

Cornwall Council report

Cllr Dick Cole

Time period: 25th September – 30th October 2022

[It should be noted that I was on leave between 30th September and 9th October].

1.0 Council and other meetings

In terms of physical meetings of Cornwall Council during the last five weeks, I attended the Central Sub-Area Planning Committee, China Clay Area Community Network, and a series of meetings (as a member of the Chief Officers Employment Panel) linked to the appointment of a new Monitoring Officer.

Other physical meetings included two St Enoder Parish Council meetings, a St Dennis Parish Neighbourhood Plan meeting, and the St Dennis and Nanpean Community Trust.

I have also attended a number of meetings via TEAMS video-conferencing including an informal meeting of the Economic Growth and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cornish National Minority Working Group (and associated briefing) and the councillor working group on the consultation linked to Cornwall Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, plus briefings on the proposed county deal (two), the proposed investment zones, the cost of living crisis and ash die-back.

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

2.0 Cornwall Council

2.1 Fire Control Centre at Tolvaddon

As reported last month, the Conservative administration is planning to close the Fire Control Centre and centralise this important service to a "partnership" based outside of Cornwall. I oppose this proposal but was away on holiday when the issue was discussed by the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I did however produce a statement which was read out by one of my colleagues in the Mebyon Kernow / Green Group. It was as follows:

I am sorry that I cannot make today's meeting, but I have asked my colleagues to pass on my views.

The leadership of Cornwall Council is presently talking about a "devolution deal," that would bring more powers to Cornwall.

In this context, it would be ridiculous to close the Fire Control Centre. We should not be giving up "control" of the Control Centre and allowing it to be lost to centralisation. We should not be giving up control of any of our public services – as once lost, we may never get them back again.

Any loss of the Fire Control Centre would also weaken the very basis of Cornwall's Fire Service and leave it open to be merged with upcountry brigades. We must do everything to protect all aspects of our Fire Service.

As the leader of the MK / Green Group, I would appeal to all members of this Scrutiny Committee to reject any proposal to take away Cornwall's Fire Control Centre. Please show solidarity with the staff at Tolvaddon and the wider Fire Service.

Councillors were not overly supportive of the proposal, and I hope that the further scrutiny work, that they agreed to do, will rule out the loss of the Centre.

2.2 Renewable energy

Later in this report I note that another pre-application consultation is about commence for a possible solar farm at Burthy Row / Chytane near Fraddon. This means that there are now proposals for three solar farms within my St Dennis & St Enoder division (totalling over 130MW of installed capacity).

I thought it would be good to understand the context for these applications within the need for local energy generation in Cornwall.

Cornwall Council's Climate Emergency Development Plan document sets out a target of 100% renewable electricity supply by 2030 [Policy RE1]. Figures from the unitary authority shows that Cornwall's present "installed capacity" is 783.59 MW, which equates to 40.49% of what is needed in Cornwall. I have therefore calculated that the total amount of energy needed in Cornwall at the moment is 1,940 MW (rounded up).

St Dennis & St Enoder Division (4,878 hectares) is 1.37% of the land mass of Cornwall (356,300 hectares). Presumably, little or no renewable energy will be provided in areas of AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and I would note that the St Dennis & St Enoder Division is 1.87% of "Cornwall minus AONB" (260,500 hectares).

So, it could be argued that if renewable energy was delivered equally across Cornwall, the local share of the target could be deemed to be 1.37% - 1.87% of 1,940 MW, namely 26.6 - 36.3MW.

I have looked at what installations already exist in the parishes of St Dennis and St Enoder, and I have already identified 37.5MW of installed capacity.

Trefullock Moor Solar Farm (PA10/06679)	5MW
Ennis Barton wind turbine (PA10/08030)	0.5MW
Glebe Solar Farm (PA12/05890)	1MW
Gaverigan wind turbine (PA12/09923)	0.5MW
Melbur wind turbine (PA12/03846)	0.5MW
Burthy Solar Farm (PA13/05983 / PA18/01710)	13MW
Goonabarn wind turbines (PA13/00848 / PA17/00957)	1MW
Incinerator	16MW

Please note that the above figure does not include the biogas plant at Fraddon (NR/08/00389/WSENV / PA13/09571 / etc) and energy from small-scale installations (eg. solar panels on domestic and commercial properties).

2.3 China Clay Area Community Network

As noted previously, in my role as Chairman of the China Clay Area Community Network Panel, I have attended a range of meetings about the future of the Networks. The Council's Conservative administration wishes to reduce the number of Networks and, at a recent meeting at Indian Queens Victory Hall, councillors were tasked to come up with suggested boundaries for a total of 12 Community Area Partnerships (CAPs).

Cornwall Council is presently consulting on its proposals for CAPs, but I can confirm that the preferred option for our area is a China Clay Area CAP. The existing Network Panel has unanimously confirmed that they support a CAP for Clay Country, as has St Enoder Parish Council.

2.4 Clay Area Strategy

I am continuing to push for senior officers to work with councillors from the China Clay Area to push the Strategy we published some 18 months ago. I can report that a meeting with a series of senior officers at the Council has been arranged for 1st November.

