

Appendix 1

Kernow Gwynn Paper **Cornwall White Paper**

Proposed

Foreword

Cornwall is a unique and special place. Its geography, its culture and its language set it apart. It is a proud Celtic nation as evidenced by Cornwall's six Members of Parliament taking their oath of allegiance to the Crown in Cornish, in the year that we are also celebrating ten years since the Cornish were officially recognised by the Government and the Council of Europe as a national minority in 2014¹.

A decade on and two devolution deals later, we are now seeking a much broader and deeper devolution settlement enshrined in law that reflects the status Cornwall shares with the Welsh, Scots and Irish in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, plus an unmatched potential to grow Cornwall's economy.

An empowered Cornwall has so much to offer in return if our potential is unleashed.

As was the case during the first industrial revolution, Cornwall is once again central to a stronger and more sustainable United Kingdom. Now is the moment when Cornwall's past defines its future.

On this occasion, Cornwall's natural assets and history of innovation means it is ideally positioned to lead a 'green industrial revolution' contributing to delivering the growth that we need both here and across the United Kingdom.

Our Cornwall White Paper is equally about creating a stronger and more sustainable Cornwall to meet the acute challenges we face: a housing crisis, a super-ageing and inverted population profile, some of the lowest household incomes in Europe, weak infrastructure and an economy that remains too reliant on tourism and hospitality.

Cornwall's motto '*Onan hag Oll*' – '*One and All*' – is a sentiment of unity that pervades the Cornish spirit, and that togetherness is at the heart of our Cornwall White Paper.

Equally, we welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to strengthening unity across the UK through the Council of Nations and Regions of the United Kingdom. As the fifth nation of the UK, we request representation of Cornwall on the new Council as part of a new devolution settlement between Whitehall and Cornwall to generate prosperity for '*One and All*'.

We would welcome discussions with the new Government on our proposals, which we strongly believe accord with the '*five missions to rebuild Britain*'.

¹ UK Government (2014) *Cornish granted minority status within the UK*. Press Release. Available [here](#).

[Cornish translation of Foreword to
be added]

Proposed

Cornwall has a clear vision for its future.

The Cornwall Plan 2050² sets out a clearly defined, shared vision which has been adopted by all of Cornwall's key public services and strategic partnerships to deliver a greener, cleaner Cornwall that is fairer and more inclusive.

Cornwall is ambitious, bold and brave.

Cornwall has developed a reputation as a place where solutions to seemingly intractable challenges are generated and bold decisions taken. Having declared a climate emergency in 2019 and an ecological emergency in 2022, we have developed blueprints for mitigating the crises for others to follow, including embracing Doughnut Economics³. Cornwall has become a 'testbed' for innovation, including developing the first Spaceport in Europe.

No other place is in a position to pioneer 'sustainable living' through a creative and carbon-neutral economy that generates opportunities for Cornwall's people, communities and businesses to thrive. Cornwall is so rich in natural capital and has considerable cultural assets and social capital; huge untapped strengths and potential for growth and dynamism which could make an enormous contribution to the UK economy.

Cornwall is defined by its history, identity and geography.

Those living beyond the Tamar and the legions of visitors may regard Cornwall as a place of beauty and nirvana, with 422 miles of stunning coastline. This creates an identity crisis that masks the reality of Cornwall being one of the poorest and less developed parts of the UK.

A growing, fast-aging and socio-economically diverse population is served by one of the largest unitary authorities responsible for providing the majority of public services, including education, social services, highways and waste. Likewise, the majority of our key public, private and voluntary sector partners focus exclusively on serving the people of Cornwall.

The designation and protection of the Cornish people and their language originates from medieval times. Since then, Cornwall has retained a unique and distinct constitutional relationship with the Crown, based on the Duchy of Cornwall and the creation of the Cornish Stannary Parliament at the start of the 13th century. Together with Cornwall's more recent status as a 'functional economic area' with an International Territorial Level 2 classification⁴, this all adds to a genuine and palpable ethos of unity. *Team Cornwall* draws on this background to create good growth and prosperity for *One and All*.

² Cornwall Plan 2050. Available [here](#).

³ Information about Doughnut Economics available [here](#).

⁴ ONS (n.d.) International Territorial Level 2. Available [here](#).

