



a strong sustainable community for one and all



ONECORNWALLONECOUNCIL

Cornwall County Council

Part Two

Achieving our aims and objectives;
Service improvement strategies



a strong sustainable community for one and all



ONECORNWALL **ONE**COUNCIL

a strong sustainable community
for one and all

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

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INTRODUCTION

In Part 1 we set out the clear case for a unified structure of local government and our proposals for change.

In Part 2 we set out how a unified council will more effectively tackle the key challenges and objectives facing Cornwall and our proposals for improved service delivery. Our proposals for service delivery improvements reflect the specific requirements of the invitation to councils accompanying the white paper (i.e. paragraph 4.13 and Annexe A of that document).





ACHIEVING OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In this section we set out our proposals in more detail for:-

- **driving economic progress**
- **promoting personal well being**
- **enhancing and protecting the environment**
- **tackling climate change**
- **building stronger, sustainable and cohesive communities**
- **meeting housing needs, including the delivery of affordable housing**
- **managing growth**

Driving Economic Progress

The key challenge for Cornwall is to accelerate the transition to a knowledge economy in order to strengthen our economic position.

Cornwall traditionally used its geography and geology as a basis for wealth creation through agriculture, fishing, mining and, in the 20th century, tourism. Now it has to compete in a very different world and use its assets in new ways, underpinned by a culture that is forward looking and outward facing. It needs to extend its already powerful reputation as a place to visit and live into a place to create, develop and attract high value, knowledge-based businesses.

Whilst Cornwall has recently enjoyed a period of economic growth, there is a continuing need to restructure the economy to focus on a broader range of higher value added and growth sectors, in order to address the underlying problems of a low wage economy. Environmental technologies and renewable energy are seen as sectors of particular potential¹. Meanwhile, existing key sectors such as tourism must reconcile the need to maintain competitiveness with increasing added value and wage levels².

Cornwall's main towns will be the focus for new sustainable development. Some centres require physical regeneration to make them more attractive for investment, coupled with the development of stronger community infrastructure. In rural areas more effective land stewardship and restructuring

¹Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly ERDF Convergence Programme Consultation Draft, November 2006 p.4

²Consultation on the European Social Fund in England and Gibraltar 2007-2013, 30 October 2006, paragraph 302



Part Two: **Achieving our aims and objectives**

of the local economy is necessary for successful regeneration; rural areas are home to 50% of Cornwall's population but only produce one third of its Gross Value Added (GVA).

Building on the success of recent ICT development, maintaining up-to-date information and communications technology and infrastructure is especially significant to reduce the perception of Cornwall's peripherality and facilitate transition to a modern knowledge-based economy in both towns and remoter rural and coastal areas. Continuing investment in key transport infrastructure is also essential for successful business development; realising the potential of Newquay Airport is a particular concern.

In order to move forward and compete effectively Cornwall needs to maximise the innovation, creativity and knowledge of its people. Increasing participation in adult learning, raising the number qualified to levels 3, 4 and 5 and addressing skills gaps are all issues to be addressed. There are significant pockets of deprivation where Cornwall's most disadvantaged, socially or economically excluded residents need special assistance to overcome barriers to employment and maximise their economic potential.

Cornwall is characterised by a larger than average percentage of small and micro- businesses requiring support to achieve the improved standards of service, investment and training necessary to grow and compete effectively in the global marketplace. Key needs include access to a high standard of information, advice, support, finance, and networks together with adequate physical infrastructure - in particular more quality workspace and better transport links.

Global sustainability issues raise special challenges for Cornwall. Responses are needed at a strategic level to adapt to global warming, rising sea levels, climate change, oil dependency/energy security and wasteful travel patterns. With suitable investment, Cornwall has the potential to generate more energy from renewable sources and thereby shield the area from the risk of anticipated worldwide oil price rises.

Encouraging growth that lessens the need to travel and reduces energy consumption will be key to future economic well-being. Moving towards achieving a carbon neutral environment is also essential if Cornwall's outstanding natural environment is to be maintained for future generations.

