

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 1st April – 22nd May 2022

1.0 Council and other meetings

In terms of physical meetings of Cornwall Council during the last few weeks, I attended Full Council, Chief Officers Employment Committee and three meetings of an Inquiry into Equality and Diversity Indicators (EDI) for the Council (for which I am the lead member).

Other meetings of the unitary authority via TEAMS or ZOOM video-conferencing included two briefings for a Full Council meeting, Group Leaders meeting, meeting of the EDI Inquiry, Cornish National Minority Working Group (Chairman), an associated all-member briefing and a forum for members of the public, China Clay Area Community Network Panel (Chairman), meeting of members from the China Clay Area, briefing for group leaders on “county deal,” all-member-briefing on the Shared Prosperity Fund, and climate literacy training.

In addition, I have attended four meetings of St Dennis Parish Council and four meetings of St Enoder Parish Council, which included the Annual Assemblies for both authorities and I presented annual reports.

Other meetings have included the South and East Cornwall Local Action Group and ClayTAWC.

I also had a number of further online meetings about a range of local issues.

2.0 Strategy for the China Clay Area

Over the last two months, I have been promoting the “Towards a Strategy” document for Clay Country, which local councillors had produced with the support of staff linked to the China Clay Area Community Network. I was pleased to do an interview with a local journalist and the resultant news story received significant coverage in both the Cornish Guardian and the St Austell Voice.

3.0 Community networks

I have previously reported that the administration at Cornwall Council wishes to reduce the number of Community Network Panels. I attended a meeting of group leaders and we were informed that they want to reduce the number of Networks from 19 to 10. The proposal would link Clay Country with the Bodmin Network (which includes rural parishes stretching almost as far east as Altarnun). I am making representations arguing for the retention of a Clay Country Network.

4.0 Shared Prosperity Fund

A key talking point over the last couple of months has been the formal announcement about the Shared Prosperity Fund. The Conservative Government

has repeatedly promised that the funding Cornwall should receive through the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) would, at least, match the level of EU structural monies that would have been received.

Cornwall Council has estimated that this should equate to £100 million each year, which had been supported by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board (which includes Cornish MPs amongst its members). The most recent report produced by the Conservative-controlled authority states that, "in order to be no worse off," Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly would "need to receive £700 million from the UK SPF over the coming seven years."

The actual funding announcement of £132 million over the next three years – less than half of the anticipated £300 million – has gone down badly. I was among the "opposition" politicians who challenged Conservative MPs on this broken promise.

ST DENNIS PARISH ISSUES

5.0 Social / affordable rent properties in St Dennis

As previously reported, I produced a report into complaints about affordable housing in St Dennis not going to local households. In particular, this related to the Sanctuary element of Harvenna Heights and the Coastline estate at Wesley Place. Both Housing Associations have acknowledged that mistakes have been made and a series of meetings have been held with Housing Associations during the last month.

Sanctuary have acknowledged that the nominations agreement for Harvenna Heights (which prioritises households with a local connection to St Dennis) was not applied and, as a consequence, less than 25% of the properties went to local families. Sanctuary Housing have confirmed lettings will, in the future, go to local households and they will also strive to be more proactive with their advertising to ensure that local families do not miss out on the opportunity to bid.

A similar nominations agreement should have been put in place at Coastline's Wesley Place development but, because of failings at both the local authority and the registered provider, this was not done. As a consequence, none of the properties went to households with a St Dennis connection. Coastline Housing have agreed to enter into a nominations agreement and lettings will, in the future, go to local households.

In addition, I have had meetings with Ocean Housing and requested that a "local connection" label be applied to their older housing stock (that have no nomination agreements or other restrictions on local connection) to boost the chances of households from St Dennis securing affordable housing.

6.0 Neighbourhood Plan

The period for responding to the first questionnaire for a Neighbourhood Plan has concluded and I am looking forward to the next phase of the project, when

we will be looking closely at the feedback from local residents and how this information can be used to inform the Plan.