That palpable togetherness is one of the reasons why the latest annual PwC Good Growth Index⁵ places Cornwall in the top areas in the country, based on a range of economic success measures. One of those measures relates to connectivity, with the recent completion of the £330m dualling of the A30 between Carland Cross and Chiverton Cross opening up more of Cornwall for business.

Of significance, the results of our most recent residents' annual survey buck the national trend with two in every three residents expressing trust in the organisation.

Cornwall's potential is substantial and unrivalled.

Our natural capital and world-leading capabilities are unique. Cornwall sits atop a wealth of critical mineral deposits like copper, tungsten and tin, and has one of the largest concentrations of lithium-enriched granite in Europe.

Global demand for next generation technologies and applications like electric vehicles and battery storage is creating a need for these base and high-technology metals. Cornwall can satisfy the UK demand with one mine alone having the potential to provide enough lithium to power the batteries of 500,000 electrical vehicles a year.

Not surprisingly, Cornwall has been identified by the Department for Business and Trade as a High Potential Opportunity (HPO)⁶ for mining tech minerals - which is one element of Cornwall's combined investment potential valued at £10.6bn⁷.

Cornwall's rich mining history has left a legacy of extensive knowledge, maps, plans and reports vital to responsible exploration and extraction of critical minerals. Historical information can be fed into modern digital subsurface geological models to allow further exploration without the need for extensive drilling.

Water depth in the Celtic Sea, excellent wind resources (the seas off Cornwall boast one of the best wind resources in the world), and generational knowledge of marine industry has allowed us to lead the way with our ambition to progress Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) as a solution towards the national mission for clean power.

Cornwall stands ready to deliver, with the foundations rooted in our Celtic Sea Power company and investment into Falmouth Docks. Further strategic investments have already been made from our Shared Prosperity Fund to establish Cornwall as a key player in the UK's transition to clean energy in the pursuit of net zero.

We would welcome the opportunity to participate in the development of a UK-wide industrial strategy based on the unique areas of specialism that Cornwall can offer, and to explore Cornwall's contribution to the success of Great British Energy.

⁵ Demos-PwC (2023) *Good Growth Index*. Available [here](#).

⁶ Department for Business and Trade (n.d.) *Mining in Cornwall*. Available [here](#).

⁷ Cornwall TI (2024) *Investment prospectus: Cornwall: Building a sustainable future*. Available [here](#).

Cornwall's growth also extends to the population, which increased by 7.1% between the 2011 and 2021 Census, and now stands at 570,300. That includes an increase of 25.1% in people aged 65+ creating a 'super-ageing' society that places demand on the public purse.

With Cornwall's population forecast to grow beyond 700,000 by 2050, the proposals in our White Paper are key to ensuring this demographic increase is focused more on working-age people, otherwise Cornwall will become unsustainable economically and socially.

Cornwall is already on a devolution journey.

Devolution has already provided Cornwall with limited but valued opportunity to design our own policy solutions to meet the place specific challenges of the area's rural and often remote communities. In 2015 Cornwall secured and subsequently delivered its first devolution deal, with a second (Level 2) devolution deal following in 2023.

An independent evaluation⁸ of devolution by Warwick Economics and Development (WECD) in 2021 found that Cornwall has one of the strongest track records in using its devolved powers to deliver tangible benefits: the introduction of our *Transport for Cornwall* model resulting in an uplift in public bus patronage and satisfaction levels evidences the point.

But there's clear support to go further and faster, so more decisions about Cornwall are taken in Cornwall.

In 2022, a Level 3 Cornwall devolution deal was negotiated and although the requirement to switch to a mayoral governance model proved contentious, our extensive public engagement revealed the majority of residents support the devolution of further powers and funding to Cornwall.

This view is widely supported by other evidence. The aforementioned independent evaluation by WECD found that 64% of residents in Cornwall believe that too many policy decisions affecting Cornwall are made outside of it, the highest of any of the devolved areas they looked into.

Devolution is a journey not a destination. There are different visions about where that journey may take us in the context of devolution over the longer-term, but we are all united around the immediate steps.

This White Paper is our collective 'stepping-stone', agreed by all parties, for the next stage in Cornwall's journey.

