

5. CULTURAL SERVICES

5.1 Introduction and background

At the outset of this bid we set out how Cornwall is a special place. Its geography, environment and culture make it unique, with people having a real attraction to Cornwall, particularly its rich heritage and strong culture. There is European recognition of its language, and affinity to Cornwall is recognised nationally and internationally.

Traditionally recognised cultural activities linked to those under environmental and heritage services delivered by both county and district councils support, celebrate and maintain Cornwall's distinct culture, either individually or together and help build stronger and more cohesive communities, and support people's individual well-being and pride in Cornwall.

Creativity including the Arts

Cornwall has world wide recognition in the Arts. Originally around the Newlyn and St Ives Arts Schools featuring Hepworth and Nicholson showcased at The Tate St Ives, but more recently through other forms or performing arts including the Minack Theatre and by the Kneehigh Theatre, and other events hosted at major venues such as Hall for Cornwall and the Eden Project.



The County Council has recently set up a new Creative Unit in partnership with the Arts Council England (South West). The purpose of this arrangement is to increase the capacity within Cornwall to develop the creative industries and draw in additional resources into the county. One of the challenges for this arrangement is that its long term future is dependent upon the outcome of the Government's Public Sector Spending Review in 2007. There is an uneven pattern of investment and commitment to the Arts across the six district councils. There is undoubtedly an issue regarding equality of access to cultural activities across the county because of this.

Historic Collections

Cornwall has a rich Celtic history. Cornwall also has had a long tradition of people, particularly miners, migrating to all parts of the world in the 18th and 19th century. It also has a strong maritime history, being the first port of call for sailors returning to the UK and the centre of British international communication channels during the 19th century i.e. Marconi and the Falmouth packet ships. It played an important part in the industrial revolution, through engineers such as Trevithick, and exported engineering and mining equipment all around the world. Consequently there is a great interest in its history, particularly for those from overseas tracing family history, mining and maritime history.

The Council is engaged in a major project to bring the Record Office, Cornwall Studies Library and Historic Environment Service together into one new building, the Environment and Heritage Centre, to be based at Redruth. Museum provision is patchy across Cornwall and complicated further by elements of its delivery being delivered at county and district levels.

Sport and Healthy Activities

Cornwall has a strong tradition of team sport and healthy recreational activity and is committed to delivering the LAA target to increase participation by 1%. Historically strong support for village, town and county rugby and cricket teams has helped strengthen communities and added to pride in Cornwall.

Recently the success of ambitious teams such as the Cornish Pirates in Rugby Union, and the appointment of a Cornishman as the England Rugby Captain, has put Cornwall firmly back on the sporting map. At the same time Cornwall has seen a massive growth in health recreational activity, in particular gig rowing, surfing, cycling and walking, as well as the success of elite sportsman such as Ben Ainsley.

Cornwall County Council hosts the Cornwall Sports Partnership and has a close relationship with the Sports Alliance. At present it does not have officers specifically responsible for sports activities other than within Children, Young People and Family Services where the Outdoor Education Service deals exclusively with sports activities related to young people, mainly in the context of schools. The County Council does not now have any direct responsibility for sports and recreation, but is subject to performance indicators regarding access to sports facilities in the community. However, the County Council is committed to promoting sport and has funded major events such as tall ships, inter-celtic watersports and preparation for the 2012 Olympics. The district councils have direct responsibility for sports and leisure, but have different levels of commitment to this aspect of their responsibilities. The current arrangements do not lend themselves well to a countywide strategic approach to sports and healthy activities.



Cornwall had a successful target to promote healthy active lifestyles for children in its Local Public Service Agreement. In addition to this the County Council has led work on Type 2 Diabetes and healthy school meals.

Cornish Language

Cornish is a recognised Celtic language, close to Breton, and has growing local support. This is being led by the Cornwall Language Partnership, hosted by the County Council which has created the momentum to safeguard and extend use of the language.

Library Services

Following the publication of the Government's 10 Year Vision for Public Libraries, Framework for the Future, library authorities are required to meet ten Public Library Service Standards. Cornwall Library Service

meets only half of these standards. Those that are not met are input standards that depend upon the resources available to the service. Cornwall is 31st out of 34 amongst the county library authorities in spending on libraries per 1000 of the population. At the same time it is 8th out of 34 in terms of visits to Libraries per 1000 of the population, thus demonstrating extremely good value for money. However at present resource levels there is little prospect of the Public Library Service Standards being met.

One of the priorities within the Council's plan is to develop public libraries as places where citizens can get access to a wide range of local authority services. In order to achieve that there will need to be a considerable amount of work in developing partnerships with other services to deliver this objective.

5.2 Opportunities for Improvement

A single authority for Cornwall presents a real opportunity to take forward traditional cultural services and provides a unique opportunity as a true community leader to take advantage of some of the opportunities that might lie ahead such as Olympics 2012 and European Region of Culture.

Creativity including the Arts

A single authority structure will deliver a much more consistent offer of access to cultural activities across the county. Reducing the existing fragmentation of cultural services across the district and county will facilitate strategic planning of these services to deliver key objectives of the LAA.

A single council will reduce duplication and competition and put more effort and resources into attracting resources, grants and match-funding.

Historic Collections Service

A single authority structure will provide opportunities to broaden public access and interest in archives. This is becoming increasingly relevant as more archive materials are being made available to citizens online. There would be an opportunity to provide more consistent museum delivery and to tackle duplication of effort.

Sport and Healthy Activities

A single authority presents an opportunity to take a much more strategic approach, whilst reducing duplication and concentrating effort at a local level, to provide a consistent level of access to sport and healthy recreation across Cornwall and help deliver healthy lifestyle outcomes in the LAA. At a strategic level, an authority could seriously investigate a major multi-sports venue for Cornwall that could also act as a venue for performing arts and other activity. A single authority would be able to take a strategic view on bidding for activity associated with the 2012 Olympics.

At a more local level, a single authority with ownership of schools, sports facilities and leisure centres could ensure a more equitable and more accessible access to sport and healthy recreation through issues such as single membership cards etc. It would also allow easier access to countywide pursuits such as cycling and walking.

Library Services

With a single authority structure we will seek to use libraries as the basis of some of the proposed community access points to enable members of the public to get access to a wide range of local authority services and gain information about the Council.

