

**Cornwall Local  
Development Framework**

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# Planning Future Cornwall

## Community Facilities and Services Survey 2012 Update

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## Summary

The 2009 survey identified key services and facilities in 330 settlements in Cornwall. The 2012 partial update looked at settlements in the C, D and E categories - and the main outcomes of this update are listed below:

- Data was collated and made available as an updated settlement profile (where applicable) within each community network area and made available on the Council's website.
- For those settlements in the C, D and E categories where no response was forthcoming, central data sources (such as GP surgeries, bus services, online directories, etc) were checked to verify existing data; other data not available from central sources (such as open spaces, meeting spaces etc) was assumed to still be accurate.
- The majority of changes recorded between the 2009 survey and the 2012 partial survey were due to better information being made available in certain settlements.
- There was however some loss of facilities recorded in settlements arising out of the 2012 partial survey.

A number of key messages to inform spatial planning policy were drawn out from this element of the evidence base, and these are summarised below:

- Community facilities and services are key to the future sustainability of local communities, and the Cornwall Local Plan and other supporting documents need to provide policies that will ensure they are distributed in such a way as to make them accessible to both urban and rural residents;
- The distribution of community facilities and services should inform how housing, employment and retail are distributed through new development to maximise sustainability and reduce personal travel in both urban and rural areas.

## ***Purpose and Role of the Evidence Base***

This is one in a series of papers dealing with a specific evidence base project. Developing the evidence base is central to the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPD) within the Cornwall Local Plan, and this evidence base underpins the generation and testing of options. Establishing an appropriate evidence base is central to developing a justifiable plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> makes it clear that *'each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area'*. This document adds that at examination, an independent inspector will assess whether a plan is considered sound, and one of the key elements in testing soundness is that the plan can be justified. That is, *'the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence'*.

The first document to be produced will be the Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies document which will provide a long-term spatial vision for the area, as well as an overall development strategy, indicating where future development should be directed. As part of this process, settlements in Cornwall will be analysed in terms of their current level of community services and facilities and hence their potential capacity to accommodate new housing, employment and associated infrastructure.

This paper sets out how the evidence base relating to community facilities and services was prepared and identifies how this can inform the issues that need to be addressed in the Cornwall Local Plan, and in particular which settlements are the most sustainable in terms of the level of facilities and services available. Other evidence base background papers and reports available in this series include:

- Settlements: Hierarchy and Settlement Categories: 2012 Update (this paper describes the methodology and evidence used to prepare settlement categories and the hierarchy – and is directly related to this paper)
- Population and Household Change in Cornwall
- Housing Growth & Distribution: Housing Growth Submission Version
- Housing Growth & Distribution: Housing Distribution Submission Version
- Planning for the role and future of smaller settlements in Cornwall.

## ***Why do we need a Community Facilities and Services Survey?***

A community facilities and services survey helps us to understand how settlements function based on their current role and service provision. The purpose of the original 2009<sup>2</sup> survey and this 2012 update is to identify and confirm existing key community facilities and services.

Key community facilities and services include:

- Meeting places – village halls, etc.;
- Public transport;
- Health care services – doctors, etc.;
- Education services – primary schools, etc;
- Convenience stores – supermarkets etc.;

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<sup>1</sup> DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>

<sup>2</sup> Cornwall Council (2011) Community Facilities & Services Survey - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=32790>

- Financial services – post offices and banks, etc.

The Cornwall Local Plan needs to provide policies that will ensure facilities and services are distributed in such a way as to make them accessible to both urban and rural residents. The current distribution of community facilities and services informs the settlement categorisation<sup>3</sup> process used for the Local Plan.

### ***Settlements in Cornwall***

There are many hundreds of settlements in Cornwall, ranging from those that are strategically significant such as Truro, through small towns and local service centres to the smallest of villages and hamlets. There is no formal definition of what a small settlement is in planning terms, so it is not possible to give an exact number of settlements for Cornwall. The original 2009 survey looked at some 330 settlements that were identified in the ex District Local Plans.

We know that many of Cornwall's towns and villages are probably well-placed to meet the challenges of the next few decades because they are already relatively self-sustaining and contain strong communities. Truro, Camborne/Pool/Illogan/Redruth, Falmouth/Penryn, Penzance/Newlyn, St Austell, Newquay, and Bodmin (settlement category<sup>4</sup> A) are regarded as of strategic importance in Cornwall, and contain a wide range of community facilities and services that serve their own and surrounding areas populations. Other important towns (settlement category B) are identified as Bude/Stratton/Flexbury/Poughill, Hayle, Helston, Launceston, Liskeard, Saltash, St Ives/Carbis Bay and Wadebridge.