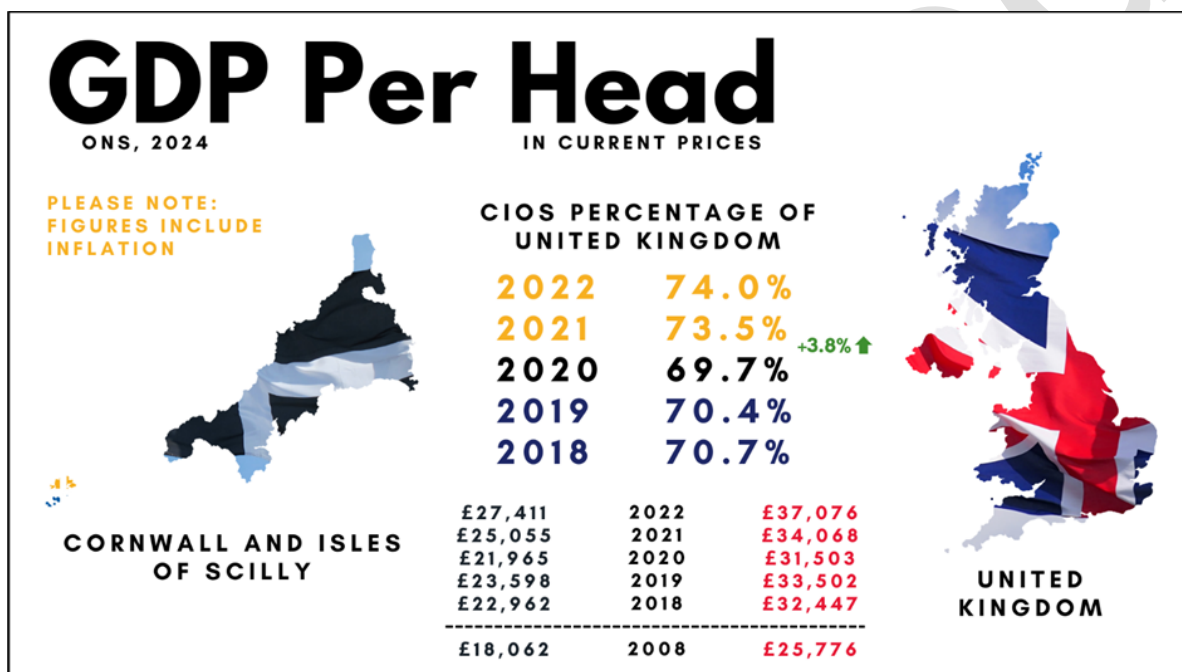
⁸ Warwick Economics and Development (2021) *Evaluation of Devolved Institutions*. Final report. Available [here](#).

What’s good for Cornwall is good for the UK as a whole.

With the Government’s support for our Cornwall White Paper, we conservatively estimate generating additional tax revenues of approximately £2 billion per annum.

With the ability to take greater control in driving Cornwall’s economy we can realise a £10.6 billion pipeline of investment opportunities⁹ over the next ten years, and many more, which would gradually reduce Cornwall’s current financial dependency and move towards positively contributing to the UK economy.

Cornwall's Gross Value Added (GVA) is currently 30% lower than the average for the country as a whole. The White Paper would accelerate Cornwall’s economic growth setting us on a path to match the average for the country and generating economic outputs that are £5.2 billion higher.



Improving economic performance in Cornwall would therefore be beneficial for the Treasury.

These are the compelling ‘win/win’ reasons why the UK Government must unleash the unrivaled power of Cornwall and create prosperity for *One and All*.

⁹ Cornwall TI (2024) Cornwall attend UKREiiF to announce dedicated pipeline of construction investment worth £10bn over the next 10 years. Available [here](#).

***One and All Cornwall* - a 'total place' approach for a stronger and more resilient future.**

Cornwall has experience, a proven track record and big ambitions. The straightforward geography and strong multi-agency working makes it well placed to work with Government to deliver a new and bold public services model that befits Cornwall's distinct constitutional status.

Our *One and All Cornwall* proposal has its origins in the *Total Place* model in taking a 'whole area' approach to increasing Cornwall's resilience by replacing a host of existing financial arrangements with a single needs-based settlement.

This would start to bring together all 'place-based' government funding streams and consolidate separate elements of the public sector where this would lead to greater efficiency in tackling the challenges faced in Cornwall, for example, establishing *Homes Cornwall* and *Natural Resources Cornwall*.

To enable Cornwall to utilise the budget in line with the known priorities it would be non-ringfenced, multi-year and guaranteed, with no provisions for funding based on competitive bids.

