



MARAZION TOWN COUNCIL

10 December 2024

To all Town and Parish Councils

On the 12 November 2023, Marazion Town Council unanimously passed a motion of no confidence in Cornwall Council's planning and enforcement department. We would like you to join forces with us in expressing our frustration with them by also passing a no confidence motion in them.

Therefore, we ask that you would:-

- Circulate this letter to all councillors on your council.
- Consider at a full council meeting passing a no confidence motion in Cornwall Council Planning and Enforcement departments.
- If you do, then before close of business **Friday 28th February 2025**, let us know by emailing Tracey at townclerk@maraziontowncouncil.gov.uk that this is the view of your council so we can collect signatories.

We will then add your council's name to a letter to Cornwall Council setting out our view of no-confidence, protest at the way this department is operating and ask that they set out how they plan on working better with us all to ensure Cornwall remains a beautiful and special place to live.

A draft motion could be as follows:

“That this council has no confidence in Cornwall Council's planning and enforcement departments. Despite the best efforts of our councillors and officers, there is a repeated and consistent failure by Cornwall to listen to our views on planning or undertake the necessary enforcement on planning issues in our area that have broken the law or planning conditions. This is leading to Cornwall becoming a less beautiful place and allows unscrupulous builders, homeowners and developers to build without permission in the full knowledge no enforcement action will be taken. We call on Cornwall planning and enforcement departments to work closer with town and parish councils on planning applications to ensure they are in keeping with the local area and views of local residents; review their planning protocol which is not fit for purpose; re-examine the way in which planning applications are 'called in', and that a significantly more rigorous enforcement of identified planning breaches is undertaken.

Context

Marazion Town Council did not take this vote lightly. We have met with the head of planning and of enforcement to highlight our concerns, raised it with the elected portfolio holder and our Cornwall councillor, and expressed our deep dissatisfaction to the chief executive and leader of the council. All to no avail.

As a statutory consultee, the town council has consistently attempted to work as a constructive force so that our area has the homes it needs for local people and businesses can expand. We provide our views to ensure that other properties are not adversely affected under current planning law; that Cornwall's landscape, areas of outstanding natural beauty and our conservation area are kept in pristine condition and that our town remains a place people want to live. Yet our knowledge and views keep being brushed off by planning officers for little good reason.

Our council includes residents whose families can be traced back generations living in the town. We pride ourselves in knowing what brings benefits for both businesses and local residents. We also are architects, urban planners, people working in local government and residents who have undertaken planning courses offered by Cornwall Council in order to effectively scrutinise planning applications. We know planning law and know what will best serve the interests of our town.

As we are sure you do, via sub committees or working group, and full council, our councillors spend a lot of time considering each application based on their merits. We do not object because we do not like something - we object because it falls foul of current planning law and/or is not in keeping with the place we serve.

Yet despite this Cornwall Council officers routinely ignore and bypass our view.

When Cornwall Council rejects our assessments on a particular planning application, the town council then has to undertake a ludicrous bureaucratic dance of having to write back within five working days to 'agree to disagree' with the decision of the planning officer. This linguistic gymnastics is solely designed to prevent town and parish councils from 'calling in' a decision to the planning committee they disagree with as set out in the little known Cornwall Council planning protocol.

The criteria under the current protocol for getting a planning decision reviewed by the elected member led committee lies almost exclusively with the head of paid service. It is both undemocratic and designed to make officers' lives easier at the expense of good decision making and the feelings of local communities.

Meanwhile, planning enforcement has become non-existent. Cornwall Council routinely fails to enforce remedial action for breaches of planning. Their failure to undertake even some of the most basic enforcement activities is allowing chancers,

cowboy builders and money grabbers to know they can ignore planning law, do what they want and Cornwall Council will not lift a finger against them.

Our council is made up of independent councillors with no political affiliation. Our only concern is to make the planning process better for the people and place we serve. We hope your council will consider adding its name to this vote of no confidence so that we are listened to by Cornwall Council and practical steps can be taken to improve how we all work together.

If you wish to discuss this further then please do call Tracey on 01736 710234.

If you share our frustrations and concerns we hope you will pass a motion of no confidence, let us know by Friday 28th February and join us in trying to get Cornwall Council to listen and respect our views as elected councillors in local towns and parishes across the Duchy and enforce planning law.

Yours faithfully

John Nicholas

Mayor of Marazion