Welcome to our first Cornwall Devolution newsletter

The newsletter will provide regular information on the progress which is being made on delivering the Cornwall Deal agreed in July 2015.

The agreement with the Government gives us greater powers, leverage, freedoms and flexibilities which we will be using to reform public services in Cornwall. All parts of the public, private and voluntary and community sectors in Cornwall are working together to make better use of resources to improve the quality of life for local people.

As part of the Deal we are also looking at the issues of governance and how we devolve greater powers to town and parish councils. We will be focusing on these issues in future editions of the newsletter.

Significant progress

We have already made significant progress in delivering the Deal, with workstreams set up to lead each of the eight themes that make up the Deal. Details of the work which has taken place since the agreement was signed in July were reported to the recent meeting of the Cornwall Deal Monitoring Board on 15 January.

The Monitoring Board

The Monitoring Board, which is chaired by Cornwall Council Leader John Pollard and includes representatives from all the key partners including MPs, was set up to oversee the progress which is being made in Cornwall. It is also responsible for providing regular reports to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Greg Clark.
Council Leader John Pollard

Cornwall is the first, and at time of writing, remains the only non-metropolitan authority to have devolved powers. We are using this advantage to ensure that the implementation progresses at pace and the Monitoring Board, which I chair, has a vital role in ensuring that there are no barriers to that.

Of course these are early days but at the latest Board meeting our partners who signed the original Deal brought clear views and honest assessments of where we are and what needs to be done next. With an eight week cycle and the involvement of the constituent bodies I am sure that the work of the board will prove to be essential to delivering better services and making decisions for Cornwall in Cornwall. In terms of devolution we have made a really good start.

Steve Double MP

The Devolution Deal for Cornwall is an historic opportunity for our Duchy. I am delighted and honoured to be one of the MPs who has worked to deliver this significant opportunity for Cornwall. As a member of the Monitoring Board I am keen to work closely with the Council, LEP and our local NHS. I am specifically concerned that this devolution deal delivers real improvements for the people of Cornwall. Our first meeting was positive and constructive as a clear programme is being put in place and I look forward to assisting as progress is made.

What they said
The eight themes | 1

Local control of business support funding

Through the Devolution Deal and the EU Growth Programme work is taking place on creating a Growth Hub for Cornwall & Isles of Scilly.

The Growth Hub will be funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Cornwall Council and the LEP, the Growth Hub will offer a single access point to the whole range of business support provision, supporting local businesses to innovate, invest and grow – both nationally and internationally.

Located at the Pool Innovation Centre the Growth Hub team will help businesses understand what local and national support is available, such as business start-up, coaching and access to finance.

Other schemes include integrating the Better Business For All initiative into the Growth Hub. The aim of the BBFA project is to cut red tape by joining regulatory services together rather than businesses having to contact a number of different regulatory agencies. A pilot project which will give businesses a single number to phone is currently taking place. If successful the pilot, which is due to end in March 2016, will then be aligned with the Growth Hub under the devolution timeframe.

There will also be support available through an ambitious regional investment fund that will comprise a range of financial instruments intended to provide access to finance support for the creation, development and growth of small and medium sized business (SME) in the area. These new financial instruments and the framework for accessing the funds are due to be in place by the end of 2016.

“...The LEP’s ambition is to achieve an easy to access single point of contact for the business community to find the right help for their business to grow and develop. The Devolution Deal will allow us to further develop our Growth Hub helping to ensure all business support – whether delivered locally or nationally – comes through this single point."

Sarah Trethowan, Chair of the LEP Growth for Business Board

To find out the latest updates about the Growth Hub please visit www.ciosgrowthhub.com
Under the Deal the Government is working with agencies in Cornwall to deliver proposals to improve employment and skills opportunities.

With a significant proportion of jobs in Cornwall currently low paid and seasonal, and concerns over the quality of careers information, advice and guidance being given to young people, the aim of this area of the Deal is to increase the number of people with higher level skills, combat underemployment and support people struggling to find work to get the skills and experience they need. It also aims to increase the quantity and quality of apprenticeships, improve careers advice for young people through the appointment of new Enterprise Co-ordinators, and help those furthest from the labour market into employment.