The *One and All Cornwall* model will bring public services together, give Cornwall far greater powers, underwritten in legislation, to meet the ambitious plan for growth and turbocharge a green economy, leading to better jobs, more affordable housing and critical infrastructure.

It provides a platform to transform Cornwall's fortunes in this decade and serves as a springboard for even greater autonomy beyond 2030, as we seek to power a 'green industrial revolution' to generate prosperity, sustainability and improved quality of life for *One and All*.

One and All Cornwall: Growing the economy.

Generating growth is crucial to Cornwall's success and to its contribution to the UK as a whole.

In order for Cornwall to thrive, measures need to be taken to diversify the Cornish economy: introducing new types of employment, ensuring the sustainability of the workforce, investing in green growth and cutting carbon emissions, and ensuring that the proceeds of Cornwall's productivity can be enjoyed in Cornwall.

Greater autonomy could unlock new economic opportunities for Cornwall by incentivising investment, attracting and supporting businesses, providing workers with new skills, allowing for strategic prioritisation of resources in growth sectors, and ensuring that the proceeds of growth benefit Cornwall's communities.

Growing the economy requires a devolution settlement that creates:

Skills Cornwall with powers and consolidated funding from Government to extend beyond the current devolution of the Adult Education Budget. **Skills Cornwall** would deliver Cornwall's ambitions to influence and lead national and our own skills programmes, and their commissioning. The development of a central convening function would enable strategic alignment and more effective commissioning of skills programmes to meet our needs.

Green Jobs Cornwall working in parallel with **Skills Cornwall** to deliver Cornwall's Energy Plan in collaboration with Government. **Green Jobs Cornwall** would develop a green jobs taskforce to develop a strategy with aligned funding and resources.

Employment Cornwall with devolved responsibility from the Government to:

- Manage Cornwall's Job Centres to connect people to training and employment in sectors with high numbers of vacancies. This will help deliver a tailored approach to help people find the right opportunities for them and help businesses find the skilled workers they need.
- Introduce a Cornwall visa programme or incentive schemes to attract new workers in areas where Cornwall requires more working-age adults to achieve its growth plans and, importantly, boost food supply to create food security for a sustainable UK.

Investment Cornwall with devolved responsibility for the ‘critical ingredients’ of growth: public and private funding for R&D, investment capital, infrastructure and connectivity, skills and a better business environment. To grow the Cornish economy we need a combination of interventions on both the demand and the supply side. We need to increase overall employment and prosperity across Cornwall. Building on our skills and infrastructure proposals elsewhere in this White Paper, to grow our economy Cornwall needs:

- **Innovation Cornwall** with devolved funding from Government to deliver a ‘Cornwall Innovation Programme’ which will invest in Cornwall’s most innovative businesses. This will strengthen Cornwall’s innovation capacity to help realise the potential of our innovation assets and the innovation potential of small and medium-sized enterprises. Innovation Cornwall will rebalance the Cornish economy and tackle low productivity to create new high paid jobs, increase R&D spend and bring new products to market.
- **Cornwall Capital** to allow for a more ready availability of equity and debt capital to finance growing businesses.
- **Business Cornwall** that is centered on the creation of a Cornwall Business Office, bringing together and taking on the powers of our business-facing services with those of the UK Government, including joint working with UKTI. Devolved powers from Government would enable Business Cornwall to support our business sector – for example through aligning regimes for regulation and licensing so that they can contribute to the prosperity of our towns and villages.

One and All Cornwall: Enabling fiscal sustainability.

The quality of public services, if not all of the ambitions in the 2050 Cornwall Plan, remain dependent on all parts of the public sector in Cornwall having the power to act: to shape, to encourage, to regulate and to deliver. Many of the issues around the provision of public services are connected to resource constraints, and the powers needed to tackle these problems are, in the main, powers to do with public finance. Power to raise money, power to spend money, and how much money comes from central government. Autonomy is dependent on sustainable and independent finances.

Despite having been in receipt of European structural funds since 1999 and good progress having been made, Cornwall's overall financial resilience remains weak. In 2023, Cornwall would still be classified as the only 'less developed region' in the country because our low Gross Domestic Product per capita was less than 75% of the EU average.

As part of our 2015 Cornwall Devolution Deal¹⁰, we were granted control over the then European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programme to ensure decisions about Cornwall's funding allocation were taken in Cornwall.

