



20 October 2021

Cllr Mrs E Lintill
Leader
Chichester District Council
East Pallant House
Chichester
West Sussex PO19 1TY

Dear Cllr Lintill,

ADDRESSING THE VOID OF POLITICAL WILL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We have read the CDC Climate Change website and the documents listed, and are aware of the work conducted ever since CDC issued a Climate Emergency in July 2019. Much work has been conducted on the development of the Climate Emergency plan consultation, Climate Emergency detailed action plan, Climate Emergency action plan supporting documentation, as well as quarterly meetings and briefings to Council on progress of these plans and the several developing ideas, including electrification of a dustcart next year.

Next week, the UK will host many international governments in Glasgow to agree the COP26 protocol providing direction the World is going to follow to achieve climate goals. This will build on the findings of the Madrid Conference and COP 25 and the significant direction set from the Paris Accord. These international directives will inform the UK Government's direction on environment, development, renewable resources and so on. In addition, a new housing directive is yet to emerge from the new Housing Minister, Mr Gove, and all these directives will trickle down to CDC and find their way into the development of the much-delayed Local Plan, and myriad other plans no doubt.

In March 2021, Natural England raised an issue of great significance that the combined developments proposed by several districts served by the Hardham water reservoir cannot be fulfilled without concern for the environment. Crawley and Chichester Councils contracted an expert report issued July 2021 providing details of the relevant aspects of this issue to help characterise the problem and possible mitigation. This is a current water resource constraint affecting us right now, and not reflected in the various plans developed in the past that were used to satisfy water consumption and supply estimates to support housing development in the district. Whilst Crawley Borough Council and Horsham District Council have shown the political and organisational leadership by making strong and unequivocal statements in support of the environment, Chichester remains silent and void on the issue.

Set against this large backdrop; a week ago CDC gave the green light for a development, with a specific condition to start before October 30th in Kirdford Village, of 54 homes (23 percent increase in housing stock) based on water predictions when the permission was originally granted in 2018, and consequently does not reflect Natural England's concerns or their recommendations for impact mitigation and water use. Kirdford Parish Council wrote to Chichester the day after we were informed about Natural England's position, asking the Director of Planning and the Environment, Mr Andrew Frost, to suspend this permission until more analysis could be performed. We were eventually told months later that suspension was not possible as permission was correctly granted on the information available in 2018 and would not be revoked.

You might begin to appreciate our obvious frustration that during this climate emergency and growing Hardham resource crisis, there is one CDC office churning out plans of what they wish to do to save the environment, with another office of CDC/planning chasing last week's government housing targets based on old data. Your route map called the Local Plan is out of date, the interim guidelines do not adequately address the climate emergency (worse, they set a water consumption target far above Natural England's recommendation), and developers only being kept at bay because Mother Earth at Hardham has drawn a line in the sand that cannot be passed as a matter of Law. With the right leadership and political intervention, we could have ensured that this specific development would be the first in the district to be compliant with Natural England's guidelines. Instead, your officers have settled for a compromise which falls woefully short of that which is required.

This is not a planning issue; this is an everything issue, and clear leadership is needed from the top.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Brooks
Clerk & RFO

cc Andrew Griffith, MP for Arundel and South Downs