

# 2. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CORNWALL

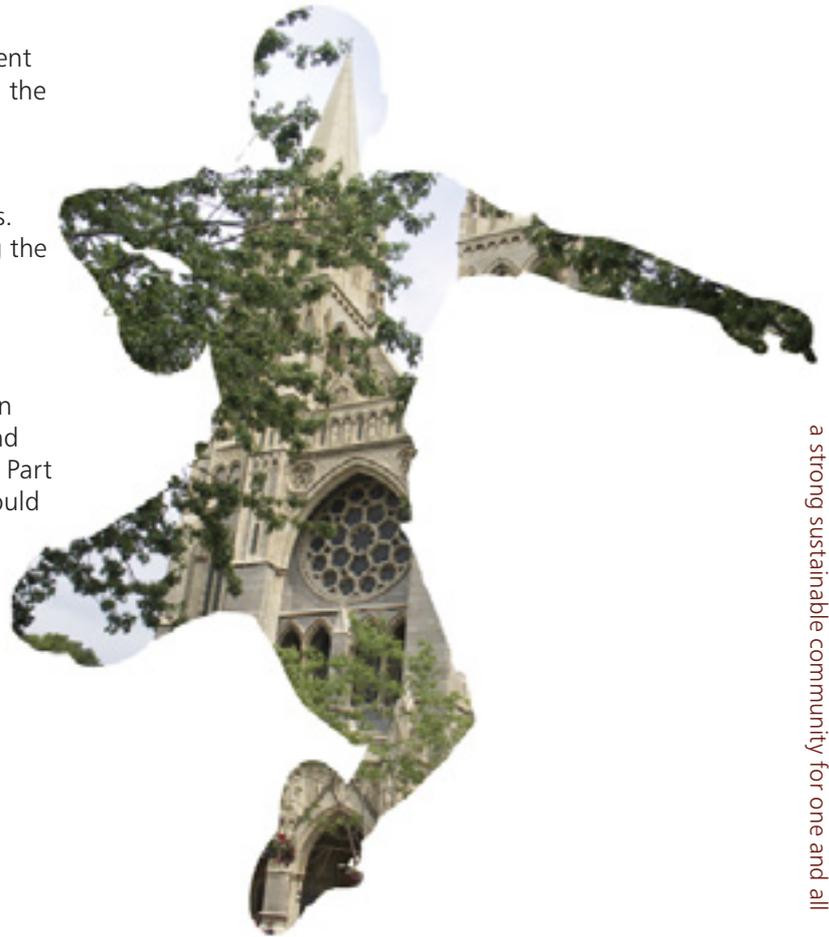
## vision, objectives and strategic aim

### 2.1 Introduction

The Local Government White Paper provides an opportunity to build a structure of local government that meets the needs of the people of Cornwall in the 21st Century.

The challenges facing Cornwall require strong leadership and responsive, efficient public services. We believe this can only be achieved by reshaping the present arrangement of local government.

In Part 1 of this document we outline the case for change, our strategic aim and objectives and proposals for restructuring. In Part 2 we set out in more detail how we will meet these challenges and our strategies for delivering improved services. In Part 3, case studies demonstrate how our strategies could be implemented.



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Our ambition is for the unification of all the public services in Cornwall within a single governance structure. We regard the integration of the 7 local authorities in the county as a significant step towards a more radical and ambitious model of 'regional' governance for Cornwall. Our proposals advocate the closer integration of all public services at both the strategic and the local level; a shift from a model of local government to one of local governance.

At the heart of our proposal is a commitment to the principles of 'double devolution' – "power transferred from Whitehall to the Townhall, and from the Townhall to citizens and communities"<sup>1</sup>. The new council for Cornwall will bring together the strengths of the existing local authorities and will have both the capacity and ambition to take on responsibilities that are currently administered by regional and national government. This includes strategic planning, economic development, transport infrastructure and housing.

At the same time as campaigning for the devolution of new powers to Cornwall, the new authority will seek to devolve services to frontline councillors and their communities. Decisions and budgets will be devolved to elected members working at the local level, and in some instances to town and parish councils.

- Build on the cultural, economic and environmental distinctiveness of Cornwall and its local communities and endorse a strategic approach to its governance.
- Empower elected members to represent their constituents' interests and have more influence over the delivery of all public services in their areas.
- Provide greater democratic scrutiny and integration of all public services in Cornwall.
- Identify local and strategic representation in such a way that capacity and local accountability are simultaneously enhanced.

### **Local responsiveness**

- Encourage local councils to take a more active role in improving their areas.
- Offer local people more opportunities to express their views about how their areas are developed and how services are provided.
- Promote decentralised local government and service delivery by ensuring that it is accessible to local people (utilising one stop shops and other service access solutions).
- Provide communities with clear representation.

### **Value for money**

- Provide high quality services that match the aspirations of local communities and are both efficient and cost-effective.

<sup>1</sup> Milliband, D (2006) Empowerment and the Deal for Devolution: Speech to the New Local Government Network, London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

## **2.2 Our principles**

The proposals outlined in this bid document are based on the following key principles; agreed by Cornwall County Council on 23rd September 2006.

### **Strong leadership**

- Provide effective strategic leadership and a stronger voice for the people of Cornwall.
- Ensure that, wherever possible, decisions about Cornwall are made in Cornwall.



## About Cornwall

Cornwall is the second largest county in the South West. Its geographical position makes Cornwall one of the most remote, peripheral and isolated parts of Britain.

The population is scattered in small towns and villages with just under a third of the population living in towns of over 10,000 inhabitants, compared to four-fifths in England and Wales.

