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Cornwall becomes first rural authority in England to agree devolution deal

16 July 2015

The Leader of Cornwall Council John Pollard has joined with the Chairman of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership Chris Pomfret and Dr Iain Chorlton, Chair of NHS Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group, to welcome the official signing of the Cornwall Devolution Deal.

Cornwall is the first rural authority in the country to be offered a devolution deal, with Prime Minister David Cameron travelling to Cornwall on Thursday to sign the formal agreement on behalf of the Government.

"This Devolution Deal is brilliant news for Cornwall" said Council Leader John Pollard. "We were early in recognising the growing momentum of the national agenda for devolving powers from Westminster and, by creating a Case for Cornwall which was strong and realistic, we have had a positive response from the Government. Cornwall is, therefore, the first rural authority in the country to be given a devolution deal. This gives Cornwall greater powers over public sector funding".

"This is the first stage of a longer journey towards delivering the full Case for Cornwall. We will now be working with partners to develop an integrated health and social care system, and deliver significant economic growth, with enhanced business support, greater access to employment and training opportunities, together with a much improved public transport network and more efficient use of public sector buildings."

Prime Minister David Cameron said: **"At the heart of this One Nation Government is the belief that everyone, no matter what their background or where they're from, has the opportunity to get on in life."**

"This devolution deal marks a major shift for the people who live and work in Cornwall – putting power in their hands and giving them the tools to take charge and make the most of the fantastic potential that Cornwall holds."

"And, alongside our long term economic plan, which has created 19,000 jobs in Cornwall since 2010 and will deliver tax cuts to benefit 2.6million people in the region, we are determined to continue to deliver and make sure opportunity and prosperity reaches every corner of our country."

Under the terms of the Deal, which is based on the proposals set out in the Case for Cornwall which were formally agreed by the full Council on Tuesday, Cornwall will have greater powers over public spending which is currently controlled by London.

Chris Pomfret, Chairman of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership, said: **"This is a tremendous achievement for Cornwall. We look forward to the LEP playing its role in supporting Cornwall Council to achieve economic growth through the many opportunities that this deal creates, including greater flexibility with employment and skills which remain a top priority for the LEP."**

Dr Iain Chorlton, Chairman at NHS Kernow, said: **"This is a significant milestone as we work towards our shared ambition of integrating health and social care, empowering local communities to have greater ownership of decisions and resources, tailored to local needs."**

"Our innovative approaches in integrating health and social care are already making a difference to people's lives – and today's announcement could enable more resources to focus directly on local patient care and outcomes."

The Deal covers a range of key areas including transport, employment and skills, EU funding, business support, energy, health and social care, public estate, heritage and culture, with a number of exciting "firsts" for Cornwall.

These include the proposals for transport, which will see the Council become the first rural authority in the country to be given powers to franchise bus services. The Government has also agreed to devolve central funding on local transport. This will deliver around £50m to create an integrated public transport system with smart ticketing, and fares and timetables for combined travel between bus, rail and ferry services.

The Government has also agreed to work with partners in Cornwall to transform health and social care services. This will involve Cornwall Council, the Council of the Isles of Scilly, NHS Kernow and other local partners working with NHS England and other local partners to develop a business plan to move progressively towards the integration of health and social care.

Other areas include an agreement on EU funding which will see Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly given Intermediate Body (IB) status. This will mean decisions on allocating €603.7m of European funding to projects will now be made locally rather than at Westminster.

The Government has also agreed to work with agencies in Cornwall on a number of proposals to improve employment and skills opportunities. These include reshaping training and learning provision, developing new apprenticeship opportunities and improving careers advice for young people.

There is also an agreement to work with the Council and the LEP on integrating national and local business support services to make it easier for local businesses to find the support they need, and develop a devolved approach to business support from 2017.

The Government has also agreed to support Cornwall's aim to create a low carbon Enterprise Zone and develop geothermal energy production, as well as working with partners to help address the current constraints on the national grid and to develop proposals to improve energy efficiency in homes.

Work will also take place on joining together funding for flood defences from a range of partners, including the Environment Agency and South West Water and the South West regional flood committee, to provide a joint investment programme to improve coastal defences, and developing proposals to ensure that the most efficient use is made of public buildings and land.

The final area of agreement is heritage and culture, with the Government pledging support for the creation of a Cornish Heritage Environment Forum.

Following the formal signing of the agreement the Council will now work with its local partners and with civil servants in London to develop detailed plans to implement the proposals.

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