7.0 Planning matters

There are a couple of live planning applications, for which I have updates.

7.1 Housing development at Hendra Prazey (PA20/11311)

An application for 27 housing units (of which 23 would be affordable) was submitted in December 2020. There have been a number of objections from local residents (because of the location and road network) and consideration of the application has been slow because Cornwall Council officers have been concerned about the road layout in the area.

The applicant has prepared further information about highway issues, which has been submitted to the unitary authority. I understand that the Parish Council will be reconsulted on this additional information in the near future.

7.2 Solar farm near Trerice

The application from Statkraft has yet to be formally submitted and I have received no further information about how the proposed development may vary from that consulted upon about 12 months ago.

8.0 Proposed multi-use trail from St Dennis to the Goss Moor

I have previously reported how St Dennis Parish Council has requested that Cornwall Council investigate the possibility of turning the section of defunct railway line between St Dennis and the Goss Moor National Nature Reserve into a multi-use trail, and that I had submitted an expression of interest from the G7 Nature Recovery Project.

Unfortunately, I recently received confirmation that the EOI was unsuccessful. The response to me states that the "G7 Legacy Project did not receive the full amount of funding" and the "proposals were highly over-subscribed." I have written to the G7 Legacy team for further information and feedback.

ST ENODER PARISH ISSUES

9.0 Planning

There continues to be a significant number of ongoing planning matters in St Enoder Parish. Listed below are some which may be of particular interest.

9.1 Six extra gypsy / traveller pitches at Toldish (PA20/03553)

On 28th August 2020, Cornwall Council refused planning permission for six additional gypsy / traveller pitches at Little Meadows, Toldish. The applicant has appealed the decision to the UK Government's Planning Inspectorate.

Representations on the application need to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by June 13th.

9.2 Two dwellings in Trevarren (PA21/03330)

An application to demolish one house at Trevarren and replace it with two houses was rejected by Cornwall Council. The Council took the view that the “application site currently occupies a prominent location to the street scene and forms an attractive rural-residential setting to the edge of a settlement,” and “the proposal, by reasons of its siting, massing and appearance, would introduce a development at odds with the established low density built forms of the immediate surrounds and a car dominated layout to the front of the site which would disrupt the continuity of the rural character of the adjoining lane.”

9.3 Six flats at St Columb Road (PA22/00228)

I previously reported that St Enoder Parish Council has objected to the proposal for six two-bedroom flats on the right-hand side of the road to Clodan Mews and rear of the Co-op. The proposed three-storey scheme would only have six parking spaces, which is less than the two parking spaces per housing unit specified in the St Enoder Neighbourhood Plan. I can report that the application has been withdrawn by the application.

9.4 Solar Farm at Tresithney

The application from Statkraft has yet to be formally submitted and I have received no further information about how the proposed development may vary from that consulted upon about 12 months ago.

9.5 Solar Farm at “Trendeal”

I attended a recent consultation about a proposed solar farm, as the location was described as Trendeal, which is on the edge of St Enoder Parish. It turns out that the development – associated with the Trendeal farm business – is outside of St Enoder Parish and lies to the south of Carland Cross and Mitchell.

10.0 Update on highway improvements

I am pleased that the two vehicle activated signs have been erected on Beacon Road and St Austell Street, which relates to the first part of the A3058 Safer Route improvements in Summercourt. As previously reported, the timetable for the second phase of works around the installation of the signalised pedestrian crossings at the crossroads has yet to be finalised.

11.0 Newsletter

The last few weeks have been extremely busy and I have not yet had chance to draft my newsletter for distribution around St Enoder Parish. Given my commitments, I am hoping aiming to be out and about with my newsletter in late June and July.

HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES

12.0 Advice

Over the last few weeks, I have also assisted numerous households and individuals with guidance and advice on a range of topics including planning matters, housing need, social care, , environmental issues and more.