

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: TO AVERT A MAJOR PLANNING CATASTROPHE

FORMAL NOTICE OF ESCALATION, FOR THE URGENT ATTENTION OF:

Kate Kennally, **Chief Executive Officer**
Henry Gordon-Lennox, **Service Director - Finance & Assurance (Monitoring Officer)**
Tracie Langley, **Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer)**
Holly Sykes, **Chief Internal Auditor, Head of Audit & Electoral Services**

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

Date 24th February 2024

Dear Sirs & Madams,

RE: REGIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE to DECLARED CLIMATE CRISIS

NOTICE of ESCALATION: HIGHTENED STRATEGIC THREAT FROM CORNWALL COUNCIL ORGANISATION & SENIOR LEADERSHIP CULTURE

Further to our initial notice letter dated 1st November and your management teams email response dated 10th November 2023 we formally notify you of a heightened level of strategic threat upon our region and people. This **imminent and significant threat** relates to the capability and behaviour of your organisation and its senior team pertaining to the management and planning of the declared climate crisis.

1. FORMAL NOTICE TO RECTIFY - MAJOR ORGANISATION FAILURES

Your response to our initial letter of notice indicates very serious issues regarding:

- a) hubris within the senior management / leadership culture
- b) a lack of **organisational culture and 'process maturity'** to deal openly and effectively with strategic risk warnings, strategic re-appraisal and dynamic 'critical' feedback which would be a necessary characteristic of **'process developed or mature'** emergency planning and execution type organisations.
- c) a lack of organisational self-awareness.

As a reminder, we previously brought to your attention **significant institutional failures, deficiencies and gaps** relating to the strategy and organisation approaches surrounding the climate emergency and accelerated carbon reduction plans. These were grouped into the following five categories:

- Advisory gaps and bias
- Institutional bias and pre-determination
- Strategy & planning
- Organisation systems
- Audit & governance

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Notably, four years since declaring ‘an emergency’ audit, advisory and governance systems have all failed to identify, intervene and address these issues. **This constitutes a major failure in the governance function of the council.**

Furthermore, the nature of your response presents a heightened indicator that reinforces our previous findings that the current organisation is NOT FIT FOR THE PURPOSE of complex systemic emergency planning.

2. RECTIFICATION MEASURES

In addition to the suggestions previously communicated, we strongly suggest that your Senior Management Team urgently seek independent specialist advice and organisation developmental support to address the issues that have now been formally notified to you.

To address these organisational failures and deficiencies it will be necessary to undertake informed and urgent strategic re-appraisals of:

1. The climate emergency & net-zero policy
2. Council advisory and audit needs
3. Open & independent validation of our report (attached to 1st letter) and its findings
4. The emergency planning, capability & execution system
5. Effectiveness of the councils audit & governance function regarding such emergency declarations, crisis planning and management.

An initial pathway towards fast-track rectification could include:

- Appointment of an **independent, ‘process mature’** inclusion advisor / facilitator
- Engaging advisors with opposing views relating to climate change
- Scenario planning
- Commissioning thorough risk, value, impact and option assessments

These are necessary and critical precursors to rigorous strategic planning and decision making that then properly inform balanced public / councillor consultation.

3. ESCALATION

The gravity of the issues notified to you and the potential for catastrophic harm from your organisation and management practice, if left unchecked, is significant.

Through this letter, **we formally and personally notify** your Chief Executive Officer, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Chief Internal Auditor.

In light of the information now presented to you we suggest that you consider discharging the statutory duties of your designated roles with care, impartiality, due diligence, cognisant of issues associated with pre-determination and bias concerning climate science, special interest groups and propaganda.

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Furthermore, as you state an intention of NOT engaging with our offerings or in dialogue, we are forced to initiate a peaceful campaign to bring these very serious issues and concerns to the public's attention across Cornwall. At this stage, this will involve a grass roots campaign to inform all Parish, Town and Borough Clerks and Councillors across Cornwall about the issues contained in this notice, also exposing the gross bias and lack of strategic planning rigour evident in the 'declared climate emergency', the aggressive mandated net zero targets and associated programmes.

4. 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 Cornwall Council at this time.

For public assurance, to avoid organisational inertia and further escalation measures from us, we request that within 20 working days that you supply details of how you intend to address this situation.

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

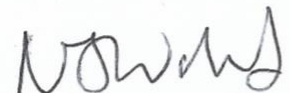
We take this opportunity to remind you that as public servants; you have **a responsibility first and foremost to cause no harm**, to act objectively using the best evidence without discrimination, bias or pre-determination solely for the public interest and the needs of the people of Cornwall. There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

Our objective, as concerned citizens (*see addendum*), is to inform and support the council, 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 'declared 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 Cornwall:


NICOLA JANE WILLIS

Sm Farrell
SARAH FARRELL


TIM JONES


DAVID LATTY

Pa Newby
PETER A NEWBY

M. Morris
MAEVE MORRIS

J.V. Hichens
J.V. HICHENS

Addendum

1. WHO ARE WE

We are a group of extremely concerned citizens worried about the adverse implications from the accelerated Cornwall Climate Emergency Programme and where this will lead society. Our concerns fall into three significant categories which were initially presented by our colleagues at a meeting with four Torbay Council 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

Five presentations were made highlighting deep concerns regarding the significant detrimental impacts of the proposed plans on the people, businesses and standards of living of the 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 CORNWALL COUNCIL

On 31 January 2023 our colleagues made presentations to officers at Torbay Council. Subsequent to the meeting, then a ten-week delay and despite repeated attempts they 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 the only recourse was to escalate to the Executive Board of Torbay Council. Through a series of freedom of information requests and subsequent scrutiny of responses it has been unequivocally demonstrated that the current council organisation system is **not fit for the purpose** to conduct effective planning and management of the declared 'climate emergency'.

The freedom of information responses refer to regionally co-ordinated efforts such as the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaption Strategy and recent consultation. **The context of the findings is therefore highly significant and relevant to Cornwall Council.**

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

In 2019 Cornwall, Devon & Torbay Councils 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

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institutional / systemic risk, if realised, could initiate a full spectrum social, environmental, technical and economic catastrophe impacting the region and its people for generations.

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

We highlight 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 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 declared 'climate emergency'.

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 Cornwall. 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 Cornwall?
- contain predetermination, advisory bias and institutionalised organisation 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.