3.0 Loss of affordable homes

Ocean Housing recently took the decision to sell-off one of their rental properties at Manson Place, St Dennis. This is the third property in my division that this registered provider has placed on the market this year. The others were at Hall Road, St Dennis, and Beaconside, Summercourt. This follows another sale in Indian Queens (Barnfield Terrace) in 2018.

Their reasoning is that the properties are in poor condition and it would be expensive to make them meet modern environmental standards, while income from the sales would be used to improve other existing properties. I do not agree with the sales and I have spoken to Ocean about my fears that a large number of the older "council houses" will be lost to the local rental market. I have asked them for some form of moratorium on future sales.

4.0 20mph limits

Cornwall Council has a commitment to 20mph limits in villages and towns across Cornwall. This year, a pilot was carried out in two Community Networks (Camelford and Camborne / Redruth), and the feedback was positive. I recently attended an informal briefing at a meeting of the Economic Growth and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the wider roll-out of the scheme. Once agreed by Cabinet in early 2023, the work programme for the various Network Areas will be confirmed.

ST DENNIS PARISH ISSUES

5.0 Cornish Lithium

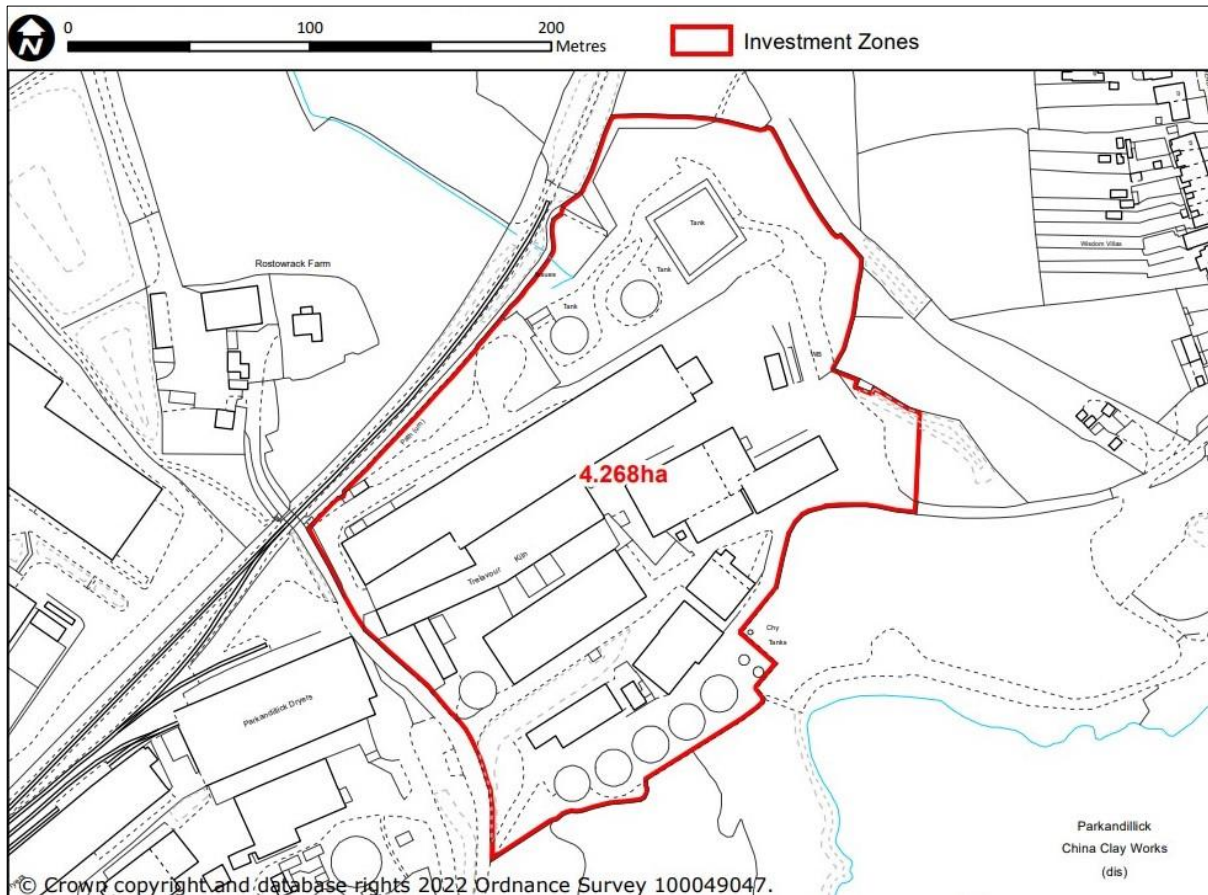
5.1 An investment zone?

On 19th October, Cornwall Council confirmed that it had submitted a bid for 17 distinct areas to be covered by investment zones. In Clay Country, three sites have been identified, namely Cornish Lithium at Trelavour, British Lithium near Roche, and the so-called garden village (eco-town) at Penwithick.