Research has since shown that over the years in which Cornwall had control, we experienced relatively robust economic and employment growth¹¹. It is therefore evident that devolving powers to Cornwall's leaders helped us tailor our policies to our needs, lay down the foundations for our clean energy revolution and ultimately drive economic growth.

The latest figures indicate that Cornwall is closing the gap with an improvement from 69% to 74% of UK GDP - but growing our economy is far from achieved. Worse still, the absence of any commitment regarding the future of Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) beyond this financial year puts this progress at risk and inhibits our ability to plan for future growth.

We are witnessing the impact of exciting SPF funded projects that are contributing to growing our economy but already we are being forced to make difficult decisions not to fund excellent projects because they cannot be fully completed before March 2025. A Cornwall Prosperity Fund would enable us to continue to support growth in every corner of our lands.

The financial pain is particularly acute across the public sector, with reliance on only a few income sources (grants, council tax, business rates) and exposure to short-term

¹⁰ HM Government (2015) *Cornwall Devolution Deal*. Available [here](#).

¹¹ Ash Futures (2019) *The benefit of EU Structural Investment Funds for CIOs*. Available [here](#). & Di Cataldo, Marco (2016) *Poorer UK regions have benefited from EU Cohesion Policy*. London School of Economics. Available [here](#).

governmental policy changes. This limits the levels of capital investment we can make in transforming the economy and increases the reliance on national structural funds.

Cornwall is not alone - the issue of financial sustainability is impacting on all public administrations. The Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) has warned that a “crisis is developing that at some point could mean the sector itself falls over”. Serious consideration needs to be given to drastically changing the way in which public services are funded.

Cornwall’s resilience could be strengthened further by having access to a wider range of income sources, by having greater control over those income sources, and by having greater control and discretion over any funding that it does receive from Whitehall. This would give Cornwall the ability to invest in services and to improve outcomes and efficiency. Likewise, the ability to generate financial gains for reinvestment from new fiscal sources would improve economic performance within Cornwall.

With autonomy comes accountability and Cornwall would introduce Accounting Officers who, in relation to devolved powers and resources, would assume the responsibilities currently exercised by Departmental Accounting Officers.

***Cornwall’s fiscal sustainability* requires a devolution settlement that creates:**

A Cornwall Wealth Fund of £133m per annum for the next five years to support growth in Cornwall over the life of the next Spending Review and Parliament to complete the transformation from a once ‘less developed region’ to one that is thriving. This would build on Cornwall’s track record in effectively delivering EU funding and UK Shared Prosperity Funding.

A Cornwall funding settlement providing greater financial freedom through a single, multi-year settlement covering the major funding streams currently received by the authority and expanding over time to include other public bodies within Cornwall. A multi-year settlement would be agreed via negotiation with HMT as part of the Spending Review process.

A Cornwall fiscal devolution pilot to work with Government to explore how the UK could transition from being one of the most fiscally centralised in the world, with Cornwall serving as an active and strategic player in the economic growth of the UK. We would welcome the opportunity to explore with Government how Cornwall could pilot fiscal devolution, for example by receiving a share of more buoyant tax streams such as VAT, stamp duty land tax, corporation tax or income tax.

A financially resilient Cornwall with the ability to access a wider range of income sources to underpin a substantial investment programme in Cornwall:

- Since 2017 Cornwall has been piloting the 100% Business Rates Retention scheme, which provides £21m annually that is reinvested. Therefore, we would welcome the opportunity to shape and pilot a new system that retains this quantum of income, but levels the playing field between the high street and online giants, to better incentivise investment, tackle empty properties and support entrepreneurship.
- Devolved powers from Government to determine the application of any rate relief scheme aligned to a new system to enable us to address the challenges faced in Cornwall. Currently, at a time with 27,000 Cornish families on the waiting list for affordable housing and 800 in emergency temporary accommodation, over £20m of Government funding is being granted through tax relief to short term holiday rentals in Cornwall such as Airbnb.
- Powers to consider and consult upon new levies in relevant areas such as a visitor levy would have the potential to raise between £20m and £63m per year (based on a visitor levy flat fee of between £1 and £3 per night).
- Powers to implement a maximum 300% Council Tax premium for second homes in line with those in Wales would provide around £78m with a further £3.9m for the police to further enhance community safety. Powers from Government to allow us to vary the application of council tax discounts would enable us to shape charges and support as appropriate to Cornwall's circumstances.
- Powers devolved by Government to enable Cornwall to develop improved funding arrangements for town and parish councils would enable them to support their communities in an effective and sustainable way.