Work is now underway to re-shape further education and training provision for adults, to prepare for local commissioning of the adult skills budget with local providers, identifying and developing apprenticeship opportunities by working more closely with businesses and ensuring information about the option of apprenticeships is being given to pupils in schools, and delivering consistent careers information and guidance, with the appointment of new Enterprise Co-ordinators.

The Council is also working with the LEP, the Department of Work and Pensions, Further Education Colleges and other partners to develop plans to support people into work and develop their skills.

“For the first time the Devolution Deal really puts employers at the table with skills providers including schools, further education, and those supporting apprenticeship programmes, to make sure the skills of our young people meet the needs of employers. This is all about achieving better, higher paid employment for all.”

Paul Massey, Chair of the LEP Employment and Skills Board
Devolving EU funding decisions

With Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly set to receive €603.7m of European funding over the next six years, partners in Cornwall have previously expressed concerns over the Government’s decision to set up a national body to decide how this money should be spent.

Under the terms of the Deal the Government has agreed to give Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Intermediate Body (IB) status. This will mean decisions on allocating the funding to projects will be made locally rather than in London and will be based on local, rather than national priorities. Partners predict that this could result in 500 more jobs being created, 400 more businesses assisted and around 700 more people taking part in training.

Work is already underway on setting up the Intermediate Body which is due to be completed by April 2016, subject to approval by the UK Government and the European Commission.

Heritage and culture

Cornwall’s rich and distinct heritage and culture is an important factor in the local economy and a key driver in attracting business and marketing Cornish products for export.

Under the Devolution Deal the Council will be working with Historic England and local partners to carry out a Cultural Distinctiveness Study. Once completed the results of the Study, which will focus on what makes Cornwall special, will be used to develop a Heritage Strategy which will help highlight the importance of the historic environment to the culture and economy of Cornwall and ensure that it is woven into the tourism offer, both nationally and internationally.

Local partners have already set up a new body -Heritage Kernow -to promote and manage the culture and heritage of Cornwall for the future and work is continuing to develop its remit and function as part of a wider South West Heritage Environment Forum.

Discussions are also due to take place with the tourist industry and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on how tourism in Cornwall can best be supported, with plans also being developed to stage a conference to share insights and work with decision makers and communities on how best to manage Cornwall’s historic assets.

Ensuring that we can design our approach to economic growth locally to meet the specific and unique needs of Cornwall is vital. The Devolution Deal allows us to do this and further cements the importance of our private/public partnership.

Mark Duddridge, Chair of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Enterprise Partnership

We are delighted to be working with the Council and other partners to support the foundation of a Cornish Historic Environment Forum ‘Heritage Kernow’ which will steer the development of a study of the relationship between local identity and place and inform how to make the most of this cultural distinctiveness into the future.

Andrew Vines, Planning Director for Historic England in the South West
Accelerated health and social care integration

Under the terms of the Devolution Deal the Government has agreed to work with Cornwall Council, the Council of the Isles of Scilly, NHS Kernow, NHS England and other local partners to transform health and social care services.

While work to integrate these services was already underway in Cornwall, the Deal provides the opportunity to work with Government Ministers and local partners to co-design a plan to improve overall health outcomes for local people at the same time as integrating these services.

With both the Council and health partners facing the challenges of reducing budgets at the same time as increased demand for services as people live longer with more complex conditions, the Plan has the triple aim of improving health and wellbeing, improving people’s experience of care and reducing the cost of long term care.