Cornwall's picturesque landscape masks the levels of deprivation within the county. The 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks the area at the mid point of the local authorities in England (75th out of 148), while 1 in 5 of Cornwall's "super output areas"<sup>2</sup> are ranked in the 15% most income deprived areas in England. Cornwall is recognised by the European Union as being an area in need of special support; it was awarded Objective One status in 1999 and has recently qualified for a new round of European Union funding: Convergence funding (2007-2013).

In spite of this, Cornwall's population is increasing at a dramatic rate and now stands at about 520,000 people; between 1981 and 2001 Cornwall's growth rate was more than four times the average for the United Kingdom. The population is also older than in most parts of the country. Indeed, between 2001 and 2028, it is predicted that Cornwall will experience a 117% increase in the numbers of people aged 80 and older; a far faster rate of increase than other areas of the country.

Cornwall's natural and historic environment is its strongest asset and underpins economic activity, such as tourism, agriculture and fishing and the newly developing industries based around environmental technology. Of Cornwall's landmass over 51% is either classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Areas of Great Landscape Value. There are over 140 sites of Special Scientific Interest covering over 3% of the County. Additionally a growing percentage of the county's agricultural land is devoted to organic farming.



<sup>2</sup> Super Output areas are small geographical areas of around 1,500 in population.

## 2.3 Our vision

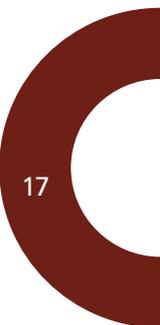
Our shared long term vision for the future of Cornwall is set out in the Cornwall Community Strategy.

### **"Cornwall – a strong sustainable community for one and all"**

The vision is for:

*"Cornwall as a special place and a strong sustainable community – its distinctive physical and cultural qualities protected and enhanced, recognised in the United Kingdom and Europe and providing the basis for a sustainable quality of life and environment for its people."*

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Cornwall displays many of the strengths of a natural region. Its geography, peripherality, environment and culture contribute to a strong sense of place and identity – a survey conducted in 2003 identified the fact that most people in Cornwall feel an affinity to the county above their local neighbourhood<sup>3</sup>.

Cornwall's strengths lie in its resilience, independent spirit and its passion for creativity and innovation. After years of decline a new sense of confidence and purpose is emerging. Assisted by European Structural funding and transformational projects such as Eden, Tate St. Ives and the Combined Universities in Cornwall, the economy is growing and a platform for sustained progress is being formed. Yet, there is much to do if this is to be sustained. High levels of population growth, continuing deprivation, demographic and climate change pose significant challenges which require a strategic focus and the effective utilisation of skills and resources.

The white paper recognises the important role which local government plays in 'place shaping'. Nowhere is this more relevant than Cornwall today. Cornwall and its people have a strong collective identity; building on this to strengthen governance across the whole of the county will enable the achievement of national, regional and local objectives.

## 2.4 Our Aims and Objectives

**Our strategic aim** is to transform local government for Cornwall and to achieve a strong sustainable community for one and all by providing:

- strong leadership,
- local flexibility and engagement, and
- responsive, cost effective services.

The new governance arrangements for Cornwall will be outcome focussed and have a real impact on people's lives, playing a lead role in a wider public sector partnership to deliver on the major issues identified above and through the Local Area Agreement.

The establishment of a unified structure of local government will lead to a more independent, self sufficient and sustainable Cornwall and a model for the successful management of a peripheral region; an exemplar for the transformation of struggling economic regions and places, building on its natural and environmental assets.

We believe that a new framework of governance for Cornwall will need to address the following objectives:

- **Driving economic progress** - building a strong, broad based and stable economy that delivers prosperity and worthwhile opportunities for all; using the Convergence Programme to bring Cornwall's economy out of 'dependency' mode - investing in skills, creating high quality, sustainable employment, improving productivity, encouraging innovation and investing in infrastructure. The new Authority will explore the concept of multi-area agreements to drive economic growth.
- **Promoting personal well being** - tackling issues of health and social welfare; dealing with specific demographic issues, e.g. an increasing elderly population; tackling social exclusion; ensuring freedom from harassment and discrimination; promoting life long learning; improving equality of access to services, a

<sup>3</sup> MORI (2003) Attitudes to Regional Government in Cornwall. London: MORI.

particular challenge in a rural county with a dispersed population; improving the quality of life for all, where all people are encouraged to make a positive contribution to community life and exercise choice and control of services.

- **Enhancing and protecting the environment** – delivering our ambition for being a centre of excellence for the natural environment, protecting our unique and special environment; improving public spaces; insisting on quality sustainable development; managing our resources wisely; but also promoting sustainable development and using our special environment as an economic driver, for example in the development of environmental technologies.
- **Tackling climate change** – building Cornwall’s reputation as a ‘green peninsula’ and the success of the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP); recognising the important role which local authorities can play in leading by example and in delivering approaches to minimising the causes of climate change and adapting to the effects, ensuring countywide buy in to a sustainable energy future. This requires a strategic approach linked to local solutions.

- **Building strong, sustainable and cohesive communities** - using and strengthening partnerships to improve community safety in an integrated way across all sectors; encouraging and enabling people to shape the future of their communities; celebrating diversity.
- **Meeting housing needs including the delivery of affordable housing** – developing a strategic integrated approach is vital to improve the delivery of housing to meet the different needs of our communities, and
- **Managing growth** – population growth as a result of net migration and increased household formation will place particular pressure on Cornwall in terms of infrastructure and services, as well as the capacity of the public sector to manage such change – this requires a strategic countywide approach and the targeted deployment of scarce skills and resources.

A more detailed explanation of how the new authority would meet these objectives and a description of the key service improvement strategies is included as Part 2 of the proposal.



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