One and All Cornwall: improving quality of life.

But an economy can only work if we can **create existing and new places and communities that are thriving with effective public infrastructure and decent, secure homes, in which everyone can build a great life.**

Access to housing was the number one priority identified by residents in our latest annual survey¹². We need double the number of affordable homes in Cornwall to enable young people to build prosperous lives in Cornwall.

Current planning regulations and powers do not give Cornwall the tools to deal with housing shortages or disincentivise behaviours that have negative effects on the housing market - such as the prevalence of second and holiday homes.

When it comes to housing grants, application processes are inefficient with providers being required to bid on a case-by-case basis and we are unable to target *Homes England* funding as it supports large scale developments as opposed to a package of medium-sized developments which equate to the same number of dwellings during the same construction period.

Improving housing requires a devolution settlement that creates:

Homes Cornwall through a devolved strategic settlement with Government to fund the provision of the type of homes we need. **Homes Cornwall** would also be empowered by Government to lead a number of new initiatives to develop blueprints for other parts of the UK grappling with similar challenges:

- Establish a **Self Build Cornwall** scheme to help remove the barriers and uncertainty that prevent people from building their own homes, mirroring the Welsh Government's scheme.
- Give flexibility within the **national regulation framework** to ensure the private rented sector in Cornwall is fair for both landlords and tenants – the flexibility extends to having the ability to introduce rent caps.
- Implement a new model '**employment university**' to provide young people with a university type experience for apprenticeships in our distinctive sectors, with affordable housing being provided as part of the course.

¹² Cornwall Residents' Survey 2023. Available [here](#).

Social Homes Cornwall through an investment pot from Government for social homes to meet decent homes standards, be fit for a carbon neutral future and reduce living costs. Combined with the ability to reform our rent setting powers for Housing Revenue Account – an exemption from rent formula to do straight cash increases rather than percentage increases until our rents get to a benchmarked average.

Decent Homes Cornwall with a devolved multi-year funding package from Government equivalent to those received by West Midlands and Greater Manchester, to deliver the Warm Homes Plan in Cornwall with an area based retrofit approach helping to tackle fuel poverty, delivering jobs and reducing the carbon impacts of our housing.

Planning Cornwall with powers to develop a Cornwall Development Framework (the equivalent of Planning Policy Wales) that would enable us to tackle the economic and housing challenges that Cornwall faces. For example, powers to introduce pre-approved or fast-tracked planning and apply tax-relief in new designated areas; an expansion of compulsory purchase orders to provide Cornwall with more powers and enforcement mechanisms for land use; and convening powers around public sector land and infrastructure providers or the ability to put a place-based duty on other providers.

Creating places and communities that are thriving requires **excellent and carbon neutral transport. To ensure people choose low-carbon transport, Cornwall's transport system needs to connect people, communities, businesses and services in a way that enhances quality of life, is reliable, efficient, safe, healthy and inclusive.**

Cornwall needs to be given the tools to demonstrate how large rural geographies can deliver joined-up sustainable transport networks that support modal shift to both active travel and public transport as a preference to private car usage.

Improving public infrastructure requires a devolution settlement that creates:

Public Infrastructure Cornwall with a devolved, multi-year integrated transport settlement from Government (as recommended by the National Infrastructure Commission) targeted at road safety, active travel, connectivity and highway maintenance. **Public Infrastructure Cornwall** would seek delegated powers and funds from the Government to oversee the approval and allocation of capital funds for other essential elements of public infrastructure. This would include:

- Capital funding for new and existing schools, with the value of the delegated fund based on population projections and our planning policy.

- An annual contribution from the Government towards the maintenance of the Tamar Bridge to ensure the sustainability of this critical public infrastructure.

Cornwall Land and Infrastructure Commission with convening powers from Government to bring together stakeholders to determine and fund the infrastructure needs of Cornwall.

*An expanded **Transport for Cornwall*** to incorporate a new rail partnership with Great British Railways to improve rail services, in time with an integrated ticketing and fares offer - working to integrate the bus and rail systems and offer the ultimate ambition of Tap On/Tap Off account-based ticketing across modes.

Creating places and communities that are thriving is also reliant on having 21st century health, social care (both for children and adults) and education systems.

