

## **URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: TO AVERT A MAJOR PLANNING CATASTROPHE**

### **FOR THE URGENT ATTENTION OF:**

CEO Devon County Council: Donna Manson

**Copy to:** Head of Devon Audit Partnership, Tony Rose

**Copy to:** Monitoring Officer, Maria Price

**Copy to:** Section 151 Officer, Angie Sinclair

**Our correspondence address:** Cranleigh House, High Street, Coombe Martin, Ilfracombe, Devon, [EX34 0EP]

**Our electronic correspondence address:** [information@sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk](mailto:information@sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk)

Date: 10 July 2025

Dear Donna,

### **NOTIFICATION OF A FOOD SECURITY & RESILIENCE EMERGENCY** **(our REF: CC/002 Devon)**

This letter **notifies you and your organisation of an emerging 'systemic emergency'** concerning regional food security and resilience.

Farmers & growers across the region are attempting to warn the public about a food system that is in a 'systemic' crisis. Additionally, in January 2025, a UK food resilience gap report on behalf of the National Preparedness Commission identified a **'serious gap in state thinking and policy'**.

To investigate this issue in January 2025 a regional gathering of concerned citizens was held followed by a *'Concerned Citizens Advisory Assembly'* (CCAA). The CCAA **unanimously endorsed a recommendation that councils across the region must declare a 'food security and resilience emergency'**.

Furthermore, the **risk impact to the region if preventative measures are not taken was considered to be CRITICAL, the highest category ranking**. In comparison with any other political or ideological agendas and in service to the wellbeing and prosperity of this region and its people, this was considered by this Assembly, to be the **highest priority regional emergency**.

**A recording of the 1 hour assembly vote** provides a summary of the situation. It is supplemented by a summary 2 page flyer, a 47 page paper, pod cast links to some keynote speakers and further references that can be found on:

<https://ccadvisoryassembly.co.uk/2-food>

[www.sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk](http://www.sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk)

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### **A. Seven advisory recommendations**

Emerging from the inquiry were the following **seven headline advisory recommendations**:

1. Food security & resilience is at a crisis and should outrank any other political agenda or emergency. **Councils must declare a 'food security crisis' and Local Authorities must create food systems resilience committees as an 'emergency' measure to urgently improve food security.**
2. A target of **85% food self-sufficiency by 2030** is established for the region and its communities.
3. To achieve this: a **'partnership of support'** is necessary between the people and farmers. This includes closer connections, buying direct from markets and farm shops, both community and council supported growing projects, allotments, home growing and land sharing.
4. **Regenerative and no dig farming are promoted as best practice.**
5. **Independent public education about the health effects of production intensive farming, GMO's and artificial foods.**
6. Re-direction of public sector emergency powers, funding & resources
7. Full scenario planning and strategy making for the region (***please note that the outputs from this inquiry are offered as an initiation to a fuller regional scenario planning exercise).***

### **B. Why this 'emergency' is being notified to Devon County Council (DCC) in this manner.**

We draw to your attention our **NOTICE OF RECTIFICATION** letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and subsequent **NOTICE OF DEFAULT** (our REF:CC/001 Devon) 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025. All correspondence, with explanatory videos, can be found on:

[\*\*\*https://sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk/devon\*\*\*](https://sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk/devon)

These notices informed your Executive and organisation about serious organisational failures and gaps concerning **emergency discernment & declarations** with subsequent planning, management, governance and audit through the example of the emergency climate declaration, net zero targets and plans.

**Previously, through a 'rectification notice'** we informed you that **if left unchecked** these organisational issues with subsequent strategies and plans being developed and executed through such an inappropriate system pose an imminent and potentially catastrophic threat of harm to the wellbeing and prosperity of this region and its people.

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**We re-affirm that it is clear that your organisation has NOT been designed and developed for the purpose of 'systemic' emergency management that includes discernment and declarations.**

To avoid such a planning and policy related catastrophe, in Devon, we **formally notified you with copies to the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 officer and Internal Audit that urgent and immediate rectification action was necessary.** We offered suggestions, for your consideration, regarding appropriate rectification measures.