Work is currently underway on developing a place based strategic plan for the whole health and social care system which is both clinically and financially sustainable. The plan, which is being co-produced by the two Councils and health partners, will also consider public health services and the impact of housing, education and employment on the overall health and wellbeing of people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

A series of consultation and engagement events are being held in the next two months to seek the views of key partners and people in local communities. These include a joint survey asking people which services are important to them and ways they believe potential savings could be made to help health and social care budgets go further. The survey will be followed by a series of community events across both Cornwall and Scilly. The feedback from the survey and events will then be used to help prioritise options selected for the final Plan to be submitted to the Department of Health later in the year.

Other activities currently taking place include developing plans for joined up commissioning. It is intended that Cornwall Council will act as lead organisation for commissioning of community based children’s services. This intention is based on the fact Cornwall Council has existing strong links to Public Health; education services; and social care. Consequently, it is well placed to lead on children and young people getting the best start in life. In parallel, it is intended that NHS Kernow will take the lead on the commissioning of domiciliary care and care homes. This will enable a more streamlined approach to securing packages of care and placements. It will also enhance the discharge process from hospital, reducing the delays people currently experience leaving hospital.

Health partners and Cornwall Council are continuing to work together to develop ambitious plans for the devolution of health and social care in Cornwall. Devolution is an extension of the nationally acclaimed work which is already taking place in Cornwall to join up health and social care and could make it happen more quickly. Devolution of health and social care could enable more resources to focus directly on local patient care and outcomes, with more decision-making, budgets and accountability at a local level.

Dr Iain Chorlton, Chairman, NHS Kernow
Freedom to create an integrated public transport system

The Devolution Deal provides the opportunity to develop and deliver one public transport system for Cornwall.

This will see the integration of routes, timetabling and ticketing for all local bus, ferry and rail services under one identifiable brand which, combined with infrastructure improvements, will provide a consistent level of service based on the needs of the customers. By significantly improving the service to both existing passengers and non-users we will improve the appeal of public transport, drive up patronage on bus and rail and bring about an upturn in revenue to make the network as a whole more financially viable in the future.

Under the Deal the Government has agreed to devolve central funding on local transport which will deliver around £50m to help deliver these changes. It also includes the offer of new bus franchising powers which will enable us to specify what services we want to have and when they will run. We are already talking to bus operators about the changes we want to see and, while we will be keeping the franchising powers in reserve to use if we need them, we are optimistic that we will be able to develop the new system through partnership and co-operation.

We are currently working with partners to design a single integrated public transport network and agree the new standards for services, vehicles, infrastructure and ticketing. These proposals will be submitted to Government in a business case.

We are also working with the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Great Western Railway on the planned improvements to the rail network. These include an upgraded sleeper service, enhanced signalling which will allow a new half hourly service on the mainline and improved rolling stock. The aim is to combine the improvements to rail and bus services to achieve one public transport system for Cornwall in December 2018.

We are delighted to be working through partnership with Cornwall Council to achieve its strategic objectives for public transport; which, in turn, forms a fundamental element of the overall devolution plan for Cornwall and its successful implementation.

Richard Stevens, Managing Director of GoCornwallBus

First Kernow is fully supportive of the devolution deal for Cornwall. As a locally managed bus business in PLC ownership, we fully understand and appreciate the differing needs of communities and their travel needs. In this respect each market is very different. We enjoy an excellent relationship with our Cornwall Council stakeholder colleagues and we look forward to building on that through the development of a formal partnership approach between the Council, bus providers and other related stakeholders, to deliver a first class public transport system for Cornwall. As the principal operator of both bus and rail services in the county, there is great opportunity to improve integration of these two modes to help make public transport a real mode of choice for Cornwall’s residents and visitors.

Alex Carter, Managing Director of First South West
Local flexibility to address our energy and resilience needs

Renewable energy will be one of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly’s main future economy strands as it strives to grow.

Energy

Energy and more importantly its sustainable resilience will be critical to Cornwall and Isles of Scilly growth. We are one of the UK leaders in producing energy from renewables, currently generating 42% of its domestic electricity requirements.

However, while Cornwall has access to substantial energy resources, including wind, solar and wave growth in renewable energy is threatened by a constrained electricity grid.

