



a strong sustainable community for one and all



ONECORNWALL **ONE**COUNCIL

Cornwall County Council

Part One

Our proposal for a single Council
for Cornwall

Part One: **Our proposal for a single Council for Cornwall**



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An opportunity for
a strong voice for Cornwall
greater local influence
in decision making
more efficient services

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FOREWORD

Cornwall is a special place. Its geography and culture make it unique. This is reflected in strong local identity and a sense of place, with local people having real affinity to Cornwall and a real pride in their heritage.

The time is right for change. After years of economic decline, Cornwall is making real progress. The successful implementation of the EU Objective One programme has been the seed corn to transform our economy. Projects such as the Combined Universities and the Eden Project have enhanced Cornwall's national and international reputation.



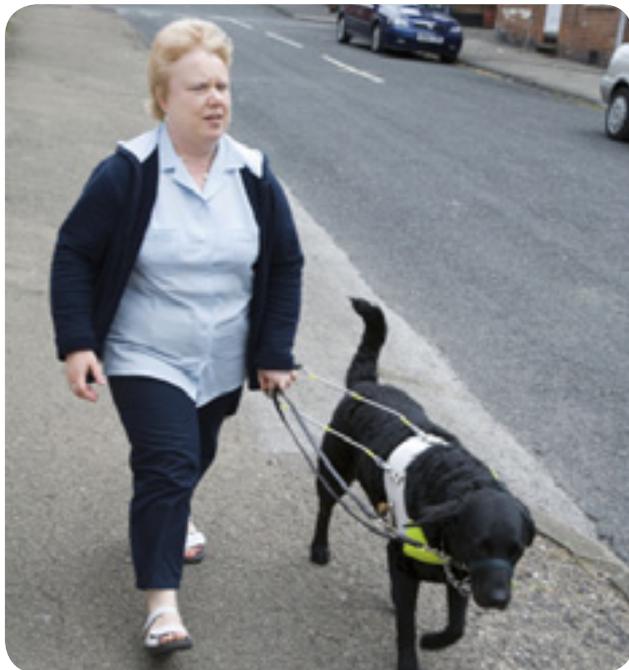
But the structure of local government does not reflect the changes and needs of today's society. Now is the time to put into place new structures that will help to further enhance the progress already made by Cornwall.

For more than a generation many decisions about public services have been taken away from local areas. People have become disenfranchised as the decision making process has become more remote. The increasing cost of public services, combined with the remoteness to local people, has undermined public confidence in the decision making process. The national Government has recognised that there is a need to reverse this situation and has given Cornwall an opportunity to reshape local government. This opportunity will bring significant benefits to local communities and local people.

Part One: **Our proposal for a single Council for Cornwall**

Our proposals are ambitious yet practical. They will transform local government in Cornwall so that it is better placed to achieve a strong sustainable community. Our proposals are cost effective; seeking to gain from economies of scale where appropriate. This approach will enable us to make large savings that will be diverted to providing better services. But we need to make local government more responsive and more local. Our proposals will do just that. Local decisions will be made locally. There will also be much more opportunity to hold the providers of public services to account locally.

Local government is about working together for the benefit of every person in Cornwall. Our proposals will offer the opportunity of real partnership working at a local level with existing parish and town councils strengthened so they can be more involved in providing and monitoring services in their area.



Our proposals will take forward 'double-devolution'. We look forward to working with national Government to ensure that Cornwall is able to make more decisions about local public services. We believe we know best which highways to improve, where new housing should be built and how to develop our economy.

Our ambition is to improve democracy in Cornwall by drawing down powers from non-elected bodies such as the NHS Boards, the Regional Assembly and the Regional Development Agency. We will press Government to work with us to bring many of the functions of these bodies into the devolved, democratic process within Cornwall. We will also seek a greater scrutiny role over the Police and the Environment Agency to make these bodies more accountable to the people of Cornwall.

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We believe that Cornwall needs to be radical to protect its environment. A green peninsula is something we promote. It is the way to make sure that the Cornwall we leave for future generations is as beautiful and unique as today's Cornwall. It is the way in which Cornwall can make more use of renewable energy and become less dependent on fossil fuels.

The Government White Paper, whilst welcome, does not fully recognise the challenge of delivering services in a rural area such as Cornwall. Our proposals highlight ways in which the "double devolution" process can be used to strengthen rural communities. Our commitment to localism, and our determination to devolve more decision making to local communities shows that a unified council can provide economies of scale whilst localising decision making.

Strong local government does not mean more centralisation. It means a single, strong voice for Cornwall, trusting local people to make more decisions about their local area. If these proposals are

accepted there is the exciting prospect of establishing new mechanisms to develop common policies for Cornwall whilst celebrating local differences in the implementation of those policies.

Cornwall is at a cross-roads. Without a radical change, the structure of local governance in Cornwall, will not meet the growing demands on services, with budgets that cannot keep pace with these demands. The Government requirement for councils to make year-on-year efficiency savings would challenge service delivery in almost every area. The proposal for a unified council will enable us to make efficiency savings that will improve services. The new council, which will take the best from both the district councils and the county council, will enable Cornwall to look towards improved services. It will provide stronger leadership within local communities and in promoting Cornwall's needs to the wider world. Our proposals will be good for the people of Cornwall.



David Whalley
Leader of the Council