

# **Attitudes to Regional Government in Cornwall**

## **Summary Report**

**Research Study Conducted for  
Cornwall County Council**



**February 2003**



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# Introduction

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## Background

This report presents the findings of a telephone survey conducted by MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of Cornwall County Council. The research was conducted in order to gauge awareness, knowledge and opinions towards regional government in Cornwall.

## Research Design

MORI Social Research Institute carried out 1,807 telephone interviews with residents aged 18+ across Cornwall County Council area between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003. Approximately, 300 interviews were conducted within each of the 6 district council areas which are:

- Penwith
- Kerrier
- Carrick
- Restormel
- Caradon
- North Cornwall

At a county-wide level, quotas were set for sex and age (from the 2001 Census) and work status (using modelled 1991 Census data) to reflect the local population profile. At the analysis stage, data was also weighted to the profile of the County. Detailed findings, with breakdown by area and other variables, are set out in computer tabulations which have been provided in a separate volume.

## Presentation and Interpretation of Data

It should be remembered at all times that a sample, and not the entire population of Cornwall County Council, has taken part in the survey. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are significant. A guide to statistical reliability is appended.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the volume an asterisk (\*) denotes any value of less than half of one per cent, but greater than zero.

In this report (and in the computer tables), reference is made to “net” figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions, and provides a particularly useful means of comparing the results for a number of variables. In

the case of a “net satisfaction” figure, this represents the percentage satisfied on a particular issue or service, less the percentage dissatisfied. For example, in this survey 89% of residents are satisfied with their local area compared to 7% who are dissatisfied. The “net” figure is +82 points.

## **Publication of Data**

As Cornwall County Council has engaged MORI to provide an objective and representative programme of research, it is important to protect the Council’s interests by ensuring that it is accurately reflected in any press release or publication of the findings. As part of our standard terms and conditions, the publication of the data in this report is therefore subject to the advance approval of MORI. This would only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misinterpretation of the findings.

## **Acknowledgements**

MORI would like to thank Rob Andrew from Cornwall County Council for his help throughout the project, as well as the 1,807 residents who participated in the survey.

# Executive Summary

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MORI's telephone survey of Cornwall County Council residents was undertaken some three to four weeks before the Government's 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003 deadline for submissions on whether or not there is support for a referendum on elected regional governance. MORI is also undertaking research in four other regions – East of England, East Midlands, North West and South East – as well as nationally. These further findings provide an important context to attitudes in Cornwall.

## Awareness

Awareness of regional governance, although higher than in some other regions recently surveyed by MORI, is low in Cornwall:

- Two-thirds (65%) say they know little or nothing at all about suggestions that there should be elected regional assemblies for each English region. One in three (35%) claim to know about these suggestions; just 4% say they know **a great deal**.
- Less than two in five (37%) can correctly identify the South West as the region in which they live; half (49%) do not claim to know.

Given people's low understanding, opinions may, however, change as people become more informed about the issues.

## People like referenda, but....

We know from other research that people like the idea of referenda in principle. In MORI's 1995 *State of the Nation* survey for the Joseph Rowntree Trust, 77% of the public (little changed from 1991) thought that Britain should adopt a referendum system, whereby certain issues are put to the people to decide by popular vote, as opposed to 20% who thought that the Government should decide. The same proportion (77%) also thought that it would be a good idea if the British people could force the Government to hold a referendum on a particular issue by raising a petition with signatures from, say, a million people. This provides an important context to people's attitudes to referenda on particular issues.

Around seven in ten Cornwall County Council residents (72%) support a referendum taking place to decide whether an elected regional assembly should be introduced in the South West region. Similar numbers (70%) also support a referendum taking place to decide the outcome on whether an elected regional assembly should be introduced solely for the County of Cornwall.

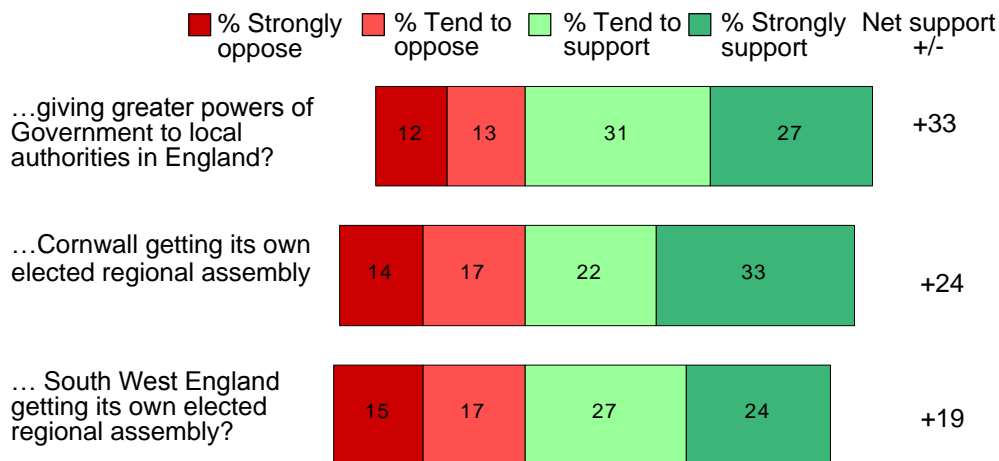
## Attitudes to an elected regional assembly for the South West

Half (51%) support the South West getting its own elected regional assembly. There is little difference in *support* among those who feel informed about this issue compared to those who do not feel informed. However, residents who feel informed are more likely to *oppose* the establishment of an assembly in the South West than those who are not informed (45% of the informed oppose, compared to 25% of the uninformed). There are similar levels of support for Cornwall to have an elected regional assembly.

