

Environment, Economy & Culture

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**DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE EU2020 STRATEGY**

Devon County Council:

- welcomes the opportunity to comment on the future EU 2020 Strategy.
- supports the key priorities:
 - (1) Creating value by basing growth on knowledge
 - (2) Empowering people in inclusive societies
 - (3) Creating a competitive, connected and greener economy
- supports the holistic approach to presenting the priorities, with economic, social and environmental aspects fully integrated across all three priorities.

However, the County Council is disappointed to see that this approach is not reflected to the same extent in the '*Making it happen*' section where the clear links between the priorities appear to be lost: there needs to be proper integration of social, environmental and economic aspects right through from policy to delivery.

The '*Making it happen*' section focuses on high-level political debate - the single market, global context and intergovernmental agreements such as the Stability and Growth Pact. In particular, while the global context is highlighted, there is scarce reference to the local context or the specific needs of regions/local authority areas. In order to fully achieve the integrated approach put forward in the priorities, further debate is required on how they will be achieved at local level particularly support for business, vulnerable groups, social cohesion, the "green" agenda and future skills requirements.

Historically EU enterprise policy has segregated business support according to location, size, type, rural/urban - this has led to a piecemeal approach with some businesses excluded altogether. With the focus of the EU2020 Strategy on innovation and high growth there is a risk of overlooking the vital contribution of small businesses of all types, especially in rural communities where traditional sectors such as tourism can play a key role. There needs to be a fully integrated approach to EU business support so that there are opportunities for small businesses of all types - including social enterprises - to become the high-growth, innovative businesses of the future.

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Devon County Council appreciates that the EU 2020 Strategy consultation sets out the new approach and the priorities and that more detailed proposals for action will be published in the Commission communication in the Spring. We would welcome another opportunity to comment at that stage given the limited information currently available on how the priorities will be delivered.

Response submitted on behalf of Devon County Council (local authority, UK)