With key strategic investments proposed in further offshore renewable developments, deep geothermal investments to facilitate further understanding of the viability and its real potential along with rollouts of smarter technologies around energy use and storage where accessing funding provided through national frameworks which do not work well for Cornwall, the Deal provides the opportunity to work with the Government to unlock Cornwall’s potential locally. This will be done by developing the electricity grid in Cornwall by adding additional capacity and increasing storage capabilities; to developing the potential of the low carbon economy by creating local ownership and community energy models for renewable energy and creating a local energy market; developing renewable energy technologies in Cornwall though the development of new enterprise zones focusing on deep geothermal and wave energy and investigating what other support mechanisms can be developed, and co-designing a new energy efficiency framework for the UK that is fit for purpose in local areas with housing stock similar to Cornwall’s.

An Energy and Resilience Board has already been created to oversee this work, with business cases completed for all the projects. Officers are now working with the Government to agree funding options and engaging with local and national stakeholders on the proposals.

“The Devolution Deal presents a huge potential for Cornwall to make decisions on getting the best out of its sustainable energy resources. We believe that using local knowledge and expertise is the best way to ensure that the benefits of renewable energy generation are kept in Cornwall and are very keen to contribute to development of practical solutions that the Devolution Deal will unlock to improve the energy efficiency of our housing. We look forward to seeing our local communities enjoying warmer, dryer homes with affordable energy bills as a consequence of this exciting opportunity.”

Dr Tim Jones, Chief Executive of Community Energy Plus
and private land owners, including the Duchy and National Trust. Existing national funding mechanisms for flood defences, which are mainly based on large numbers of houses being affected in a specific area, do not work in Cornwall which typically has much smaller numbers of affected houses in isolated communities.

The Devolution Deal provides the opportunity to develop an integrated evidence based flooding and coastal defence investment programme which will help reduce risks to residents and economic activities from severe weather events. This will include developing long term investment plans, based on 25 year programmes rather than the six year programmes currently carried out by Environment Agency and the Council to improve access to funding and using innovative and catchment based approaches to manage flood risk and coastal protection.

Work is already underway to develop a new governance structure which brings together all the key agencies and to liaise with partners and stakeholders to develop catchment profiles and review the Shoreline Management Plan. Once work has been completed on capturing the evidence base and working practices this will be used to develop the 25 year investment plan and annual action plans.
Local control over public assets

Work has already been taking place under the One Public Estate programme to encourage public sector partners in Cornwall to share services and buildings to help reduce running costs and to re-invest the money from selling surplus property.

Cornwall has a very fragmented public estate with a number of agencies owning and managing a range of different buildings.

The devolution deal provides the opportunity for the public sector partners to work with the Government to create a single public estate for Cornwall so that people can access services and support from a network of combined and cost effective service hubs at key towns and localities. This will, in turn, release surplus land and buildings which can be used to drive growth and housing within communities. A key part of this work is to agree a process in which the proceeds from the sale of public sector owned buildings and land in Cornwall is retained locally to be re-invested in local projects rather than going to national organisations.

A Cornwall Strategic Property Board, which includes representatives from key Council services, health partners and blue light services, chaired by the police, has been set up to lead this work. The Board is currently working with health partners to co-produce a Local Estates Strategy, due to be completed by March 2016; and is liaising with representatives from the Ministry of Defence, Homes and Communities Agency; Department of Work and Pensions and town and parish councils to take forward opportunities to better manage assets.

The Council places equal emphasis on opportunities that might arise through devolution to Town and Parish Councils as it does to those opportunities that arise through working with Central Government departments.

As Chair of the Strategic Property Board, I am proud to lead this aspect of the work for the Cornwall Devolution Deal and believe that the intelligent use of property will deliver benefits for the communities under our care, through opportunities for more housing, jobs, safeguarding of local services as well as efficiencies in costs of delivery. I look forward to working collectively to take this forward.

Chief Superintendent Julie Fielding, BCU Commander for Cornwall, Devon and Cornwall Police Constabulary
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