

Camborne-Redruth – really?

Visitors to the CPR Regeneration website might have come across 'Spark'. Spark is a glossy magazine produced by 3Fox International 'a B2B customer publishing and events company ... located in London ... specialises in strategic marketing for regeneration programmes, particularly magazines, websites and events to promote big development schemes to investors, developers, consultants and end-users...'

Spark is 'essential reading for regeneration executives.'

3Fox International produce glossy magazines about lots of places across the UK.

What does 'Spark' tell people about the area?

'Cut off from the country, and even the rest of the county, the Cornish towns of Camborne, Pool and Redruth...'

Odd. The area has the A30 running through it and also the Penzance to Paddington railway line. Compared to other Cornish urban areas it is quite well connected. Considerable numbers commute in and out, shoppers flock to Pool. Hardly cut off.

'which will include an upgraded dual carriageway linking the towns to the A30, the main road to the rest of the country.'

How long is this dual carriageway from the A30 to the towns? Judging by the comment above you might assume it was 10-20 miles. In fact it's about a quarter of a mile.

'Heartlands will dramatically transform 7.5 ha of derelict land with innovative landscape design celebrating the culture of Cornwall, and 'Central to the regeneration of the CPR area is Heartlands, and key to its success is community involvement'. The huge 7.5ha transformation of Cornwall's most derelict urban area'..'

Strange how reports on 'Heartlands' manage to miss the existence of a substantial area of agricultural land between Station road and Dudnace lane. It actually appears on photos – it's the large green bit. Neglected perhaps but still farmland. Green fields cannot be confused with 'derelict' or can they?

The result has been to raise Cornwall's GDP from 56% of the EU average in 2001 to 75% in 2007.

Very impressive. Jubilation on the streets. Only one small problem, it's not quite accurate. GDP per person in Cornwall increased from 73% to 78% of the EU average between 2001 and 2006.

One problem that needs addressing urgently is that of housing affordability. The popularity of Cornwall as a downsizing destination, or for second homes (one in 10 properties is a second home) means that too many locals have been priced out of the housing market.

The housing market is driven not just by the incomes of local residents but also by those of people who choose to move to Cornwall from elsewhere, whether it's retiring to the county, moving there for quality of life, or buying a holiday home. And while this money helps the local economy it also drives house prices up, even inland, as the popularity of favoured coastal resorts have made them unaffordable to even the new arrivals.

Now that is news to all of us! High 'demand' from elsewhere pushes up house prices! Amazing.

To solve this, more houses need to be built. Ambitious targets for the growth of the area are set down in the draft regional spatial strategy of creating up to 11,100 new houses by 2026.

11,100 to meet local need? Well no. Most of the new houses will be sold on the open market so no guarantee that they will meet local need. But they will meet the demand for downsizing or for those new arrivals who find the coastal areas too pricey! Local needs estimates vary, 2,000-2,500 perhaps.

It is also important to remember how strong the Cornish market has been in recent years, helped not least by 63,000 people moving into the county between 2004 and 2007.

Probably an underestimate – 80,000 perhaps? Though as the population increased by 16000, a large number moved out. We obviously need a strong market to push house prices up!

A developer's perspective on the matter comes from Simon Williams, managing director of local building company Percy Williams and Sons. "I certainly think any housing built in this area is going to have a percentage of it that is affordable housing as part of the deal," he says. "But the Camborne, Pool and Redruth area has actually got relatively low house prices compared with the rest of Cornwall, and so it can be difficult to pay for the affordable housing. You cannot cross-subsidise from such a low profit. I hope that the various ongoing regeneration projects will change that over time by improving the local property values."

Improving property values = increasing property values. But the problem highlighted in previous quotes was the unaffordability of housing. How might 'improving' them help affordability? Very confusing.

EP is working with CPR Regeneration to "increase the supply of homes and quality of neighbourhoods",. One example of this work is Trevenson Park North, a site formerly used by the mining and engineering industries.

Presumably an old mining site in need of regeneration? Actually, this the School of mines/Camborne college and Pool school site. Education perhaps?

Trevenson Park North - *The development will create a park in the heart of the residential area*

Good news – Pool needs a park. So that’s the site in front of the college where there are clumps of trees and green space. Sounds like the description of a park. Its there already! Incredible.

As it says on the website - *Please download Spark Magazine below. It provides an in-depth look at regeneration schemes in Camborne, Pool and Redruth.*

<http://www.cprregeneration.co.uk/downloads.htm>