Our further work – in other regions and nationally – will enable us to identify which factors actually *drive* people's views. Reasons for opposition to a regional assembly for the South West and Cornwall focus on it being too complicated to work, dividing the country and the scale of the region being too large. Reasons for support for a regional assembly focus on devolution: moving away from central government and on understanding specific local issues better. Indeed, more residents support giving greater powers of Government to local authorities in England than support the South West getting an elected regional assembly (58% compared with 51%). As many residents support Cornwall getting a regional assembly on its own (55%)

### Support for Devolving Powers

Q Do you support or oppose ....



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

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February 2003

Checked & Approved:

John Kennedy

Checked & Approved:

Colin Wilby



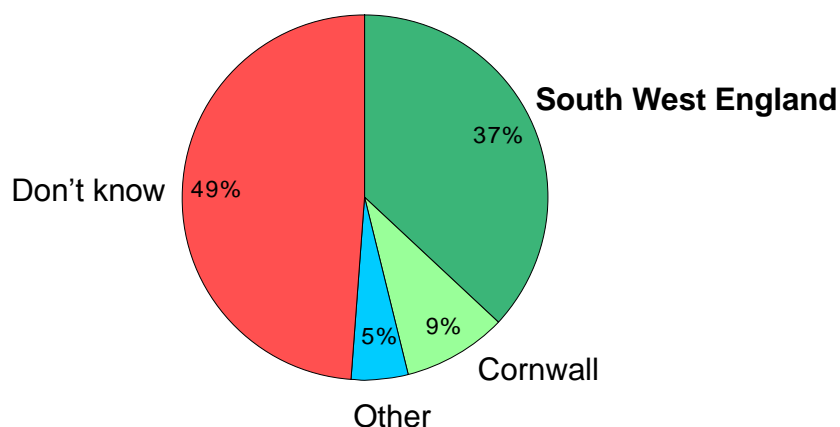
# 1. Awareness

## Knowledge of Region

Many Cornwall residents cannot correctly name their region; less than two in five correctly name the South West. Half say they do not know which region they are in.

### Awareness of Region

Q As you may know, the Government has divided England into several regions (called Government Office Regions) for some services. Please can you tell me which region you are in?



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

There is little variation in knowledge of region between people in different demographic groups. Men are somewhat more likely than women to know that they are in the South West (40% of men compared to 33% of women). Analysis by district shows that Caradon and North Cornwall residents are most aware of their region (40% correct), Restormel residents are least aware (32%).

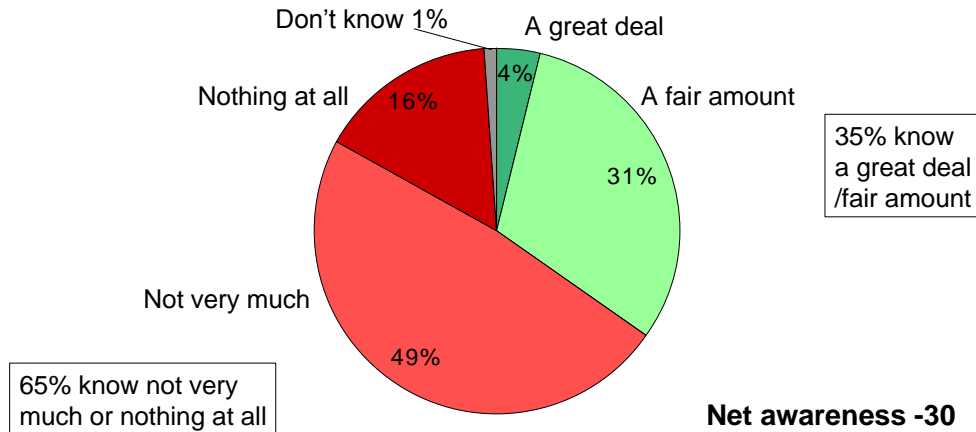
## Awareness of Regional Government

Around one in three (35%) residents in Cornwall say they know either 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' about suggestions that there should be elected regional assemblies in each English region. A majority of residents (65%) know 'not very much' or 'nothing at all'.

As could be expected, young people aged 18-24 and those in manual jobs (social classes C2DE) are the groups who are *least* informed about the suggestions on elected regional assemblies; 82% of 18-24 year-olds know 'not very much' or 'nothing at all', while seven in ten (70%) of those in social classes C2DE know little or nothing about regional government suggestions.

## Knowledge of Regional Government

Q As you may know, people in Scotland now elect a Scottish Parliament and people in Wales a Welsh Assembly. There are also suggestions that there should be elected regional assemblies for each English region. How much, if anything, would you say you know about these suggestions?



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

Knowledge is low throughout the county: there are no statistically significant differences between residents of the various districts.