Cornwall is ideally placed to work with Government to help achieve the mission to build NHS and social care services fit for the future, working together to develop and agree a long-term and pioneering plan for investment in health and social care and progressing wider system reform across Cornwall.

The challenges of Cornwall's growing, fast-aging and socio-economically diverse population together with the strengths of our already well-established integrated health and social care services would provide an ideal environment in which to work together in the development of a sustainable National Care Service and neighbourhood health centres.

***Improving health, social care and education* requires a devolution settlement that creates:**

Cornwall Health and Social Care empowered by Government to create a preventive, people focused system, ensuring individuals are cared for in the home of their choice, and supported by responsive services when they need them. With the appropriate powers and funding Cornwall can pioneer ways to recruit and retain a sufficient and appropriately skilled workforce; transition away from traditional forms of residential care towards preventative forms of community-based care; invest in and deploy rapidly advancing technologies; and truly integrate services across the NHS and social care.

Healthier environments and places to live, so Cornwall creates the best environment to enable people to live healthier, active lives, reducing avoidable ill health. Having devolved powers to change licensing policy, planning regulations and control advertising will help us shape healthier environments for our children to grow up in. The ability to create a sustainable food system will provide healthy, affordable food grown in Cornwall. As will access to secure, flexible and fairly paid work for all including vulnerable groups and those with health conditions through our complementary economic powers.

Education Cornwall with an enhanced role and powers across the whole education ecosystem, including being able to direct academies on matters such as admissions, management of SEND pupils and school place planning. **Education Cornwall** would also be empowered by Government to transform services and support for children and families enabling us to break down barriers to opportunity - including shaping the **childcare** market, with funding to enhance childcare settings and support the recruitment and retention of a sufficient childcare workforce, and creating a more inclusive school system which supports keeping more children with **SEND** in mainstream rather than specialist education.

Proposed

One and All Cornwall: mitigating the climate and ecological crises.

The golden thread which runs through this whole White Paper is Cornwall's climate and ecological ambitions.

Many of the solutions we propose on skills and transport will allow Cornwall to deliver an integrated, joined up approach to build a low carbon future.

Environmental growth is about not just protecting but also enhancing nature – ensuring that there is more of it, and that it is bigger, better, more diverse and more joined up.

However, analysis carried out on behalf of the Local Nature Partnership in 2023 highlights the key barriers which are stagnating progress towards place-led environmental growth and what could be done to help address them: reductions in flexible funding to deliver nature recovery and enforce environmental compliance, emerging skills gap and complexity within the sector, compounded by centralised delivery.

***Mitigating the climate and ecological crises* requires a devolution settlement that creates:**

Natural Resources Cornwall with local facilitation powers and devolved funding from Government to deliver our Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy, building on existing successful models such as the Forest for Cornwall. Consolidating agencies and funding would enable us to deliver an integrated approach to place-led restoration of our natural capital, tackle the climate and ecological emergency and adapt our infrastructure and communities to a changing environment with more streamlined allocation of funding to Cornwall's priorities, management and regulatory enforcement, which can be supplemented with green finance channelled through the Cornwall Natural Capital Exchange Platform.

Cornwall Environmental Ombudsman aligned to the new Office for Environmental Protection, with designated powers and funding from Government to enhance our environmental enforcement approach in Cornwall.

Cornwall Marine and Coastal Partnership with longer-term, devolved funding and convening powers from Government to enable stakeholders to continue to work without boundaries across the land/sea divide to better achieve effective environmental coordination, water quality improvements, reducing flood risk, maximising the role of blue natural capital and cross-sector working towards a thriving blue economy.

Cornwall whole farm advisory service with devolved funding from Government to enable us to draw together the expertise of our agriculture, environment, business, research/tech-transfer, and crisis advisors to provide a single, holistic and coherent one stop shop of information and advice for farmers and land managers aligning environment and finance into whole farm business models.

Proposed

One and All Cornwall: enhancing our identity.

Cornwall is benefiting immeasurably from a cultural renaissance focused on many tangible and intangible elements of Cornish distinctness.

As a result, there has been an increase in the number of people that identify as Cornish, with 117,350 people selecting Cornish as their national identity, main language or ethnic group in the most recent Census (2021). And we've seen a revival of the Cornish language. More than 200 people sign up for Kernewek classes each year, and more than 8,000 schoolchildren have taken part in the *Go Cornish* for our Primary Schools Cornish Language programme.