### ***Facilities and Services in Cornwall***

One of the main aims of the Cornwall Local Plan is to create opportunities to improve the sustainability of communities. However, a settlement containing a good range of services and facilities does not inevitably mean that significant growth should be accommodated there, because other factors need to be considered, such as environmental constraints.

One of the key principles the Cornwall Local Plan will address is the need for development to be allowed at a scale that reinforces the role of smaller towns and villages as providers of community, leisure and retail facilities to support both that settlement and adjacent communities. This was explored through two pieces of work looking at 'Planning for the role and future of smaller settlements in Cornwall'<sup>5</sup> and the 'Cornwall Council Small Settlements Study'<sup>6</sup>.

**2009 Survey Summary:** Information was collated for each of the 330 settlements in 2009 from a range of sources on key facilities. A settlement profile was created from the many data sources and these were then sent to each Town and Parish Council for verification. This Survey was also used to explore where residents of settlements would look too to access key services and facilities not available within their own settlement. This work resulted in the production of the first version of this paper –

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<sup>3</sup> Cornwall Council (2011) Settlements: Hierarchy and Settlement Categories - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=32790>

<sup>4</sup> Cornwall Council (2011) Settlements: Hierarchy and Settlement Categories - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=32790>

<sup>5</sup> C4G/Roger Tym & Partners/Rural Innovation (2009) Planning for the role and future of smaller settlements in Cornwall - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=32790>

<sup>6</sup> URS Scott Wilson (2011) Cornwall Council Small Settlements Study: applicability and deliverability - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=32791>

'Community Services & Facilities Survey'<sup>7</sup> – which was made publicly available in 2011 as part of the Core Strategy Options Report<sup>8</sup> evidence base and again in 2012 as part of the Core Strategy Preferred Approach<sup>9</sup> evidence base.

### ***Relevant Policy Context***

The Government has set a clear policy agenda that in the future communities need to be sustainable, and the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>10</sup> acknowledges that the '*purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*'.

Being sustainable also means living within environmental limits, the most obvious of which is the need to limit greenhouse gas emissions. This means that in future we have to plan for communities which use less energy, need to use their cars less, and can cope with the impacts of climate change, whilst maintaining a good quality of life. The Cornwall Local Plan aims to do this by encouraging a close proximity of housing, jobs and services, therefore reducing the need to travel, especially by private car. These themes are at the core of the Sustainable Community Strategy<sup>11</sup> for Cornwall.

### ***Why do we need to update the Community Facilities & Services Survey?***

The Cornwall Local Plan once adopted will shape and direct Cornwall's development up to 2030, and will be based on an assessment of the functional relationships between places. This functional approach, which is based on how people interact with businesses, services and facilities, requires an in-depth assessment of where people live, work, go to school, shop, bank and use leisure facilities.

Since the previous survey was undertaken, the economy has worsened and public funding has been affected. This has meant that community facilities and services have been put under increasing financial pressure and this has resulted in the closure of some. This update proposes an approach to update current information on settlements in Cornwall and to determine whether any loss or gain in facilities and services in a settlement leads to a change in its designated settlement category. It will also confirm which settlements currently perform a 'local service centre' role.

We are particularly interested in 2012 in what has happened in the smaller towns and larger villages. Settlement categories A and B incorporate the main towns in Cornwall, and although facilities and services may have been lost or gained in these locations, it is unlikely that any changes will impact on the overall sustainability of these types of settlements. However, the loss of just one facility in a smaller settlement can have a significant impact on its sustainability. Therefore the 2012 survey concentrates on settlement categories C, D and E particularly, as it is these types of settlements that will probably need to accommodate some growth – and therefore important that we have up to date information on their current sustainability. Development in settlements that fall into categories 'F' and 'Other' will be allowed only where it can be shown that it meets a local need for homes and/or employment space.

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<sup>7</sup> Cornwall Council (2011) Community Facilities & Services Survey - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=32790>

<sup>8</sup> Cornwall Council (2011) Core Strategy Options Report - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=32790>

<sup>9</sup> Cornwall Council (2012) Our Preferred Approach for a Core Strategy - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=32791>

<sup>10</sup> DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>

<sup>11</sup> Future Cornwall (2010) Cornwall Sustainable Community Strategy - <http://www.futurecornwall.org.uk/default.aspx?page=5>

In light of decreasing public and private funding in the current economic climate it is important to understand how far residents travel to access required services. Understanding this is key to delivering key services and facilities to our more rural communities in the most effective way. We must therefore look to alternative methods of delivery such as co-location and co-delivery towards 'clusters' of settlements rather than to individual settlements. This work will identify where residents currently access services unavailable in their own settlement and therefore where it is most appropriate to provide the policy context to maintain and improve the role of 'local service centres'.