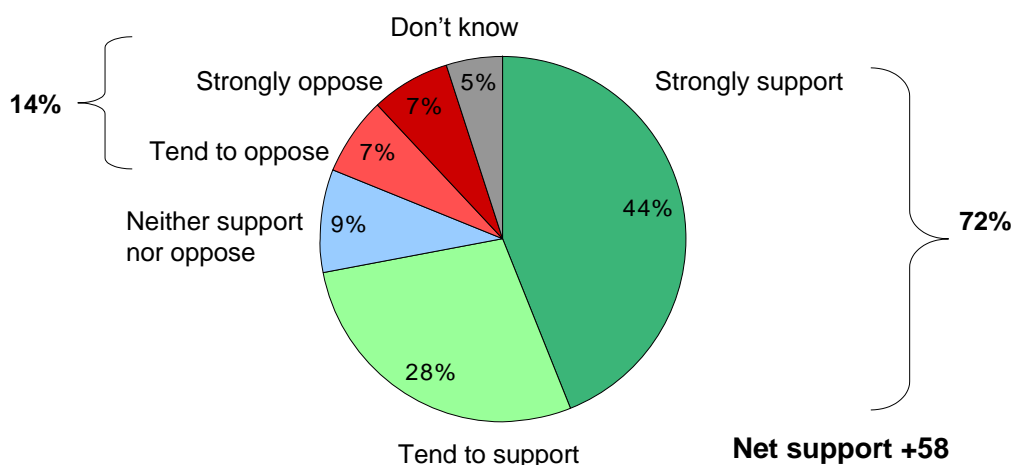
## 2. Attitudes to Referendum on Regional Government

### Level of Support for Referendum

Seven in ten residents (72%) say they would support a referendum taking place to decide whether an elected regional assembly should be introduced for the South West region, while one in seven (14%) would oppose it.

#### Support for Referendum on Regional Government 1

Q Could you tell me how strongly you would support or oppose a referendum taking place to decide whether an elected regional assembly should be introduced for the South West region?



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

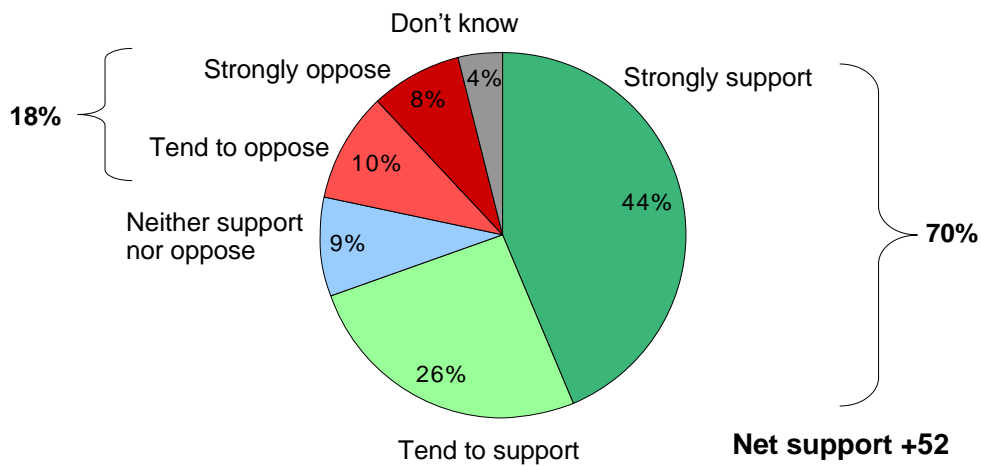
Source: MORI

Those who are in favour of a regional assembly being introduced for the South West are more likely to say that they support a referendum taking place to decide the outcome that those who are opposed (90% compared to 54%). This indicates that the question of a referendum cannot be viewed in isolation, as there may be a relationship with people's level of support for a regional assembly.

There is also strong support for a referendum taking place to decide the outcome of whether an elected regional assembly should be introduced solely for the County of Cornwall. As with support for a referendum in the South West, those who support a regional assembly also strongly support a referendum for Cornwall (85% compared to 54%).

## Support for Referendum on Regional Government 2

Q I now want to ask about Cornwall. How strongly you would support or oppose a referendum taking place to decide the outcome on whether an elected regional assembly should be introduced solely for the County of Cornwall?



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

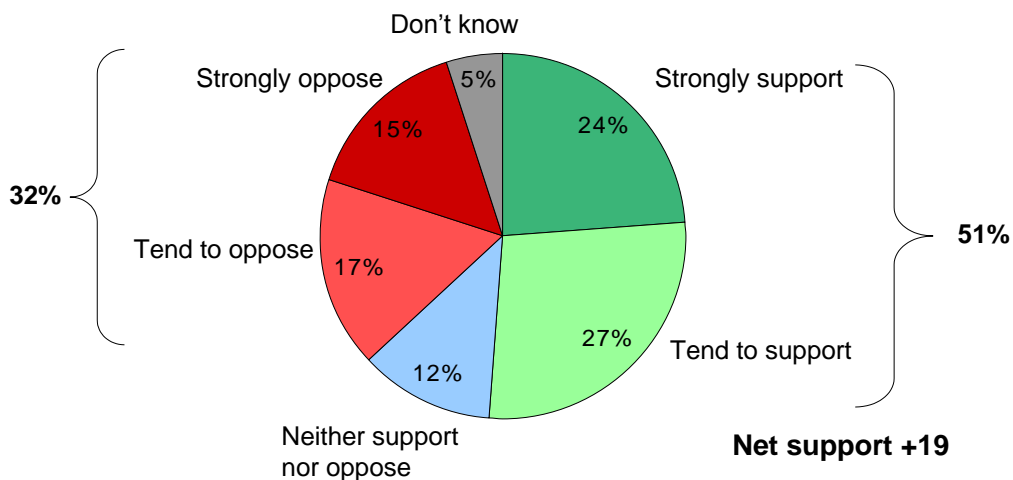
## 3. Attitudes to Regional Government

### Benchmark Support

Respondents were asked a series of questions on their support or opposition to the South West having its own elected regional assembly. The first of these questions provided no information on the issue, which is important to note as many respondents have little or no prior knowledge about the suggestions or the implications of having regional assemblies. The results from this question show that around half (51%) say they support the South West getting an elected regional assembly, while some one in three (32%) oppose it.