I would add that the decision to bid for an "investment" zone was made by council officers and senior members of the administration. I was not involved and I was not told about the bid until after it had been submitted.

In terms of Cornish Lithium, the proposed area is small and covers the Trelavour Kilns area, where it is proposed that processing works would take place. By comparison, the site at Roche covers a massive area covering the whole of Hensbarrow and Goonbarrow, which has much wider implications.

At this point, it is unknown which areas will become investment zones and, following the election of a new Prime Minister last week, the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has already announced a review of the investment zone proposition.



I understand that businesses on the specified sites, if successful, would benefit from tax incentives, for example, relief on business rates and national insurance, plus tax mechanisms to support capital investment. There have been comments that there will be some de-regulation in terms of planning and environmental controls in "investment zones." I have raised this with the Head of Housing and Planning. From her perspective, she said it would be about speeding up some aspects of planning and delivery, but she gave me assurances that necessary planning and environmental controls would remain fully in place.

5.2 PA22/08714

Cornish Lithium and Imerys have also submitted a proposal to install two temporary mobile units for use as office, welfare and amenity accommodation for staff and equipment at the Trelavour Kilns complex. It is anticipated that the proposal will be deemed permitted development and therefore does not need a formal planning application as such.

6.0 Proposed dwelling off Hendra Road (PA22/02138)

I referred the above planning application to a meeting of the Central Sub-Area Planning Committee, which took place on 24th October. Kieran Sinnott spoke on behalf of the Parish Council and raised concerns about the access and junction with Hendra Road. I meanwhile raised concerns about the (i) change in character of the historic lane and how the creation of a 'new' access would damage the edge of the existing lane, which may or may not be outside of the applicant's ownership, the (ii) likely discordant impact of a new dwelling in a location, which is significantly below the level of the nearby parking area for Hendra Heights, and the (iii) lack of consideration given to issues such as screening for neighbouring properties.

I made as strong an argument as I could against the development, but the Committee granted outline planning permission for a dwelling. The detail will need to be the basis of a further reserved matters application.

The planning meeting was recorded and can be viewed at:
<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/councillors-and-meetings/webcasts/archived-webcasts/>

7.0 St Dennis Neighbourhood Plan

I also attended a meeting of the Parish Council's working group on the Neighbourhood Plan, and I am pleased that we will soon be reporting back on some of the findings of the questionnaire distributed earlier this year.

8.0 Warm hub

As Chairman of the Board at ClayTAWC, I am pleased that we have secured some funding for the Centre to be a "warm hub" this winter. Linked to this, on the first Wednesday of every month (between 1.00 and 3.00) there will be drop-in session where local residents can get advice from a range of bodies about benefits, education and training, energy advice, social prescribing and more.

ST ENODER PARISH ISSUES

9.0 Planning

Listed below is information about some planning applications, which people may find of interest.

9.1 Housing development in Summercourt (PA22/08134)

The affordable housing led development of 20 dwellings in Summercourt, opposite New Row, has been registered with Cornwall Council, and I note that a number of local residents have already raised concerns / objections. It will be discussed by the Parish Council at their planning meeting on October 8th, which will take place in the Summercourt New Memorial Hall (7.00).

9.2 Solar farm

As noted in section 2.2, the Parish Council and I have just been informed about an upcoming pre-application consultation for a possible 50MW solar farm at Burthy Row / Chytane near Fraddon. A representative of the developers attended the last meeting of the Parish Council and informed us that a consultation letter would soon be distributed to all households in St Enoder Parish.

9.3 Gnomeworld (PA22/07277)

A planning application has also been submitted for the stationing of 69 residential park home dwellings at the Gnomeworld complex, in the place of most of the holiday caravans.

10.0 Parish Council

10.1 CIL application

I have worked with the Parish Clerk to submit an application to Cornwall Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding towards the extension of the Youth Club

building in the Indian Queens Recreation Ground. I can confirm that the funding application has been completed and sent in for assessment.

10.2 Strongman's Field

I have also been working with the Parish Clerk to scope the necessary landscaping and other works to complete the works on land between Indian Queens Primary School and the Harvenna Heights estate.

10.3 Football and Indian Queens Recreation Ground

In addition, I have been involved in discussions with the adult and youth football teams about the use of the Recreation Ground for matches and training (with the Parish Clerk and Vice-chairman of the Parish Council, Alan Shaw).

11.0 Highway matters

11.1 Pedestrianised crossings in Summercourt

The timetable for the installation of the pedestrianised crossings on three arms of the crossroads at Summercourt has just been confirmed. The works will be carried out during March-May 2023.

11.2 Study into road through Fraddon and St Columb Road / Improvements at Sea View Terrace

A meeting has been arranged for me to meet with council officers to discuss their road safety audit from Penhale to the Halloon roundabout, as well as proposed road safety improvements at Sea View Terrace.

The meeting is due to take place on 3rd November and I will give more feedback on discussions around their finding in the near future.

HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES

12.0 Advice

Over the last month, I have also assisted numerous households and individuals with guidance and advice on a range of topics.