The draft economic development strategy for Cornwall³ sets out four framework goals for 2007-21:

- A. *To establish Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as a knowledge economy and society*
- B. *To ensure environmental sustainability*
- C. *To bridge economic and social divides and improve the well being of people*
- D. *To establish Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as a place for wealth creators and entrepreneurs and to improve economic value across all sectors*

Cornwall's low GDP qualifies it for the highest level of European support as a Convergence Region, and it will receive £380 million ESF and ERDF funding during the period 2007-13 to help deliver its economic development strategy. Convergence funding will be allocated in a much more strategically focused commissioning manner than the previous 5b and

³*Strategy and Action The Economic Development Strategy for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly 2007-2021 Edited Draft Post Consultation, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum, 16 November 2006*

Objective One programmes, and will be closely aligned to the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas.

Cornwall County Council's Best Value Review of Economic Development, Regeneration and Tourism recommended the need to clarify roles and responsibilities of agencies, partnerships and local authorities in delivering economic, regeneration and tourism in Cornwall, in particular to identify lead agencies in relation to the thematic areas of Cornwall's economic development strategy. Much good work has been achieved in this area and a number of partnership protocols have been established – for example the recognition of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Development Forum as the relevant partnership within the Cornwall Strategic Partnership.

Currently Cornwall's economic development policy is developed by a single partnership – the Economic Forum – but delivered by many agencies. There is a case to align more clearly delivery mechanisms with strategy and thus improve accountability and performance monitoring.

Unification of the councils in Cornwall and the increased capacity this will bring will help us to meet the requirements of a 'dispersed city region' (or polycentric city region) and realise the benefits set out in the government's recent consultation paper concerning city-regions⁴.

Our ambition is to drive forward the economy of the county by building and strengthening existing partnership working and by stating a case for improved local delivery through a Cornwall Development Agency. We will look to stretch existing targets for economic and progress, demonstrating the extra 'clout' that a unified structure will deliver.

⁴*The Role of City Development Companies in English Cities and City-Regions – a consultation. December 2006 – Department for Communities and Local Government.*

Promoting Personal Well Being

Cornwall's population has grown and is growing faster than the national average. We have also experienced a considerable rise in the number of people over the age of 75 in the last 10 years. Changing demography will challenge service provision. Older residents place greater demands on public services than those in younger age groups.

Our dispersed population also provides challenges for health and social care and access to services and support. The case for a better integration of health and social care services has never been stronger.

In order to address these issues, the new authority would seek to build on existing joint working in the fields of health and adult social care, and in particular would seek to integrate these areas of work with the housing and related services currently administered by Cornwall's district councils.

Cornwall is currently served by 1 primary care trust, the Cornwall Partnership Trust, and 3 acute hospitals. The county council and primary care trust have already agreed that the joint commissioning of health and social care services is a shared objective and the county council's 'commissioning and partnerships unit' will be working towards achieving this by April 2007. A new local authority in Cornwall would honour this commitment and continue to support the existing multi agency partnerships relating to health, adult social care and housing.

We believe there is a strong case for integration of social care and housing services based on the fact that people's accommodation and care needs are highly interrelated. The creation of a countywide, unified

housing service would deliver the following benefits:

- a single method to establish housing needs across Cornwall
- a common housing allocation policy
- common homelessness policies
- common prioritisation policies for disability facilities grants
- common processes around claims for and payment of housing benefit

Integration of adult social care and housing services will assist in resolving some high profile failings of the current system. The most obvious, perhaps, is the provision and management of temporary and permanent sites and accommodation for gypsies and travellers. It has proved difficult to achieve common, unified approaches to this area of work across the county and district councils. A unified service, with common ambitions, priorities, plans and services will assist in providing support to this group of people, as well as raising public confidence that sites were well managed.

Our proposals for the development of Adult Social Care and indeed for Children, Young People and Families services and the stronger links we intend to make with housing and health services are set out in Section 3 below.

Our ambition is to integrate working in the fields of adult social care, health and housing to reflect better the interrelation of these services and provide seamless services for the people of Cornwall.

Enhancing and protecting the environment – towards Cornwall as a “green peninsula”

Cornwall’s environment is unique. Much of the countryside and the varied coastline is of high landscape value, more than 50% designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Areas of Great Landscape Value. The towns and villages are rich in variety, reflecting the past and present economic and cultural development of the county. The moors and upland, as well as much of the coast, have considerable importance for wildlife and many sites of historical and archaeological importance.

In 2006 the Cornwall Mining Landscape was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in recognition of the importance of mining development innovation and engineering over the period of the early 1700s to the late 1800s which was of worldwide significance.