#### Benchmark Support for Regional Assemblies

Q Do you support or oppose South West England getting its own elected regional assembly?



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

Younger people aged between 18 and 34 are more likely than those aged 60 or over to support a regional assembly for the South West (58% compared to 45%).

There is a difference in support among those who feel informed about this issue compared to those who do not feel informed. Residents who feel informed are more likely to *oppose* the establishment of an assembly in the South West than those who are not informed (45% of the informed oppose, compared to 25% of the uninformed).

## Reasons for Supporting a Regional Assembly

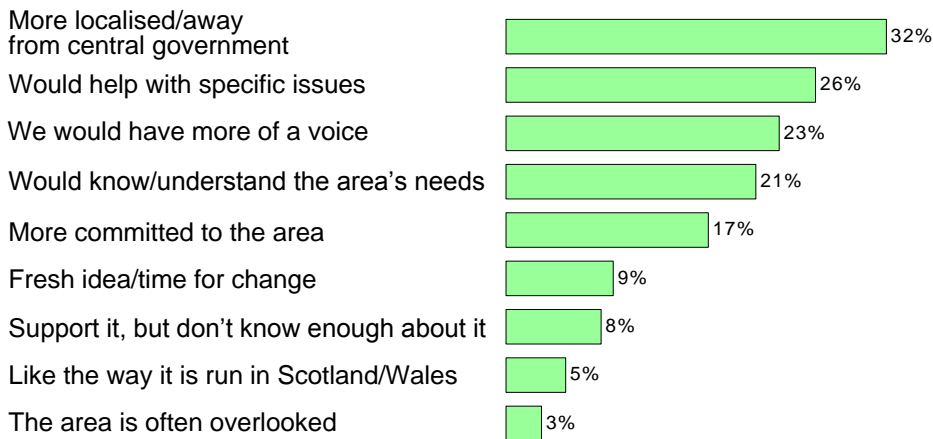
The principal reason given for supporting a regional assembly is that it would be **more localised/away from central government**; one in three (32%) of those in favour cite this as a reason. This is followed by the view that a regional assembly **would help with specific issues relevant to the area** (26%) and that residents **would get more of a voice** (23%).

It is interesting to note that around one in twelve (8%) of those who support a regional assembly say they don't know enough about it, with an additional 6% saying they don't know.

## Support for Elected Regional Assembly

Q You said that you support South West England getting its own elected regional assembly. Why do you say that?

### TOP MENTIONS (UNPROMPTED)



Base: All who support an elected regional assembly for the South West region (926)

Source: MORI

## Reasons for Opposing a Regional Assembly

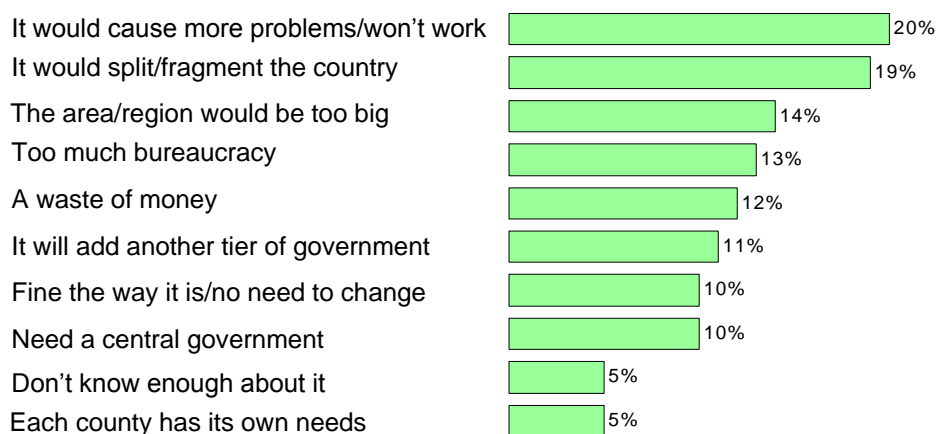
The main reason for opposing an elected regional assembly in the South West is that it would **cause more problems/won't work/too complicated** (mentioned by one in five residents).

Around one in five (19%) oppose it because **it would split/fragment the country**, while around one in seven believe **the area/region would be too large** and **too much bureaucracy**.

### Support for Elected Regional Assembly

Q You said that you oppose South West England getting its own elected regional assembly. Why do you say that?

#### TOP MENTIONS (UNPROMPTED)



Base: All who oppose an elected regional assembly for the South West region (588)

Source: MORI

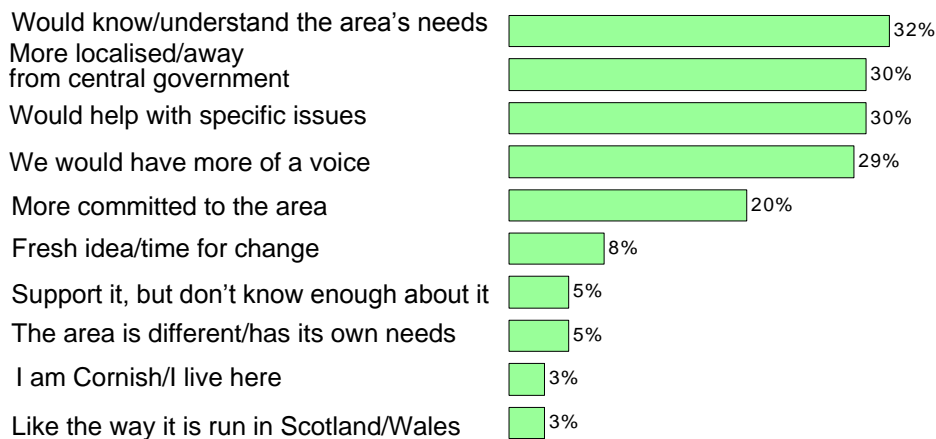
## A Regional Assembly for Cornwall – Support

There are broadly similar levels of support for regional assemblies in both the South West region and Cornwall itself. The reasons for support are not dissimilar in either case. One in three of those who support a regional assembly in Cornwall say that **it would know the area/understand the area's needs**. This is followed by **more localised/away from central government** and **would help with specific issues relevant to the area**.