### ***Consultation***

Profiles for each settlement categorised as a 'C', 'D' or 'E' settlement were sent to each Community Network Area Manager to co-ordinate the response from their particular area. Some Network Managers were familiar enough with their areas to confirm the accuracy of information themselves, whereas others chose to consult their local Members and/or Town and Parish Councils. A 'frequently asked question' sheet was provided to give supporting guidance - see Appendix 1.

Response was patchy, and a further consultation exercise amongst Planning & Regeneration staff was undertaken to improve data on the C and D category settlements in particular.

Together the response rate on settlements in the C, D and E categories achieved 87%, 81% and 26% respectively.

### ***Key Outcomes***

Data was collated and made available as an updated settlement profile (where applicable) within each community network area and made available on the Council's website<sup>12</sup>.

For those settlements where no response was forthcoming, central data sources (such as GP surgeries, bus services, online directories, etc) were checked to verify existing data; other data not available from central sources (such as open spaces, meeting spaces etc) was assumed to still be accurate.

### ***Changes between 2009 and 2012***

The majority of changes recorded between the 2009 survey and the 2012 partial survey were due to better information being made available in certain settlements.

There was however some loss of facilities recorded in settlements arising out of the 2012 partial survey as summarised below:

- General store losses were recorded in Gorran Haven, Marhamchurch, Mevagissey, Shop (Morwenstow) and St Agnes;
- Post office losses were recorded in Shop (Morwenstow) and Trekenner;
- Dentist loss were recorded in Camelford and Perranwell/Perranarworthal,
- Optician loss was recorded in Camelford;
- Public house loss was recorded in Crowlas/Lower Ludgvan and Week St Mary;
- Bank loss was recorded in Fowey;

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<sup>12</sup> Cornwall Council (2012) Settlement Profiles - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=24898>

- Church loss was recorded in Goonhavern and Padstow;
- Doctor loss was recorded in St Buryan;
- Meeting place loss was recorded in Tintagel.

### ***Gaps or Limitations in Evidence***

- Although a fairly good response was achieved from work undertaken by the Community Network Area Managers and others, information was not returned for every settlement surveyed, indicating that there are some settlements where information has not been verified. A variable response rate was achieved overall. Resource limitations mean that a proportion of settlements remain unchecked.
- The 2012 update survey only looked at the category C, D and E settlements so information in the database has not all been updated at the same time – this is due to available resources.
- Because of the nature of the survey – the Network Manager, local Member or Parish Clerk was most likely to complete the survey – and means that we could on occasion be getting the view of one person in a Parish rather than a consensus view. However, as most Network Manager, local Members or Parish Clerks are local to their area they have as valid a view as anyone.
- No views were sought from communities just outside the County border, and towns such as Bude, Callington, and Launceston may also serve settlements in Devon.
- Some facilities and services are more vulnerable to change than others, and although attempts have been made to monitor change of use through planning applications this is unlikely to catch all closures. It is likely that this survey will need repeating again during future reviews of the Cornwall Local Plan to keep it up to date.

### ***Key Messages for Spatial Planning Policy***

A number of key messages and issues were drawn out from this element of the evidence base, and these are summarised below:

- Community facilities and services are key to the future sustainability of local communities, and the Cornwall Local Plan and other DPD's need to provide policies that will ensure they are distributed in such a way as to make them accessible to both urban and rural residents;
- The distribution of community facilities and services should inform how housing, employment and retail are distributed through new development to maximise sustainability and reduce personal travel in both urban and rural areas.

## SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current distribution of settlements with good range of facilities and services</li> <li>• Some communities are more likely to retain services due to their isolation from other larger settlements</li> <li>• Local resistance to closures of post offices, primary schools etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current round of post office closures and the impact on the viability of general stores as they are often combined</li> <li>• Strength of large outlets (e.g. supermarkets) affecting the viability of town centres and local stores</li> <li>• Smaller settlements losing whole range of facilities and services (e.g. pubs, halls, etc)</li> <li>• Personal travel very accessible at this moment in time.</li> <li>• Only a partial update undertaken in 2012.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New development can maintain viability of local services and facilities</li> <li>• Housing and other growth can encourage the development of new facilities and services</li> <li>• Basing services and facilities locally can help with targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions if they are accessible by public transport, walking or cycling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing rounds of post office closures and the impact on the viability of general stores as they are often combined in smaller settlements</li> <li>• Impact of recession continuing</li> <li>• Accessibility is not improved, and 'green' travel alternatives are not embraced/ encouraged/ enforced.</li> </ul>

This paper summarises the evidence on community facilities and services brought together to inform the Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies Submission Version. However, it will be added to and kept up-to-date as other relevant evidence becomes available. In updating these papers all previous versions will be archived to ensure it is clear what evidence was available at each stage.