**These notifications were met with inappropriate responses that further indicated that DCC and its executives were NOT FIT to conduct emergency management.**

**In response, and serving as an escalation measure, a 'Concerned Citizens Advisory Assembly' (CCAA) has been established.** This has a regional focus to address and mitigate the root causes of the serious and ongoing institutional & organisational failures that were demonstrated through the series of freedom of information inquiries and, subsequently communicated through previous notices. **The root cause of these organisational problems may be considered as being multiple gaps and failures in advisory practice, strategy making and governance.**

The purpose of the CCAA is to offer informed, independent, impartial and non-political advice accompanied by possible solutions concerning emergencies and in so doing to begin to address the shortcomings identified in the regional council organisation system. An organisation system considered by a CCAA vote as being within the **highest ranking risk / threat category to the wellbeing and prosperity of this region and its people.**

More information on the notices, freedom of information inquiry findings, council responses and specifically **the recording of the CCAA, can be found on:**

**<https://ccadvisoryassembly.co.uk/1-notice>**

### **C. Food insecurity in Devon at 16% in 2022 ... *another indicator of a growing systemic emergency.***

We draw to your attention findings from the *Transform Research Consultancy* report published in January 2023, commissioned by Devon County Council, concerning food insecurity. It reports in the headline findings (*extract below*):

**Headline findings: Food insecurity has increased markedly**

The results show that overall levels of household food insecurity have increased substantially over the last 18 months. 16% of Devon households are now experiencing very low food security compared with 10% in 2021. These households are experiencing substantial disruptions to their eating patterns, such as household members eating less and going hungry. They often reduce food intake because they have insufficient money to pay for enough food.

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The research was undertaken between August and November 2022 and indicates an alarming rise in food insecurity. **Informed by recent freedom of information requests, almost three years later there appears to be no further updates available.**

The report infers that food security is related to the context of a 'cost of living' crisis. This may indeed be partially valid however there are systemic problems and potential solutions such as those being highlighted by this notice that reside outside the 'cost of living' context.

We suggest that Devon County Council consider seeking specialist advisory services to identify strategy making approaches that are appropriate to better spot and tackle the complex issues and nature of this emergency that is being brought to your attention.

### **D. Public duty of care**

We take this opportunity to remind you that as public servants; you have **a responsibility first and foremost to CAUSE NO HARM, to act objectively using the best evidence without discrimination, bias or pre-determination solely for the public interest and the needs of the people of Devon.** There is a duty of care on public authorities and their officers to consider or think about how their policies, organisation systems and decisions affect the people and the wellbeing of this region.

**Informed by our previous notices, we trust that you will NOW as a primary council consider engaging independent, non-biased and balanced advisory perspectives in-order to inform ANY AND ALL emergency declarations and supplement strategy making with transparent, rigorous and balanced approaches such as scenario planning. Similarly, we assume that Audit and governance practice, will NOW seek to assure such practices and additionally treat decisions, impact assessments, risk and value management with a heightened degree of impartiality, scrutiny and rigor.**

**We furthermore expect that Councillors and Scrutiny Committees will be appropriately informed and supported, by your Officers, to act and observe with such a heightened degree of scrutiny.**

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We affirm that our objective, as a '*concerned citizens movement*', is to inform and support the councils, their officers, councillors and partners. Our intention is to avert an imminent planning and organisation related catastrophe associated with **public sector discerned and led 'emergency declarations' (or lack of) and subsequent strategic planning and execution.** In this case, gaps related to a regional food security & resilience emergency.

On behalf of the rapidly growing numbers of informed and concerned citizens across this region, **we look forward to receiving a mature, appropriate and well-intentioned response.**

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Signed by seven concerned citizens living in Devon:

K.L. Armitage  
KATHERINE ARMITAGE

Trevor Brice  
TREVOR BRICE

Daniel Bell  
DANIEL BELL

Peter Whitehart  
PETER WHITEHART

Istvan Ezsias  
ISTVAN EZSIAS

John Yates  
JOHN YATES

Vanessa Coxon  
VANESSA COXON