in part-time work; whilst not lacking skills, relatively low numbers of people are skilled to Level 4 and above; it does comparatively poorly for young people going onto higher education and has a comparatively low gross value added score - which is a means of measuring the output of the local economy and productivity. It is not certain that the city will achieve its desired population increase to time, though estimates that have just come out show a rise, and a lot will depend on the composition of that increase if it is to be the dynamic, vibrant waterfront city with cutting edge industries and a strong cultural offer.

Health

12 Health has improved across the population with life expectancy increasing and now standing at 81.9 years for women and 76.8 years for men, which is a slight widening of the gender gap and just above the national average for women (81.8yrs) and a below that for men (77.7yrs). Health inequalities feature strongly in Plymouth and together with crime, educational attainment, housing quality and deprivation levels generally converge around the western boundary of the city, with multiple demands on multiple services. At the extreme there is a 12 year gap between neighbourhoods at the top and bottom end of the spectrum. When comparing the bottom and top 20% of areas the gap is 7 years for men and nearly 3 years for women. Health in the city is significantly worse than the national average in

17 of the 32 comparative health categories. For example, estimated rates for smoking, healthy eating and obesity in adults are worse than average; physical activity is similar, as is childhood obesity. Teenage pregnancy and hospital stays for alcohol related harm are both higher than average. Early deaths from cancer, heart disease and stroke are falling, though new cases of malignant melanoma are amongst the highest in England. The proportion of the population that is elderly is below average, but is growing numerically and there are consequently rising demands for care packages.

Safe/strong

13 Plymouth is a comparatively safe city when compared to other urban conurbations, with falling overall crime, particularly acquisitive crime, such as theft of and from vehicles, domestic burglary and robbery. Offending linked to the night time economy and alcohol remains problematic for the city with drunkenness, alcohol related violence and offences such as sexual assaults and domestic abuse main issues. Violence against the person has reduced over the past few years, though the city still performs poorly against its national comparative group for assault related crimes. Whilst violence and drunkenness impact on the economy and health, there is currently no shared city-wide approach to addressing it or joint commissioning in place. There is a strong focus on safeguarding children and adults and supporting the most vulnerable in communities. There are excellent examples of partnership working in relation to emergencies and critically sensitive events, where the city received a green flag under the former CAA inspection. Safeguarding will always be a concern, particularly at a time of public sector cutbacks, and there are large numbers of children and young people in care or with child protection plans. The environment is relatively clean and the city has undergone a major change in the collection of waste. Satisfaction results for waste compare well with other public services in Plymouth, though not so well with some national figures. Success has been achieved around social cohesion and the city has been officially classed as 'low' for tension for some years, though it is recognised that the city's expansion will need to be managed in a cohesive way. The voluntary and community sector, though making good progress from the mid-nineties, is not as developed as in comparable cities according to the local Whitfield study and National Study of the Third Sector. This needs to be seen in the context of the national drive for a bigger role for the sector.

Wise

14 The city has a cultural strategy and is trying to improve its cultural and sporting offer through the development of initiatives like the Life Centre, Plymouth Report August 2010 - Executive Summary

World Cup bid and major events like the Pilgrim 400 anniversary and British Art Show. The creative industries sector is one of the six priority growth sectors. Both the University of Plymouth and City College are focused outwards on business and skills. There is a strong focus on educational attainment and improving learning environments, though progress with the schools building programme is affected by current national cutbacks. Attainment, together with safeguarding, is going to be a priority for the new coalition government. Progress with educational attainment has been good and needs to be maintained. The Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 4 have all continued to improve; the city does better than nationally for getting 5 GCSEs A*-C, but is below the national average when English and Maths are included. Although the geographic attainment gap has been narrowed, it is still significant; while girls consistently out perform boys. Comparatively low number of young people are going into higher education when contrasted with other cities and keeping or attracting those who already have such qualifications is recognised as necessary. The city could also think how it compares internationally on attainment and other matters, given its ambitions and desire to raise aspirations.

Capacity

15 Although performance is generally good and finances managed well it should be noted that the resource management element of the 2009 Use of Resources assessment only met minimum requirements across each of the partners inspected – i.e. Primary Care Trust (PCT), Council, Police and Fire and Rescue Service. In the current climate there is likely to be a sharper focus on the need for further enhancing joint commissioning activity, shared service provision and support functions, as a means of more effective delivery, improved value for money and cost savings. The first draft of an investment plan for the city has been completed, though there is no LSP resource plan as such that would include the strategic use of resources like people, assets and finance across the partnership. There is a wealth of data, numerous needs analysis and multiple strategies and plans across the agencies. They are, however, not always aligned in their scheduling, can contain contradictory data and do not always demonstrate shared high level objectives. Staff survey data from some public agencies, though containing many positive findings, shows that staff do not feel they are being sufficiently involved in the improvement agenda. This should be seen in the context of partners needing to do more with less available resources, with innovation increasingly likely to be valued.■