### Support for Elected Assembly in Cornwall

Q You said that you support Cornwall getting its own elected regional assembly. Why do you say that?

#### TOP MENTIONS (UNPROMPTED)



Base: All who support an elected regional assembly for Cornwall (1,001)

Source: MORI



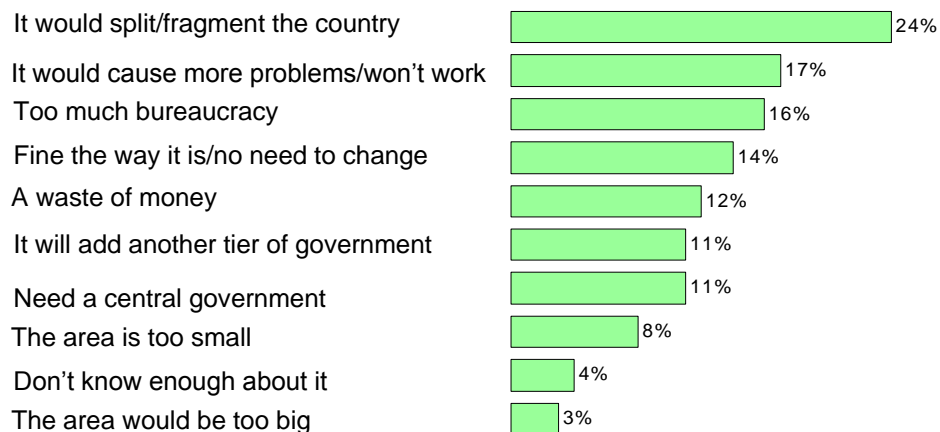
## A Regional Assembly for Cornwall – Oppose

Three in ten residents are opposed to Cornwall getting its own elected regional assembly. Main reasons for this opposition are **it would split/fragment the country, it would cause more problems/won't work/too complicated** and **too much bureaucracy**.

### Support for Elected Assembly in Cornwall

Q You said that you oppose Cornwall getting its own elected regional assembly. Why do you say that?

#### TOP MENTIONS (UNPROMPTED)



Base: All who oppose an elected regional assembly for Cornwall (573)

Source: MORI

## Level of Support as Getting More Informed

As previously mentioned, respondents were asked a series of questions on their support or opposition to the South West having its own regional assembly. Following the first (benchmarking) question, each question provided the respondents with further information: about, organisation and preferred local government structure in Cornwall in the event of local government reorganisation. The intention was to make respondents more knowledgeable about the issue as they answered each question in turn.

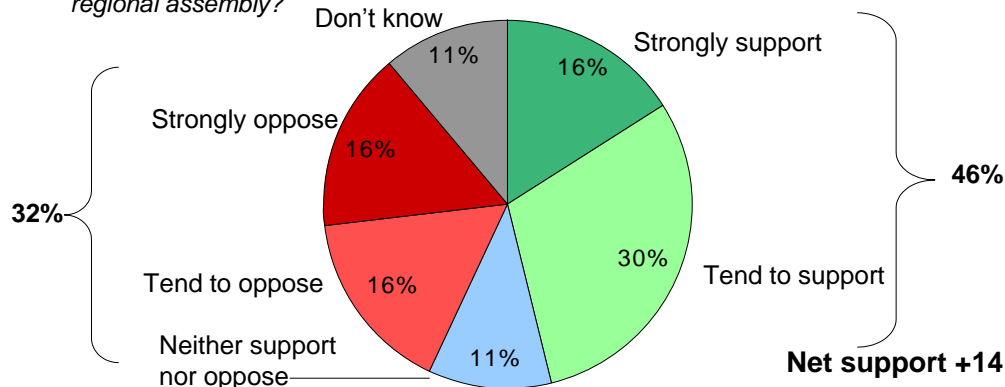
### 'Re-organisation'

This question explained to respondents that a condition of setting up a regional assembly would be replacing the present county council and district council so that services would be provided by one new local authority. In the light of this information, support for a regional assembly decreases while opposition remains the same. As the chart below shows, less than half (46%) say at this point that they support it (down from 51%), while a third (32%) oppose.

### Replacing the Councils

Q At the moment, local government services in this area are provided by Cornwall County Council and (District Council). The Government has stated that a condition of setting up an elected regional assembly would be replacing the present County Council and District Councils so that services are provided by one or more new all-purpose councils.

If the present system of county/district councils were to be replaced in this way, can I ask whether you would support or oppose the establishment of an elected regional assembly?



