

Objective One case study public realm



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The projects in the Public Realm investment cluster support the conservation of the environment of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where it contributes to economic regeneration, particularly the economic vitality and viability of our towns and villages.

The historic environment and cultural heritage of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are fundamental building blocks in the strong sense of regional distinctiveness and identity felt in the area, which in turn is a major contributor to the product of Cornwall. This distinctiveness is a key strength and developing the ability to secure economic benefits from the heritage is a key plank in achieving a sustainable and successful economy.

Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey (CSUS)

A pioneering blueprint for urban regeneration that was compiled for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is so successful it is being promoted internationally.

The study is aimed at ensuring that development acknowledges and enhances the quality and historic character of towns in the region.

Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey (CSUS) is a groundbreaking initiative aimed at capturing the quality and distinctive character of the historic environment for successful and sustainable economic regeneration. The result is a comprehensive information resource for 19 towns across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

This resource is being used by local authorities, architects, private developers, development agencies, residents, visitors, community groups and others and can help to ensure that any new development is sympathetic to an area.

It is already a national exemplar, being the first project of its kind to carry out a characterisation-based assessment of the historic urban environment specifically to inform and support a regional economic regeneration programme.

CSUS methods and reports are now being promoted by English Heritage as an example of best practice for similar projects elsewhere in the UK and internationally.

The CSUS cost £454,346 of which £211,396 came from the Objective One European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Match funding was provided by English Heritage, the South West Regional Development Agency and Cornwall County



Falmouth HERS has improved access and public safety by carrying out work to openways and has encouraged investment in Falmouth town centre through the conservation of the historic environment

Council. The study was carried out by the Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council.

Roger Carson, Director of Rosemullion Homes, explained the value of CSUS for private developers: “Tragically house building in Cornwall in the late 20th century largely ignored the rich heritage of fine older buildings which grew out of the landscape, and many stretches of coast and countryside are blighted by ill-considered modern buildings of little architectural merit. When we founded Rosemullion Homes in 1994 our mission was to start – in a small way – to reverse this trend. By looking carefully at historic houses in Cornish towns and villages, we try to capture the atmosphere of their surroundings. Using locally sourced materials we build houses of traditional character that ‘go with the grain’ of their landscape.

“There is no doubt that CSUS reports could be used to assist and encourage other developers in Cornwall to understand local historical context and pay close attention to proper architectural detail in their schemes. We also see CSUS reports as a tool for planning officers to encourage good housing design from developers and where this is not successful, to refuse schemes which lack any attempt to properly relate to their surroundings.”

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Bob Bewley, Regional Director-South West of English Heritage, said: “English Heritage is delighted to have been able to work with Objective One and SWRDA on such a successful project. It shows what can be achieved when heritage and regeneration agencies work together to pursue shared aims.

“This was an innovative and ambitious project. The value of its results will be strongly felt in Cornwall and Scillies towns, but also far more widely as a demonstration of the importance of characterisation and its key role in maintaining the distinctiveness of places.”

Carleen Kelemen, Director of the Objective One Partnership, added: “This project demonstrates how partnership work has ensured the conservation of our heritage while keeping one eye on future development. This study provides an excellent environment for business growth.”

Adam Paynter, Executive Member for Environment and Heritage and Deputy Leader, Cornwall County Council, explained that CSUS promotes the idea of development which respects the individual character of different places.

He said: “Thanks to the Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey it is at last possible to demonstrate clearly, and in straightforward language, the distinctiveness of different towns in a way that is extremely helpful when assessing the impact of development proposals on their historic character.

“Development is essential for the health of towns and villages across Cornwall: these reports help clarify heritage values and define a place’s essential character in order to inform the development process and guide the construction of the heritage of the future.”

Nick Johnson, Historic Environment Manager, Cornwall County Council, went on to say how the study has been welcomed by residents of the 19 targeted areas.

“From the feedback at many talks, local people are always very pleased that the quality and character of their towns have been recognised. There is also an unexpected but strong consensus amongst local people on which aspects of urban design over the last 30 years have degraded the historic character of their towns. Audiences are appreciative that the underlying themes of the CSUS reports are those of quality and distinctiveness.”



White's Warehouse in Foundry Square, Hayle which has received investment from Objective One via Penwith District Council's Hayle Townscape Heritage Initiative

Stephen Bohane, Head of Operations for the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), said: “CSUS is a reminder to us all that the historic environment can be used as a catalyst for change and a powerful driver for sustainable economic regeneration. The CSUS reports will be a valuable resource for future RDA initiatives in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.”

The 19 towns in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were identified in consultation with planning, conservation and economic regeneration officers within the seven district, borough and unitary authorities in the county, as those most likely to be the focus for economic regeneration.

These towns are: Hugh Town (St Mary's, Isles of Scilly), Newlyn, Penzance, Hayle, St Ives, Camborne, Helston, Penryn, Falmouth, Redruth, Truro, Newquay, St Austell, Bodmin, Camelford, Liskeard, Launceston, Saltash and Torpoint.

Cornwall has an unusually high density of historic towns. All are small by English standards, the largest being St Austell which contained only 28,000 people in 2001, but all have a full range of urban components. These include commercial, administrative, community and ecclesiastical buildings; public and private spaces, and varieties of residential areas.

The major findings of the project are presented in report form. These are complemented by computer-based digital mapping and data recorded using ArcView GIS (Geographical Information System)

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software and together the two sources provide comprehensive information on historic development; urban topography; significant components of the historic environment; archaeological potential and historic character.

The reports and associated digital resources have been shared with local authorities, funding agencies, community groups and members of the general public. Great emphasis has been placed on making information easily accessible and each of the 19 survey reports and associated mapping is available for downloading from the project's dedicated website, www.historic-cornwall.org.uk.



Harvey's Foundry is a pioneering £1.9 million Objective One project that has sympathetically restored the Grade II listed 24 Foundry Square in Hayle to create 8000 sq ft of quality workspace
