

Planning Decisions Must Command Public Trust

Cllr Rowland O'Connor challenges Cornwall Council on transparency, consistency, and the weight given to local voices.

Cornwall Councillor Rowland O'Connor has challenged the Council to demonstrate that Cornwall's planning system is fair, transparent, and capable of commanding public confidence, following a question raised at Full Council.

The intervention focused on whether the views of parish councils and local residents are not only heard, but meaningfully reflected in planning decisions.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr O'Connor said:

“People can accept difficult decisions. What they cannot accept is a system that appears inconsistent or unaccountable.”

“If parish councils and residents are asked to engage properly, they must be able to see that their voices genuinely matter in the decisions that are made.”

The question also sought clarification on whether any directive – written or otherwise – influences how planning decisions are reached, particularly in relation to how housing need is applied in the planning balance.

Cllr O'Connor added:

“If housing need is being used to justify decisions, then it must be applied consistently and transparently across Cornwall.”

“Public confidence in the planning system depends on clarity, consistency, and the clear demonstration that local input carries real weight.”

He emphasised that maintaining trust in the system is essential, particularly given the role parish councils play in representing their communities.

“Parish councils are on the front line of local democracy. Respecting that role means ensuring their input is properly considered and clearly reflected.”

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Cllr O'Connor confirmed he will continue to monitor the issue and consider further steps to support transparency and consistency in planning decision-making.

Notes to Editors

- The question was raised at Cornwall Council Full Council.
- It focused on fairness, transparency, and consistency in planning decision-making.
- No specific planning applications were referenced.

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