An effective strategic approach to enhancing and protecting our environment is required, which transcends existing administrative boundaries. There are a number of successful partnerships at a strategic and local level operating in Cornwall but there are also overlaps and duplication between present county and district services and activities which could more effectively be rationalised. For example there is scope to bring together the management of the very large landbank of open spaces which presents a significant resource challenge across all seven councils.

A key issue is the most effective deployment of specialist resources to manage and advise on environmental and conservation (both for the natural and historic) issues. At present the county council is

the only authority which has professional expertise in a fully integrated way, dealing with biodiversity, nature conservation, trees, forestry, arboriculture and marine issues at policy, advice and project levels. Similarly the Council's Historic Environment Service provides the professional expertise for archaeology and historic elements of the built and rural environment. Some expertise lies within the districts but this is patchy and their influence is limited. Much more could be achieved if this was brought together and deployed strategically across the county.

Strategy and policy would be undertaken at a more centralised level with service delivery more effectively undertaken at a community level with some services commissioned out.

Our special environment is also an economic asset and can be used to drive the economy. We can use our innovative and creative skills and environmental technological know how to create a truly "green peninsula"; an exemplar for sustainable development and a Centre of Excellence for the Natural Environment. Our intent is to make protecting the environment key to all our actions and we will encourage local communities to devise their own ways to improve their local environment.

Our ambition is to bring together environment and heritage services across the county, develop a wider approach to cultural and community services and build on best practice in sustainable development to enhance our "green peninsula".

Tackling Climate Change

Local authorities have a key role to play in tackling climate change. At present action is taken in isolation, limiting effectiveness. Our proposals for a unified approach will enable a "whole county" approach to

climate change taking advantage of increased capacity to develop solutions within an overall framework of strong leadership, and build upon the nationally recognised success of the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership.

Examples of ways in which a more co-ordinated approach could be taken include green purchasing (e.g. energy), sustainable travel and extending our existing actions to address fuel poverty. We already have strong partnerships in place and can extend this across the whole public and private sector to address mitigation and adaptation.

Our ambition is to achieve a carbon-neutral environment to protect and maintain Cornwall's outstanding natural assets.

Building Stronger, Sustainable and Cohesive Communities

Cornwall already has a strong Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) that operates at a strategic countywide level. It is supported by Amethyst, a partnership based information hub that can provide data below ward level to ensure resources are targeted to the areas of greater need. Whilst CDRPs also exist at a district level, this hierarchy of partnerships can cause confusion and has created an added bureaucracy that is often unnecessary. Expanding the powers of the new Executive to include a portfolio holder with a remit for Community Safety will provide added leadership and accountability at a strategic level and build closer links with the Police and other Criminal Justice Board Partners.

At the Community Network level, closer working between all public sector operational managers and frontline Members will provide greater efficiency, responsiveness and public accountability. Our proposals to build and expand the Local Involvement Networks to include, in particular, health and police, linked to the Community Call for Action will provide an improved responsiveness to deal with real local issues swiftly and efficiently.

As set out elsewhere in this document many of the districts in Cornwall are not homogenous and can be divided into more 'local' identifiable communities with specific needs.

In building upon these local involvement and engagement processes, we look to build upon the existing work, particularly that undertaken at a parish and town council level. Many parish and town councils in Cornwall have produced, or are producing, Parish Plans. However, often they are aspirational, with limited hope of attracting the resources needed to deliver the outcomes in an efficient and effective way.

Through the Cornwall Equality and Diversity Group (CEDG) and the Diversity Network for Cornwall (DNfC), the public, voluntary and community sectors are working together to promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity to build a welcoming and cohesive society for one and all.

Our ambition is to 'join-up' these Parish Plans to develop long-term Community Plans that will act as a local sustainable community strategy and can then be used by all sectors in the area to plan and shape local delivery to meet local needs and aspirations. Additionally we are exploring the idea of developing mini-Local Area Agreements, at this level, to support the Community Network Plans. This will incentivise local performance to meet local needs, whilst at the same time support strategic countywide targets.

Meeting Housing Needs

Affordable housing is the top priority for the district councils as the statutory providers. The County Council also identifies it as a key priority for Cornwall. The scale of the problem in terms of income/house price differentials is amongst the highest in the UK and the number of households on local authority waiting lists in Cornwall is in excess of 15,000. While house building currently meets planned rates, there is an annual shortfall of 3,000 affordable houses.

