



The Panel from left to right: Sir John Harvey-Jones, Peter Cochrane, Cathy Bakewell – Leader, Somerset County Council, Tim Jones – Chairman, Devon & Cornwall Business Council, Tim Render – Director, Government Office South West

“Small businesses should be encouraged and helped to develop a niche in the market place and to become international via e-commerce” (Sir John Harvey-Jones)

“It is important to develop private enterprise in order to generate the money needed to support deprived areas” (Peter Cochrane)

“Somerset is a great place to live and this should be built on and advertised to the world at large” (Cathy Bakewell)

“Over the next five years Somerset should concentrate on teaching the public how to make the most out of new technology” (Tim Jones)

“The well-being of Somerset depends on the actions of its people” (Tim Render)

The Conference was arranged as a first step to promote the image of Somerset. It was a high profile event with excellent feedback. 200 delegates attended many of whom have signed up to work together to promote Somerset.

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Transforming Somerset - Raising the game Conference Summary 2004



Key Messages



Sir John Harvey-Jones

■ Everything depends on the degree we care about enhancing and making Somerset better. The height we manage to raise the game is dependent on everyone here. It is tempting to aim low, this is a weakness, we are risk averse and we must learn to seek ambitious targets that are risky. The attitude to ambition in England is obstructive and is caused by the approach: "one mistake and you're out!"

■ We have to re-create the whole time; if you are trading water you are dead. Competition is not in Somerset or the South West – it now comes from all over the world. We now need to look outwards: the world is our oyster.

■ Somerset is one of those counties that has most potential to be in line with tomorrow's world. The future lies with small companies – as they want to change. Large organisations take too long to change and will be left behind. Unless we are looking outward and setting our sights outward and upward we will not grow

■ The more we are measured and the more initiatives we have to do, the less we can achieve. No outfit can take on more than 3 initiatives at a time.

■ The job of leadership is to grow the self-belief of others. Making change is about focus, enlisting enthusiasm, caring and trusting others to meet tasks and deadlines. A key leadership skill is a belief in others. Most people want to make a contribution and to achieve change in their career. The sign of leadership is enabling ordinary people to do extraordinary things and to help people to do things that they did not think they could do. There are no ordinary people ... there really aren't.

■ Somerset represents the model for the future. Competitive success depends on speed and constant innovation. Competitive business success is a matter of your ability to think out of the box. There is no future in leading a life of incremental improvement. The numbers of businesses that work worldwide on less than 5 people are legion. You can operate a business from anywhere now and they can be quite dispersed. But you do need a reasonable amount of time for networking.

■ If you understand the basis of competition its important that small outfits recognise the important contribution that they can make – keep it small, keep it simple and press like hell for speed. The small organisation sees everything holistically.

■ I hope we can unlock the doors that will help your small businesses. Any small company can set itself up with IT for less than £10k and can run in real time. We need to help small businesses to catch up with the IT revolution and to operate in a world market.

Peter Cochrane

■ Constant change is now the norm - we have to embrace it - stasis invokes disaster

■ The exponential progress of our technologies powers the economy

■ Our world is now very visibly chaotic and simple linear thinking seldom provides an adequate answer - we have to model and war game

■ Equal pain management and/or problem solving is nearly always a complete failure - we have to think and address strategically

■ Every complex problem has a very simple solution - and it is almost certainly wrong

■ Attention to detail at the start of a project is essential - it pays dividends - having to fix problems on the fly is really expensive

■ Don't view the world through a soda straw; get a fire hose! It is vital to have a holistic view - see the whole and not just an element

■ Networks, networking, and connectivity are now core to the success of any modern business