Cornwall and Cornish people have a unique national identity, which we need to cherish and protect into the future. During April, Cornwall celebrated the 10th anniversary of Cornish being recognised as a national minority under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

As part of the celebrations, Cornwall called on the Government to recognise the Cornish language (Kernewek) – the only Celtic language in the British Isles that does not yet enjoy protection under Part III (Articles 8 – 14) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages – to grant Kernewek the same protections as the other Celtic languages. A swift and positive response to Cornwall's request would be seen as an immediate renewing of the Government's commitment to the Council of Europe's treaties protecting national minorities and their languages signed by the UK in 1998 and 2000 respectively.

Part III status for the Cornish language, together with our additional proposals to enhance Cornwall's identity and status, would also be consistent and complement:

- the inclusion of Cornish in the list of recognised regional or minority languages in the Media Act 2024¹³ (which now requires implementation by broadcasters).
- political representation from Cornwall at language meetings of the British-Irish Council (as a result of the Level 2 Cornwall Devolution Deal).
- the historic Collaboration Agreement between Cornwall and Wales agreed in 2023 between the respective political leaders of the two Celtic nations.
- the signing of the *Rennes Declaration* and creation of the Celtic Forum between Cornwall, the Governments of Ireland, Wales and Scotland, plus regions of France and Spain, to maintain and deepen institutional relations between the Celtic partners and to strengthen their cooperation.

¹³ Media Act 2024 available [here](#).

Enhancing Cornwall's identity requires a devolution settlement that creates:

A Minister for Cornwall appointed by the Government to recognise the special identity of Cornwall. The Minister would be responsible for ensuring Cornwall's voice is heard across all parts of the UK Government to deliver the change and renewal that Cornwall needs – to drive economic growth, create jobs and increase household incomes. Government departments and agencies such as *Highways England* and the Office for National Statistics must collect statistical data about the Cornish and consult with the Minister for Cornwall before implementing any policy changes that impact on all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life in Cornwall, and collect statistical data about the Cornish – in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹⁴.

Furthermore, we ask that Cornwall is represented in its own right on the Government's **Council of UK Nations and Regions to ensure** the interests of the Cornish as a protected national minority are promoted and to enable Cornwall to play an active part in the delivery of growth that benefits the whole UK.

Full membership of the British-Irish Council in recognition of Cornwall's status as a national minority with a protected Cornish language, together with the many shared issues with the Celtic nations represented on the BIC.

A Cornish Language Act to be introduced by the Government in the next Parliament to give effect to the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Cornwall, English and Kernewek should be treated on a basis of equality.

Arts Cornwall with passported funding from Government and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, so we can determine where that funding is invested. *Arts Cornwall* would enable a more strategic and efficient mechanism for allocating and managing Government funding.

A revision to the **Parliamentary Constituencies Act**, to give legal protection to Cornwall's constituencies in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities that requires the UK Government to 'refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities'.

¹⁴ Council of Europe (1995) *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. Available [here](#).

Conclusion

Cornwall has long been recognised and praised for the excellent partnership working across organisations serving the area. More recently this reputation has extended to our paradiplomacy beyond Cornwall's shores in establishing a range of agreements with other Celtic nations.

Inspections and peer reviews have praised the 'can-do' attitude, collaboration and cohesive multi-agency governance to create a *One and All* sense of unity across all partners, with everyone following the 'North Star' that is the Cornwall Plan 2050.

Our overriding sense of unity and putting Cornwall first is a rare commodity and testament to Cornwall's distinctiveness as a proud Celtic nation with its own protected language and identity: a status it shares with Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

As fellow Celtic nations of the United Kingdom will testify, those ingredients are fundamental to making devolution work, and we have them in rich abundance in Cornwall.

The *One and All Cornwall* model that we have presented is a proposal to capitalize on those ingredients and opportunities to achieve an ambitious 'step-change' in the empowerment and delivery of public services to create a more resilient, healthy and prosperous future.

Crucially, the benefits of this White Paper would be felt across Cornwall, but they would also deliver benefits to the UK Government and the wider economy.

We are confident in our track record of delivery and growth.

We simply seek the powers and capabilities that will allow us to unlock our unique potential and become the place that we, and all our residents, know that Cornwall can be. *One and All*.