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

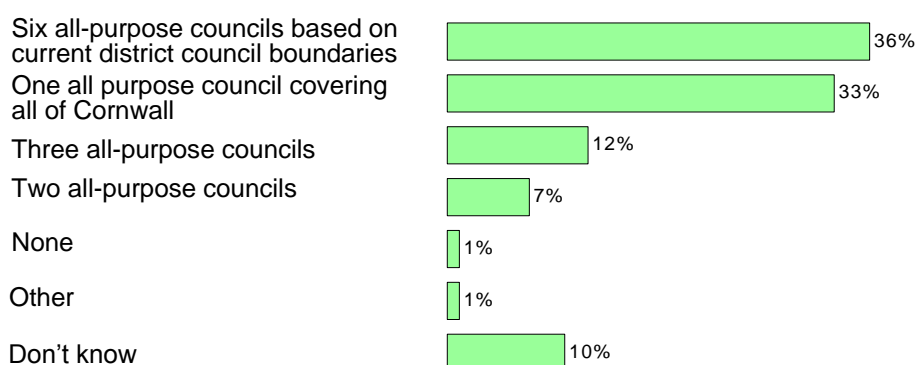
Source: MORI

## Preferred Option

Respondents were asked about their preferred option if the County Council and district councils were to be replaced by one or more new all-purpose councils. There is similar support for one all-purpose council covering all of Cornwall and for six all-purpose councils based upon current district council boundaries. One in ten don't know.

### Council Reorganisation 1

Q Thinking about the possibility of local government being reorganised, if the present County Council and District Councils were to be replaced by one or more new all-purpose councils, which of these options would you prefer?



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

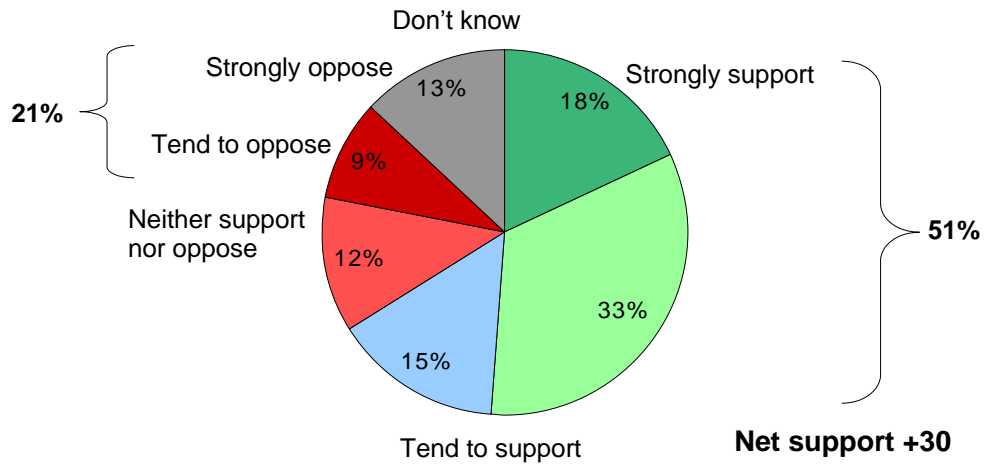
There are no significant differences in opinions between those who support a regional assembly and those who oppose. There are also no differences between those who say they have knowledge of regional assemblies and those who are uninformed about regional assemblies. These are important findings as they show that people lack awareness of what the actual options mean. Opinions may differ if people were informed about the differences between each option.

## Reorganisation of Local Government Anyway?

Half (51%) support local government reorganisation even if there isn't a directly elected regional assembly in Cornwall.

### Council Reorganisation 2

Q *If there isn't a directly elected regional assembly, there would be no local government reorganisation in Cornwall via this route. In this event, how strongly would you support or oppose reorganisation of local government in Cornwall anyway?*



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

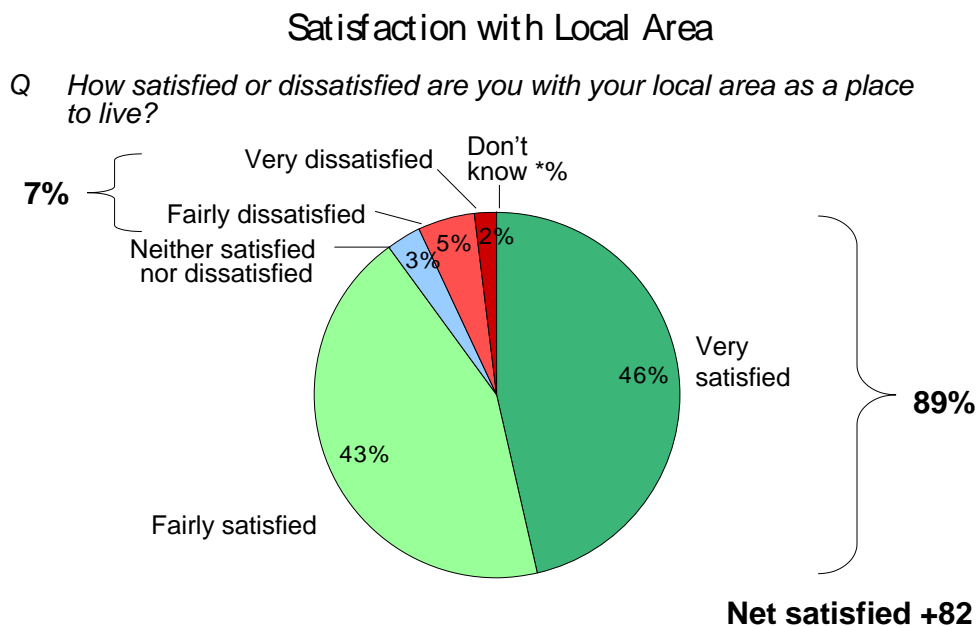
Source: MORI

## Potential Drivers

There are some interesting subgroup differences when looking at the level of support for an elected regional assembly for the South West. These are discussed below.

