

May 22nd 2006

Carleen Kelemen's welcome to Danuta Hübner

Back in 1999 when we negotiated the Objective One Programme for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Cornwall was a very different place to the Cornwall of today.

Back then we wouldn't have envisaged media headlines such as "Cool Cornwall" or "Cornwall's on a Roll" or "Cornwall the Place to Think Differently" nor did we foresee that in less than 6 years these new perceptions would be created by:

- the success of the Tate Gallery in St Ives
- the National Maritime museum at Falmouth housing the national small boat collection from Greenwich
- the buzz and excitement around the Extreme Sports Academy at Watergate Bay
- the national and regional recognition for Cornish food and drink - a renewal in the sense of pride of our local produce and ability
- the growth of low cost airlines flying into Newquay Airport
- the Peninsula Medical School and Knowledge Spa in Truro
- the Eden Project, one of the most photographed buildings in the world – creating a new iconic image for Cornwall and the perception of a "can-do" culture
- a 21st century IT infrastructure available to over 99% of this peninsula
- or that we would be sitting in this wonderful building, the hub of our Combined Universities in Cornwall

Back then, Commissioner, our economy was characterised by a lack of confidence, recognition of market failure and years of consistently having the lowest GVA per head in the UK. Our problem was not one of unemployment but underemployment. The quality of jobs was poor and average income levels were 32% below national levels.

Our traditional industries of agriculture, fishing and mining were in long term decline and local economic conditions did not support entrepreneurship or the emergence of competitive growth sectors.

And critically, our young people were leaving, leaving for higher education or better career opportunities or simply better paid full time jobs.



Objective One is
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With Objective One came the opportunity to set out our vision for a prosperous Cornwall and Isles of Scilly where all people and communities share in an improving quality of life.

Creating that equality of opportunity where everyone is encouraged to raise their aspirations for themselves and others, is what drives Objective One and is at the heart of everything we do. So our strategy was to create the conditions for new opportunities whilst tackling those barriers to social and economic exclusion.

And in so doing we firmly set our sights on moving towards a more knowledge based economy - this was going to be a long term generational approach and to start we had to look to refettle the structure of the Cornish economy and at the beginning of this long journey create the beginning of a renaissance through a new root for our future - the first ever Combined Universities in Cornwall.

In working towards this we have:

- invested in quality workspace to attract quality businesses which can offer better paid jobs. And have used the best of sustainable technologies from Cornwall's mining past
- invested in our infrastructure where it is a barrier to economic growth
- added value to traditional industries to preserve their benefit locally
- invested in local food processors to use local produce creating new markets and smarter ways of working through collaboratives and the better use of modern technologies
- invested in the fabric and public areas of our historic and much loved towns to make them more attractive places to live and work and invest in
- jumped forward a generation in the creation and use of an IT infrastructure for the 21st century - the virtual bridge to address peripherality - from having less than 1% broadband access in 2000 we now have over 99% across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- reached out to those people of working age who are incapacitated or disadvantaged and helped them to move closer to or into the labour market
- created new pools of learning and knowledge for our people and our businesses through the creation of the Combined Universities in Cornwall, the Peninsula Medical School and Knowledge Spa, and the Eden Project

Such a difference, Commissioner, in less than 6 years since the Programme began; a difference characterised through Confidence, Change, Quality, and Partnership. Core partnerships through Cornwall County Council, District Councils, the Council of the Isles of Scilly, the South West Regional Development Agency and



Government Office for the South West. Partnerships across Europe, UK government, regional and local bodies – the exemplar engagement of the Private Sector both in terms of strategic guidance and delivery of projects.

And we are now seeing new partnerships emerging of businesses, planners, universities and the local communities.

We have created these partnerships through hard work, transparency and effective delivery. Strong partnerships which now have the confidence and trust to continue the challenge that lies ahead.

As you have said in the past, Commissioner, "we reach out to people we know and trust, those around tomorrow and the day after."

And the economy? There are visible signs of change all around us and after years of economic decline the local GVA statistics for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for 2003 show us as one of the fastest growing economies in the UK - at a percentage growth of 6.8% - outperforming both the UK average and Inner London in terms of rates of growth.

And the lessons and benefits of the Objective One Programme have not just been for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly but have informed both regional and national economic agendas as well as providing new models of best practice for the European member states:

- the actnow project reset the UK government's approach to the rollout of broadband and the support for business take-up
- the innovative work with Jobcentre Plus which has played a transformational role here in creating a new way of reaching out and effectively helping the economically inactive to work
- the Combined Universities in Cornwall model as the regenerator of the economy and its outreach to business is being shared across the UK and Europe

For me the difference lies in the attitude and aspirations of the people around us. You can see it and feel it.

New types of businesses are emerging, particularly in the media and IT sectors and traditional businesses are transforming themselves through new knowledge and technologies to meet the changing need of national and global markets and there are people who have been supported by the Programme in overcoming social and economic barriers:

- the single parent who achieved her dream of being a bus driver through the Truronian Training Project
- the lady in her early 50s who for years would not apply for a job because she had personal issues and has now been assisted by the Programme to overcome this and apply for interviews
- the dairy farmers in Bodmin who, through the Programme, have diversified into bottled spring water which is selling across restaurants in Cornwall and in London



- the young man from Falmouth whose family couldn't afford to send him away to university who now studies here at the Hub
- and the young man who had a serious drink problem when he was 14/15 years old and very little hope that life would get better - he is now one of the trainee chefs at the newly opened Jamie Oliver Fifteen Cornwall project at Watergate Bay, a project supported by the Programme

President Barroso in his address "Working together for growth and jobs - A New start for the Lisbon agenda" has laid down some serious and ambitious challenges for the next round of structural funds and we are ready to accept that challenge to concentrate our efforts for delivering those stepchange investments focussing on knowledge, education, innovation and distinctiveness which will deliver longer lasting growth and creating better jobs accessible to all.

Our work is really just beginning.

Carleen Kelemen
Director of the Objective One Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

