

## Background

City/Cities of Learning (CofL) is a project about making the whole city a learning campus.

In 2015, The Royal Society for Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce (RSA) in their [The New Digital Learning Age](#) recommended that the UK should explore piloting a 'City of Learning'. This was based on the original work of the 'Collective Shift' in the United States.

The Programme seeks to widen opportunity and empower access to places that promote lifelong learning. It does this via a digitally based system and approach that identifies and promotes learning systems in the city (in addition to schools, FE and HE), encouraging more people to take part in learning.

The four components of the programme designed to support learners are:

- digital badges
- a tool to support pathways to success
- a learning framework and
- online / offline resources

Plymouth made a successful bid to become one of the first UK 'Cities of Learning' and has established a strong partnership with the RSA in leading the UK programme. This is in conjunction with DigitalMe, who are developing the technology platform and Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) who are providing the match funding for the pilot phase.

The RSA has received £250K across the project and is involving other cities. Plymouth's proportion is £70k. This has been allocated to the RIO.

The status of PCC is as a trusted partner and our digital lead has represented the city on a national level.

## Approach

In Plymouth we have mobilised local organisations, networks and communities across the city to develop their learning offers for use on a digital platform to promote a shared and accessible learning offer under the following themes:

- Creative, cultural, and digital
- Health, youth, volunteering, housing
- Social enterprise, community businesses

The project aims to present combined learning offers particularly to those disengaged from formal education and to recognise knowledge, skills, attitudes and values towards the following destinations:

- Education
- Enterprise
- Employability
- Civic engagement

The learning spine framework is underpinned by:

- Engagement
- Participation
- Demonstration

- Leadership

A technology platform will be used to identify and capture learning offers and opportunities across the city. This will allow learners to record their activities in a digital portfolio of achievement. This extends the role of the city's 'Employability Passport'.

Data from the platform will also help to provide analytical insight into learning activity and employment trends across the city, enabling targeted planning and streamlining of services.

### **The current situation**

At present there are 25 issuers including Youth Services and the Box who are fully engaged. Badges will commence from September 2019. The pathway tool will be ready in February 2020 with Digital, Civic Engagement, Health and Wellbeing identified as the initial pathway developments. City of Learning will make a significant contribution to our Inclusive Growth agenda.

### **The future potential**

The City of Learning provides an opportunity for Plymouth to lead the way in innovative approaches to learning, capitalising on our existing strengths in the city and region. It provides a way to celebrate the city as a destination for learning, employability and cultural development. Raising aspiration and facilitating achievement in both formal and informal learning for our young people. It also supports the National Careers Strategy and Gatsby benchmarks.

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