### Satisfaction with Local Area

People are generally very positive about their local area as a place to live. Nine in ten (89%) say they are satisfied, with almost half (46%) saying they are *very* satisfied.



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

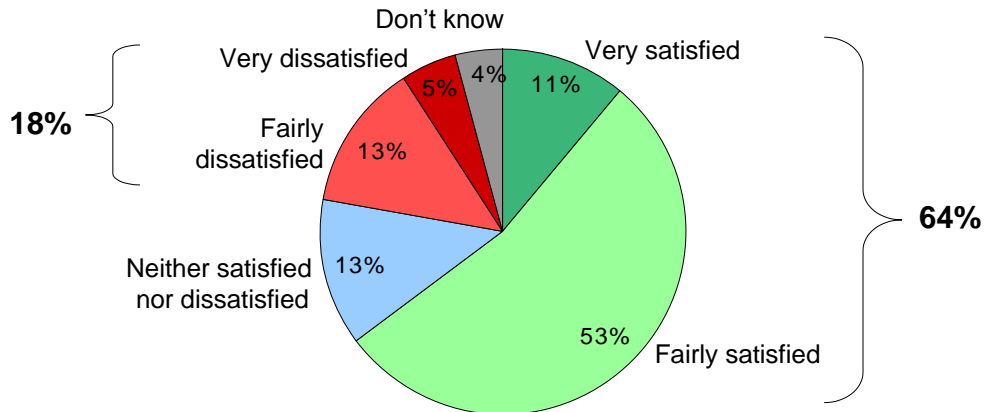
Generally, satisfaction with the local area has little impact on support for regional assemblies.

## Satisfaction with County Council

Over three in five (64%) residents say they are satisfied with the way Cornwall County Council is running the area, with about one in five (18%) saying they are *very* satisfied.

### Satisfaction with Cornwall County Council

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Cornwall County Council is running the area?



**Net satisfied +46**

Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

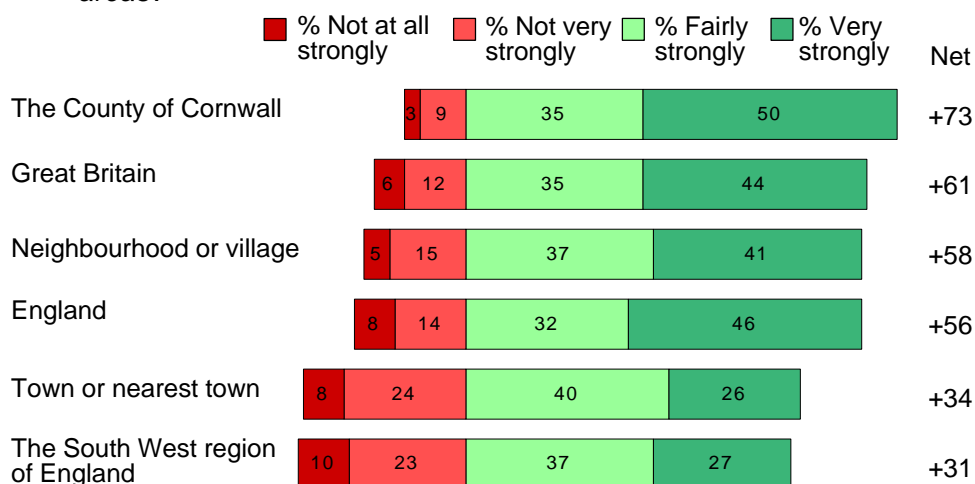
As with satisfaction with local area, the satisfaction with the Council appears to have no significant impact on the support for regional assemblies. However, the exception is the question where respondents are informed that a condition of setting up a regional assembly would be replacing the present county council and district council with one new local authority. On this particular question, those who are dissatisfied with the County Council are more likely to support a regional assembly than those who are satisfied (55% compared to 44%).

## Identity

The area that people are most likely to say they feel they belong to is the County of Cornwall, of whom half (50%) feel they belong 'very strongly'. More than two in five (46%) feel they very strongly belong to England and Great Britain (44%).

### Community Identity 1

Q How strongly do you feel that you belong to each of the following areas?



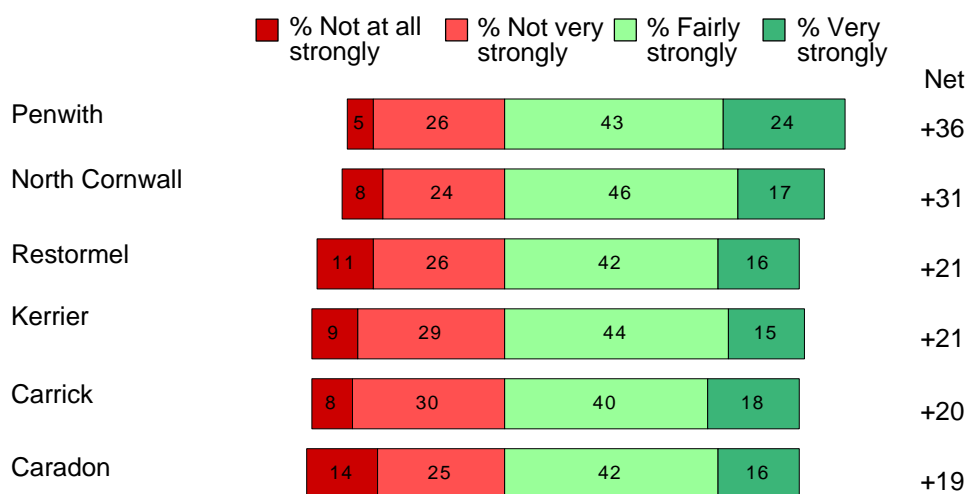
Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI

Interestingly, though residents have a very strong sense of belonging to the County of Cornwall, they felt much less belonging to their district.