There is no short term solution. The Housing Corporation make considerable public investment in affordable housing in Cornwall through more than 10 active Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The private sector continues to facilitate the majority of affordable housing provided through planning agreements. Presently, each district council deals with the Housing Corporation, the RSLs and developers separately and slightly differently. Housing Corporation bids are not based on an agreed Cornwall-wide strategy.

A unified approach will provide a profound opportunity to rationalise strategy, spending and mechanisms to optimise opportunities and efficiencies of scale eg; consistent planning agreements; strategic approach to funding (housing corporation, PFI); Delivery Teams; and the Cornwall Community Land Trust. This will provide a more rational and appropriate approach to Cornwall. That is not to say that Cornwall is uniform, but a consistent approach and baseline is essential for proper delivery.

Delivery of this would also enable the rationalisation of resources. Currently roles are duplicated in each district; the engagement of necessary additional skills and resources to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing is widely unviable. A unified arrangement will rationalise the administrative and research tasks freeing up essential resources to focus on facilitating

delivery. Only one district council has a dedicated delivery team to help bring sites through the planning process. It is demonstrably significant to the delivery of affordable housing, but funded by a contribution from the County Council's share of second home tax. This model cannot be replicated six times but could, valuably be established as a single strategic operation.

A fundamental benefit of a unified approach will be the opportunity to address corporately a full range of roles and functions. This will enable the full integration of the housing agenda with social care, transport infrastructure and education, as well as an opportunity to engage with utilities and other service providers in a strategic manner. This is essential for more effective delivery.

The Government recognises the crucial role that the planning system has to play in the delivery of affordable housing and encourages the best possible use of planning obligations and other tools. We know that a more consistent approach to Section 106 obligations would improve delivery; something that a unified approach can achieve.

The housing strands of the LAA each reference and lend themselves to a unified Cornwall approach: improving value for money; improving land supply; improving the availability of funds; and developing a market place for affordable homes.

Key areas for improved performance would be:

- a consistent approach to needs assessment and baseline
- establishing priorities in a strategic context
- optimising funding through corporation bids and alternative sources
- consistent dealings with private sector
- removing duplication and enable wider skills base
- enabling a viable focus on delivery

Our ambition is to use the stronger leadership and improved resources available to a single council to stretch the delivery of affordable housing beyond existing targets.

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 targeted deployment of scarce skills and resources.

Inappropriate and badly located growth would be harmful to Cornwall's future. Managing growth is about delivering the right development in the right place at the right time. Achieving this is resource intensive and requires diverse and specialist skills.

The level of anticipated growth in Cornwall justifies better co-ordinated and skilled resources. A unified structure would add considerably to the opportunity to prioritise corporately the integration of all functions including the essential delivery of transport infrastructure, schools, waste and employment space with the wider growth agenda.

Delivering growth means balancing and phasing growth in Cornwall in a complementary way. This can be achieved more effectively in a unified arrangement. Most notably the complementary planning and delivery of growth between the key urban areas of Camborne-Pool-Redruth, Truro and Falmouth-Penryn is crucial, but is constrained by cross boundary issues between districts. Other growth and regeneration issues have implications across district boundaries and, in many cases, across Cornwall.

Part Two: **Achieving our aims and objectives**



The economies of scale offered by a unified arrangement extend also to the provision of specialist skills and urban design resource, which are vital to ensure the necessary quality of development. Master planning and critical appraisal of proposals will be fundamental to the successful “place making” required by the level of growth facing Cornwall’s main focus.

House building capacity in Cornwall remains a pivotal issue and enabling developers to deliver the scale of growth necessary to meet housing need of all types in Cornwall is an important role for local authorities and can be better co-ordinated in a unified approach.

Cornwall has been working with other key areas in the South West to see how we can improve the knowledge, skills and capacity of areas to achieve better quality sustainable development through ‘The Way Ahead’ initiative. We already have an Urban Regeneration Company in Camborne, Pool and Redruth which is coordinating focussed effort on delivering a step change in the economy, environment

and skills base of the area. A key issue is to harness the benefits of growth for the wider community and better planning and coordination of private sector contributions.

Our key areas for improved performance to effect the management of growth include:

- Multi-skilled teams and resources to enable major schemes
- Integrated land use and infrastructure planning
- Effective and strategic prioritisation based on spatial priorities
- The use of tools such as developer contributions and revolving infrastructure funds
- Raising the game on design quality

Our ambition is to achieve a unified approach to managing growth that will improve the capacity to delivery quality, sustainable development – ‘smart growth’.

