



**PENZANCE  
COUNCIL**

**PENLEE CENTRE  
PENLEE PARK  
PENZANCE  
CORNWALL TR18 4HE  
Telephone: (01736) 363405  
Email: [info@penzance-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@penzance-tc.gov.uk)**

**TOWN CLERK: JAMES HARDY**

**NOTICE OF MOTION TO PENZANCE COUNCIL**

Please note that Standing Orders 2, 11 and 12 apply to motions. Written notice of a motion must be submitted to the Proper Officer at least seven clear days (*not including weekends, bank holidays or the day of the meeting*) prior to the meeting.

*Section A – To be completed by Councillors*

Title of Motion:	<i>No Confidence in South West Water</i>
Should this motion be referred from Penzance Council to a Committee and, if so, which?	<i>No</i>
Proposed by:	<i>Cllr Duncan Paul</i>
Seconded by:	<i>Cllr Andy Law</i>
Proposed motion which will form a <b>resolution</b> for consideration at the meeting:	<p><i>"This Council notes with grave concern the systemic failure of South West Water to manage the sewage system in Cornwall. Despite record bills and government intervention, raw sewage continues to impact our environment and public health. Therefore, this Council resolves to:-</i></p> <p><i>i) Formally declare a vote of no confidence in South West Water; and</i></p> <p><i>ii) Sign the amended collective letter to the Secretary of State, as set out at Appendix 1 to this motion, demanding the removal of South West Water's management through a Special Administration Order."</i></p>

<p>Background (to be provided by the proposer)</p>	<p><i>This motion has its origin in Dowl Glan (Clean Water), a grassroots campaign by Cornish local councillors, activists and residents who are fed up with the ongoing sewage crisis.</i></p> <p><i>This is a critical moment for Cornwall. With sewage continuing to spill into our rivers and onto our shores and streets, and water bills having risen again this April, the appetite for radical measures to tackle South West Water (SWW) has never been higher.</i></p> <p><i>The campaign moves beyond "consultation" and "summits" toward a direct challenge to SWW's licence to operate in the Duchy.</i></p> <p><i>It aims to:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Mobilise councillors to get parish and town councils across Cornwall to sign a letter of no-confidence regarding SWW to the Government, Ofwat and Cornwall Council</i></li> <li>- <i>Put pressure on the Government and local MPs to support the removal of SWW from managing water and sewage in Cornwall and to transition its assets into a publicly-owned organisation, run as a public service</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Parish and town councillors in Cornwall are being encouraged to formally declare "No Confidence" in South West Water and petition the Government for the sewage and water system to be transferred to a public-owned organisation and managed as a public service.</i></p> <p><i>This motion is of particular relevance to the Parish of Penzance given our extensive shoreline on Mounts Bay; the frequency of sewage alerts in the Bay; the rich marine life off our shores, including the nationally important seagrass beds in the Marine Conservation Zone; and the importance of water-based recreation for both local amenity and the visitor economy.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to the standard letter adopted by other Councils, an addition has been made to state that SWW's Customer Service is one of the worst in the country, down to No. 16 out of 19, according to the latest Ofwat report and they have extremely high levels of Customer indebtedness, a reflection of their unnecessary, unacceptably high charges and their appalling Customer Service.</i></p>
<p>Implications (including financial and staffing / resources) anticipated by the proposer:</p>	<p><i>Marginal impact arising from the sending of a letter to the Secretary of State, and potentially dealing with media enquiries.</i></p>

Proposers signature	<i>Provided electronically</i>
Seconders signature	<i>Provided electronically</i>

*Section B – To be completed by officers*

Additional background information	<i>None.</i>
Financial and budgetary implications	<i>None apparent.</i>
Legal and procedural implications	<i>None apparent.</i>
Staffing and resource implications	<i>None other than those already mentioned above.</i>
Motion accepted or rejected by the Proper Officer <i>(including reason for rejection if applicable)</i>	<i>Accepted.</i>
Meeting date	<i>1 June 2026</i>
Referred to Committee <i>(if applicable)</i>	
Motion carried, amended or failed at the meeting(s)	
Detail of amendments <i>(if any)</i>	
Minute reference(s)	

**Formal Letter of No Confidence**

**TO:** Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

**CC:** The Chief Executive of Ofwat; The Leader of Cornwall Council; Cornwall's Members of Parliament.

**DATE:** [

**SUBJECT: Formal Vote of No Confidence in South West Water (SWW) and Petition for Special Administration.**

To the Secretary of State,

This Council, representing the residents, businesses, and ecosystems of the parish of Penzance, hereby formally issues this **Vote of No Confidence** in the management of South West Water (SWW).

This Council is no longer requesting "improvements" or "consultations." South West Water has failed for more than a decade to show its capability and willingness to manage our water and sewage system. This Council is formally petitioning the Government and Ofwat to remove SWW from the management of the Cornish sewage and water systems, and transfer the ownership and management of the sewage and water system to a publicly-owned organisation, run as a public service.

This decision is based on a systemic and catastrophic failure in the following areas:-

**1. Failure of Infrastructure and Public Health**

Despite Cornwall's residents paying the highest water bills in the UK, our coastline and rivers have become conduits for raw sewage. In 2025 and early 2026, we have witnessed unprecedented spill durations that have closed our beaches, impacted our tourism economy, and posed a direct threat to public health. The current management has proven incapable of maintaining a sewage system fit for the 21st century.

**2. Financial Mismanagement and Breach of Public Trust**

While the electorate face further bill increases this April, SWW continues to prioritise shareholder dividends and executive bonuses over essential capital investment. The "investment plans" touted by the company have repeatedly failed to yield results on the ground, leading to a total breakdown of trust between the utility provider and the Cornish people.

**3. Inadequacy of Governance**

It is the view of this Council that SWW's leadership has lost the confidence of the Cornish communities and its "social license" to operate. The repeated fines and enforcement cases from Ofwat have acted as a "cost of doing business" rather than a

deterrent. This Council believes the company is now structurally incapable of delivering the environmental protections required by law.

#### **4. Poor Customer Service**

SWW's Customer Service is one of the worst in the country, down to No. 16 out of 19, according to the latest Ofwat report and they have extremely high levels of Customer indebtedness, a reflection of their unnecessary, unacceptably high charges and their appalling Customer Service.

#### **The Formal Demand:-**

This Council calls upon the Government to intervene and make this situation stop at once, using powers such as those granted by the **Water (Special Measures) Act** to remove the offending company from operating in Cornwall. This Council demands that South West Water be placed into **Special Administration**, stripping the current management of their mandate. This Council calls upon the Government to transition Cornish sewage and water assets into a publicly-owned organisation, run as a public service, answerable to elected representatives of Cornish voters, that will prioritise the Cornish environment and its people over private profit.

Cornish rivers and seas are the lifeblood of our economy and our identity. This Council will no longer stand by while they are managed into decline.

Your response regarding the steps you will take to revoke SWW's licence in the Duchy is awaited.

Yours sincerely,

**Penzance Council**