### Community Identity 2

Q How strongly do you feel that you belong to each of the following areas?



Base: All respondents in each district

Source: MORI

Perhaps surprisingly, people's identification with their local area appears to have little impact on the level of support for regional assemblies. Those who support having a regional assembly are just as likely to say they identify 'very strongly' with their county as are people who oppose regional assemblies (53% vs 48%).

However, the supporters of a regional assembly in the South West are more likely than those who oppose the proposal to say that they feel they belong to the South West region (70% compared to 55%).

## Age

Younger people, and particularly those in the youngest age group (18-24), are more likely to support a regional assembly for the South West than older people.

Older people aged 55 and over are the most likely to oppose the establishment of a regional assembly.

## Length of Residency

How long the respondents have lived in the county has little impact on the level of support for regional assemblies.

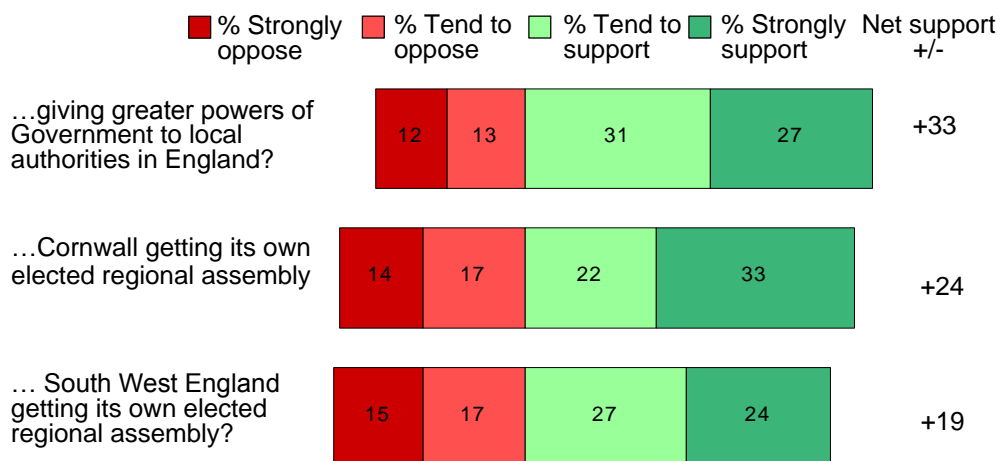
## Context

### Support for Devolving Powers

About three in five (58%) respondents say they support giving greater powers of Government to local authorities in England, while one in four (25%) oppose it. Support for the South West and Cornwall having its own regional assembly is lower, as the following chart shows.

### Support for Devolving Powers

Q Do you support or oppose ....



Base: 1,807 residents in Cornwall aged 18+, 3-14 February 2003

Source: MORI



Interestingly, those who support having a regional assembly for the South West region are more likely than those who oppose it to support giving greater powers to local authorities (85% compared to 27%). This suggests that many respondents are assuming a link between the two, i.e. that the South West getting its own regional assembly would mean a devolution of powers to local authorities.



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# Appendices

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# Social Class Definitions

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- A** Professionals such as doctors, surgeons, solicitors or dentists; chartered people like architects; fully qualified people with a large degree of responsibility such as senior editors, senior civil servants, town clerks, senior business executives and managers, and high ranking grades of the Services.
- B** People with very responsible jobs such as university lecturers, hospital matrons, heads of local government departments, middle management in business, qualified scientists, bank managers, police inspectors, and upper grades of the Services.
- C1** All others doing non-manual jobs; nurses, technicians, pharmacists, salesmen, publicans, people in clerical positions, police sergeants/constables, and middle ranks of the Services.
- C2** Skilled manual workers/craftsmen who have served apprenticeships; foremen, manual workers with special qualifications such as long distance lorry drivers, security officers, and lower grades of Services.
- D** Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, including labourers and mates of occupations in the C2 grade and people serving apprenticeships; machine minders, farm labourers, bus and railway conductors, laboratory assistants, postmen, door-to-door and van salesmen.
- E** Those on lowest levels of subsistence including pensioners, casual workers, and others with minimum levels of income.



# Guide to Statistical Reliability

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It should be remembered at all times that a sample, and not the entire population of Cornwall County Council, has taken part in the survey. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are significant.

We cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the 'true' values), however, we can predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values. This is based on a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the '95% confidence interval':

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	$\pm$	$\pm$	$\pm$
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
500 interviews	3	4	4
800 interviews	2	3	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
1,500 interviews	2	2	3
1,800 interviews	1	2	2
<b>1,807 interviews</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

For example, with a sample size of 1,807 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of  $\pm 2$  percentage points from the sample result.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be 'real', or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is 'statistically significant', we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume '95% confidence interval', the differences between the results of two separate groups must be greater than the values given in the table below:

Size of samples compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 and 100	8	13	14
100 and 200	7	11	12
200 and 200	6	9	10
300 and 400	5	7	8
100 and 400	6	10	11
200 and 400	5	8	9
500 and 500	4	6	6
700 and 700	3	5	5
900 and 900	3	4	5



# Marked-up Questionnaire

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