

Theme: Economy & Skills

Theme Pack for Board: objectives, projects, gaps, resources, dependencies and risks

Version	v0.2
Date	23 February 2026
Prepared by	Programme Manager (PM)
Status	Draft for Board review
Source meetings	Strategic Planning Workshop (Theme Meeting #1) and Theme Group Meeting #2 (04 Feb 2026)

1. Theme name and agreed objective

Improve the economy of Ilfracombe by offering higher quality jobs to match a highly skilled workforce, supported by clear pathways, employer engagement, and wrap-around support (including childcare).

2. Context, scope and what success looks like

- Focus on upskilling, diversifying industry, attracting business investment and improving the flow of investment opportunities.
- Current pilot provides a working model that can be turned into a replicable end-to-end blueprint.
- Ensure inclusive pathways for young people not in mainstream education and for people facing additional barriers.
- Integrate enablement infrastructure (childcare, transport/physical access, signposting) so opportunities are usable in practice.

3. Current activity and progress

- A 4-month end-to-end pilot is underway across partners: Town Council, District, Devon County Council, North Devon College, Maritime Training Academy, DWP and others.
- Headline progress reported: approx. 200 people engaged in training/upskilling; around one-third already moving into a positive outcome (employment / further training / similar).
- Approx. 100 businesses supported through engagement and needs conversations.
- A task-and-finish group is becoming a more consistent ongoing group feeding into One Ilfracombe.
- Upcoming: 25 February - Working Skills Fair and partner roundtable to review what worked/what did not, identify gaps, resources, risks and the next 6-12 month plan.

Project portfolio and tracker

Project / intervention	Purpose / description	Current status	Lead / partners	Next milestone	Dependencies / risks	Measures (headline)
4-month end-to-end skills and employability pilot	End-to-end pathway across partners: engagement, training/upskilling, and outcomes tracking.	In delivery	Multi-partner delivery group (Town Council, District, DCC, NDC, Maritime Training Academy, DWP, others)	25 Feb Skills Fair + partner roundtable; publish post-roundtable 6-12 month plan	Convert learning into plan; align with CNN/CNM	Engaged numbers; positive outcomes; employer engagements; skills progression
Blueprint for replicable end-to-end delivery	Document pilot into a blueprint: user journey, referral routes, partner roles, measures; replicable across other towns.	In development	PM with Economy & Skills partners; KPI input from Kier Duffin	Draft blueprint + KPI set for Board cycle after 25 Feb	Shared measures; data access	Blueprint completed; agreed KPI pack
Priority sectors and pathways plan	Agree bedrock vs transformational sectors; build pathways including anchors/employers (healthcare, education, youth work; manufacturing; tourism).	Proposed	Theme group with employer/anchor partners (incl. potential Royal Devon link)	Sector/pathways workshop; publish sector plan	Employer engagement capacity	Number of pathways agreed; employer commitments
Business/sector development offer	Strengthen business/sector development beyond training/employment delivery; inward investment narrative.	Proposed	Theme group (aligned with CNN/CNM)	Define offer and map existing provision	CNN/CNM alignment; comms	Business support interactions; investment opportunities pipeline
Wrap-around support integration	Embed childcare and other enablement infrastructure into skills pathways (not separate add-ons).	In development	Theme group with partners	Agree delivery mechanism and referral routes	Enablement resources	Reduction in drop-off; barrier resolution tracking

4. Gaps, decisions and additional interventions needed

- Strengthen business/sector development work beyond training and employability delivery.
- Agree priority sectors (bedrock vs transformational) and an inward investment narrative.
- Improve community engagement and local intelligence so the offer reflects Ilfracombe communities and employers.
- Agree shared measures and alignment with CNN/CNM so there is one joined-up story.

5. Resources required

- Employer and anchor engagement capacity to build real pathways and sector priorities.
- Capacity for community engagement/local intelligence gathering and continuous improvement.
- Data and reporting support to maintain a shared KPI pack and outcome tracking.
- Enablement resources to integrate childcare and other barrier removal into delivery.
- Communications alignment with CNN/CNM for a single narrative on priorities and opportunities.

Measures and reporting

Measures below combine those explicitly discussed and a small set proposed for Board agreement based on the meeting framing.

Suggested headline measures (for Board agreement):

- People engaged in training/upskilling (monthly and cumulative).
- Positive outcomes rate (employment, further training, sustained participation).
- Employer engagements and number of businesses supported.
- Progression in skills/qualification levels (including longer-term Level 3/4).
- Barrier resolution indicators (e.g., childcare addressed; drop-off reasons).

Dependencies and risk register

ID	Risk / dependency	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation / action
ES-1	Pilot learning not converted into a clear 6-12 month plan (momentum loss).	High	Medium	Amber	Use 25 Feb partner roundtable to capture learning, gaps, resources and publish a costed plan.
ES-2	Weak employer/sector engagement means pathways do not match labour market demand.	High	Medium	Amber	Structured employer engagement; sector workshop; integrate CNN/CNM intelligence.

ES-3	Barriers (childcare/transport/access) not solved, reducing uptake for those most in need.	High	Medium	Amber	Embed wrap-around support; track drop-off reasons and solutions.
ES-4	Inconsistent KPIs across partners undermines reporting and learning.	Medium	Medium	Amber	Agree shared KPI set and standard reporting template.

Action log

Action	Owner	Timescale / next date	Notes
Send Economy & Skills KPIs and pilot details (including initial risks/dependencies) to PM.	Kier Duffin	Before Board pack finalised	Full gaps/resources output after 25 Feb roundtable.
Hold Working Skills Fair and partner roundtable; capture what worked/what did not; identify gaps, resources, risks and next 6-12 month plan.	Charmaine / Economy & Skills partners	25 Feb 2026	Outputs to feed Board pack and ongoing reporting.
Compile pilot learning into blueprint and shared KPI pack for monthly reporting.	PM + theme partners	Post-25 Feb; before/after 4 Mar Board	Align with CNN/CNM reporting.

6. Programme-wide links and cross-cutting items

- Community safety/ASB is a cross-cutting issue shaping outcomes across themes; ownership and reporting need an explicit decision and measures.
- Coastal Navigators Network (CNN/CNM) integration must be visible, particularly for sector priorities, investment opportunities and partner alignment.
- Campus model and public sector estate strategy must be aligned so service navigation does not duplicate or compete with building-based solutions.
- Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) outcomes should be shown as continuing within One Ilfracombe with clear accountability and lived-experience involvement.
- Communications capacity is a key enabler; Kara Stevens (new Comms Officer) noted as an enabling resource once bedded in.