

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

Our correspondence address: 77 Barcombe Road, Paignton, TQ3 1QB

Our electronic correspondence address: information@sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk

Date: 4th March 2024

Dear Donna,

RE: REGIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE to DECLARED CLIMATE CRISIS

ESCALATION NOTICE & FAILURE TO RESPOND

A. FAILURE TO RESPOND

Further to our **NOTICE OF RECTIFICATION** letter dated 31st October 2023 informing you about serious issues concerning organisation, planning, management, governance and audit regarding the emergency climate declaration, net zero targets and plans.

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

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

To date, after four months, we note that you have not responded.

B. AGREEMENT BY DEFAULT

If we have not received correspondence, to the contrary, from you within 40 days of this letter stating your position and proposed rectifications, then we will consider by default that you agree with the entirety of our findings.

Please note that these findings were communicated through the initial notice letter accompanied by a 56 page report. Electronic copies and two explanatory videos can be found on our website.

www.sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk

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C. ESCALATION MEASURES

As concerned Devon citizens, we have both a civic duty and a duty of care to our fellow citizens to alert them to the significant threat and strategic risks posed to the wellbeing of our region from your plans, programmes and organisation system.

As you have to date neither acknowledged nor replied to our letter, we are forced to initiate a peaceful campaign to bring these very serious issues and concerns to the public's attention across Devon.

At this stage, this will involve a grass roots campaign to inform all Parish, Town, District and Borough Clerks and Councillors across the region about the issues contained in our notice letters, also exposing the institutional / advisory bias and lack of strategic planning rigour evident in the 'declared climate emergency', the aggressive mandated net zero targets and associated programmes.

D. URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

The momentum of policy rollout for this 'declared emergency' is rapidly accelerating.

Therefore, the gravity, urgency and emergency nature of rectification should overshadow all other risks and executive level concerns across Devon County Council at this time.

For public assurance, to avoid organisational inertia and further escalation measures from us, we request that within 40 working days that you supply details of how you intend to address this situation.

Associated with this, we strongly suggest that Devon County Council urgently requests from your audit partner an impartial (a) formal '**Advisory Notice**' and (b) a '**Public Interest Report**' pertaining to the issues raised in these letters.

E. PUBLIC DUTY

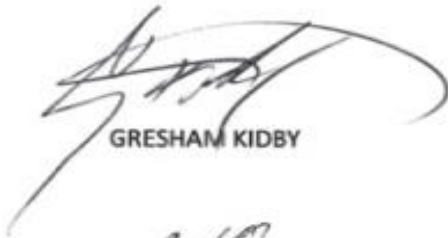
We take this opportunity to remind you that as public servants; you have **a responsibility first and foremost to cause no harm**, to act objectively using the best evidence without discrimination, bias or pre-determination solely for the public interest and the needs of the people of Devon. There is 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 (*see addendum item 4*).

We reiterate that our objective, as concerned citizens (*see addendum*), 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 emergency declarations, strategic planning and execution, in part related to the climate emergency.

On behalf of the rapidly growing numbers of informed and concerned citizens across this region, we look forward to receiving your response.

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Signed by seven concerned citizens living in Devon:



GRESHAM KIDBY



JANE PERRY



MATTHEW SYKES



GLYN OWEN



LEIGH CARRUTHERS



SUSAN ROBINSON



JULIE ADAMS

Addendum

1. WHO ARE WE

We are a group of extremely concerned citizens worried about the adverse implications from the accelerated Devon Climate Emergency Programme and where this will lead society. Our concerns fall into three significant categories which were presented at an initial meeting with four Torbay officers on the 31st January 2023:

- The adverse implications of the plans
- Council planning systems being 'fit for purpose'
- The validity and pragmatism of the Climate Emergency & Carbon policies

We made five presentations that highlighted deep concerns regarding the significant detrimental impacts of the proposed Devon Carbon Plan on the people, businesses and standards of living of this region. These presentations with supporting information by 'independent' climate science experts can be found on: www.sevenconcernedcitizens.co.uk

From our position and perspective, it is essential that balanced scientific information is presented and communicated to better inform councillors, officers and the general public in dialogue and decision making. This requires an understanding of the complexities, potential threats and risks associated with these policies and an assurance of the organisation and planning rigour needed to execute these policies without causing harm and detriment to our quality of living.

2. WHY WE ARE ENGAGING THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

On 31 January 2023 we made presentations to four officers at Torbay Council. Subsequent to the meeting, then a ten-week delay and despite repeated attempts we had been unable to secure a follow-up meeting or any meaningful dialogue with the officers.

Due to the urgency, gravity and systemic nature of this issue our only recourse was to escalate to the Executive Board of Torbay Council. In many respects Devon County Council (DCC) are the lead authority in the regional climate crisis response. Many of the references given by Torbay Council in their freedom of information responses are directly related to DCC as a regional lead authority and their associated organisations.

3. A KEY CONCERN: COUNCIL PLANNING SYSTEMS BEING 'FIT FOR PURPOSE'

In 2019 DCC & Torbay Council declared a 'climate emergency' of such gravity as to initiate accelerated plans and aggressive targets for CO₂ reduction measures.

We are a group of concerned and informed citizens that perceive a significant and imminent threat of harm to the wellbeing of this region and its people. The adverse effects of this institutional / systemic risk, if realised, could initiate a full spectrum social, environmental, technical and economic catastrophe impacting the region and its people for generations.

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Our objective is to avert the risks of such a planning & organisation related catastrophe.

Previously, we highlighted and referenced that many independent 'expert' climate scientists and advisors strongly refute the notion of a climate crisis and sternly warn about the significant adverse impacts to standards of living, social, and economic wellbeing from pursuing accelerated and systemically incoherent CO₂ reduction strategies.

We have concerns that the emergency climate and accelerated CO₂ policies if driven and executed through the present council planning and organisation systems will highly likely result in and exasperate a catastrophic risk event for this region.

As concerned citizens we are seeking assurances from the Executive Boards that the Council's planning and organisation systems, including its governance, are 'fit for the purpose' of conducting emergency planning and execution, in part relating to the climate emergency.

We question whether rigorous strategic process, transparent and non-biased advisory practices have informed the formulation, roll out, consultations, decision making, and procurement activity associated with the 'climate emergency' and Devon Carbon Plan (DCP).

4. A REMINDER OF YOUR PUBLIC STANDARDS OF DUTY

The seven principles of public life: You have a responsibility first and foremost to act objectively using the best evidence without discrimination or bias 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, institutional behaviours and decisions affect people of this region.

Environmental Information Regulations: The public have enhanced rights to participate in environmental matters, such as the climate emergency, and public authorities have less grounds to withhold any information.

Our community right to challenge: As a community we are asking, do the emergency climate and accelerated CO₂ policies and plans:

- truly serve the priorities, best interests, maintenance of living standards, freedoms and wellbeing of the people of Devon?
- contain predetermination, advisory bias and institutionalised process bias?
- possess the potential for harms that have not been adequately assessed, understood, communicated and mitigated?
- truly provide resilience, sustainability and the best return on public sector procurement / investment and effort pursuant to the healthy development, wellbeing and growth of all aspects of life in this region?

Beyond corporate law and its regulations: As a U.K. Citizen under common law and a sovereign human being abiding by natural law, there is a duty of care to do no harm.