

Dear Prime Minister

We are pleased that the newly formed North West Sustainable Development Agency (replacing the outdated NWDA) has supported us in our campaign to drop the `City Region` title and to more accurately rename it the Bio Region. We are looking forward to working together with them and the other UK Bio Regions to produce the first UK Bio Regional Plan in 2012.

In the North West we have already begun work on mapping out our ecological habitats (leisure areas, rivers, community forests, nature reserves, green spaces etc.), so that any developments within the Bio-Region are carefully planned and within the ecological carrying capacity of the region. The collaborative work between Regional Agencies, Universities, Schools, Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations is certainly helping us to build up a more accurate and comprehensive database.

The introduction of national policies designed to make the Bio-Regions more resilient and self sufficient (by making it easier for Local Authorities to release and/or obtain suitable urban and peri-urban land for food growing and energy production), are to be welcomed. In addition, your stronger pro-environmental planning laws will result in more vertical and rooftop gardens which will help to increase food production, increase wildlife habitats and will help to absorb rain and lower temperatures in the cities and towns brought about because of Climate Change. We also welcome the strengthening of the laws for the protection and enhancement of nature reserves, rivers and forests with the introduction of the `Environment Bill`, which states that environments have the right to exist above and beyond their economic and social benefit for humans.

Our planned programme of energy descent will result in a decrease in our energy requirements and the creation of green jobs through the implementation of a mass home improvement programme, small scale wind and hydro production, solar panels, and high energy efficiency standards on all new buildings. The refurbishment of vacant buildings is set to increase with your removal of VAT on energy efficient retrofitting and this will also help to reduce the pressure on our green spaces. The additional support offered in the budget for businesses setting up sustainable social enterprises in areas such as reclamation, recycling, food production and food distribution, will result in lower unemployment levels and a stronger and more resilient local economy.

We are delighted that we finally have a PM who understands sustainability and the need to implement a one planet economy.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Downey
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