

Response 1:

Freeports are a low regulation environment which is the opposite of what is needed for high wage jobs and worker's right and the environmental controls. Also a Low tax area "so the District Council and government will get less revenue to do the work it wishes to. It is tying your planning dep's freedom, and brings immense threats. Also borrowing money to set it up mortgages our future and will prevent much spending on desirable outcomes, and add to inequality

Just to stress that the freeport is likely to impede most of these aims and ambitions, even if your current political process will not be to be low regulation and low tax, then the next administration is likely to take that route and undo everything you do.

Response 2:

I am extremely concerned that South Hams District Council has committed considerable sums of money towards the objective of the South Hams being part of a Freeport zone. Surely this money could be better spent on all of the priorities you identify in question 8 above.

It looks to me like you're using my money to prop up private businesses which can well afford to stand on their own feet at the expense of our many wonderful local small businesses.

It seems to me that any jobs created by being in a Freeport zone are at risk of being low paid, non-unionised and lacking in basic workers' rights. I'd rather see the creation of secure work paying a decent wage and giving workers the dignity they deserve in the form of unions and rights.

I also worry for our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in a Freeport zone which is potentially exempt from environmental protections. If South Hams District Council is serious about having declared a climate emergency and about protecting biodiversity, aren't there better ways of spending our money?

I'm also alarmed that South Hams Council decided to use our money to back such a financially risky scheme and we weren't even consulted - what happened to transparency?

My understanding is that this does not need to be a "done deal" because, amongst other things, the zone being much larger than is considered normal for a Freeport zone. I would urge you to think again about taking this route - it was voted in by the Tory administration. Aren't the Liberal Democrats better than this?

Response 3:

I am very concerned that the Freeports will have a detrimental effect for South Hams. Too much financial risk for the council, too much freedom for unelected corporations. The freeport is a ticking bomb. Can you be certain that it does not have the potential to bankrupt the council some time in the future?

Response 4:

Very little commentary regarding Freeports and SEZ. Why is information so hard to find? Why were residents not consulted about freeport adoption? Teeside is enduring ecoside as it's freeport is developed. We live in AONB, what protections are in place given that it also incorporates a huge swathe of Dartmoor NP

Vagu detail in your strategy on page 11 about working with the freeport. Elaborate. Does this include more CPO's as per Langage? How will we be protected?

Distinct concerns about the Freeport and the lack of transparent information regarding it. Why is it the biggest out of 74 ports?

Will sovereign law be maintained or will corporate law be adopted?

What does it mean to be adopted in a "host country"?

What links to Gov do Carlton Power have and why in the IOW have residents been forcibly moved to Hydrogen where Carlton Power is already at work?

Why were Devon County Council denied a vote about Devon's Freeport by Central Government.

How will workers rights be protected given DP World, they sacked 800 PO workers.

Response 5:

Mostly but its not easy to see how all of the aims will be achieved. Also it's not possible to see how the Freeport will benefit residents of the south Hams situation

Response 6

The Freeport will endanger the whole planning and environmental infrastructure and make these aims much harder. It has not been thought out properly.

Response 7:

Poor road communications anywhere except the A 38 and being a coastal area will ever be a challenge because effectively South Hams only has half a hinterland. Good luck, but not having control over most of the Freeport area in the District was a missed chance.

Response 8:

Yes but rationale for Freeport not clear why and how it supports other aims. Supporting Freeport seems to undermine encouraging local economy and environmental protection. Allowing corporate profit and tax breaks at expense of local services, jobs and security (risks of increasing drug and organised crime imports)

Response 9:

Yes, but doesn't explain some of the terminology or implications (like the Freeport). I feel the idea of furthering the "Freeport" contradict the primary aims of biodiversity and climate. I have grave concerns about the Freeport. It has not been widely discussed among the public. Most people I speak to don't even know what a freeport is, let alone that we're in one. Elsewhere freeports have seen reduction of workers rights and planning regulation and a rise in money-laundering, organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorist finance. Is this the kind of South Devon you want? And the cost of freeports is picked up by the British taxpayer via the cut to the Exchequer.

Response 10

Concerns have been raised about the Council borrowing £6m for the Freeport scheme, and about the scheme itself. Julian Brazil criticised "ill-conceived projects" across the South Hams (Totnes Times 19.8.22) which collapsed and cost the taxpayers considerable sums of money. What guarantee is there that the Freeport scheme will not have a similar outcome?

Response 11

I welcome the ambition to move towards business decarbonisation. I'm not sure how the Plymouth Freeport actually relates to the South Hams - what are the benefits exactly? I am not well briefed in this area so I can't really speak to the other priorities ambitions etc

Response 12:

I meant to add to my survey response that I am alarmed by Totnes being included in the Plymouth Freeport. In my view, Freeports are a nightmare, a playground for unregulated capitalism to do its worst. So I would advocate that the council not just revoke their cooperation but actively campaign against Freeports.

Response 13

Whatever your economic priorities, I don't believe that a commitment to participation in the Plymouth Freeport is likely to help achieve them. I had hoped, with the change in overall control of SHDC, that the brakes would have been applied to this ill-advised initiative. Any proposal which puts more power and more public money into the hands of unaccountable corporations, whose sole purpose is the creation of shareholder returns, should be resolutely resisted. Freeports are just another Tory trick to privatise and disempower the public realm for the benefit of their funders and cronies.

I am aware that local authorities have been systematically starved of funding for the last 13 years, and that this makes it difficult to do anything very bold, risky, or innovative. Whatever problems we face, however, I would like to reiterate that the solution to none of them lies with participation in a freeport initiative. There will clearly be a new government in power within the next 18 months, and the sensible strategy at this point would be to sit tight and

wait to see what changes that may bring. Giving away local democratic control of processes like planning and economic development to the board of a freeport would be to create both a foolish and an unnecessary hostage to fortune.

Response 14

The council should immediately withdraw from the freeport initiative. The whole concept of freeports is nothing but a charter for vested interests and corporate businesses to make use of public funding and assets to enhance their own profits and influence.

I appreciate that local government has been poorly served by national government in recent years and that funding is a real problem, but I do feel that this strategy document lacks sufficient ambition. I had hoped that the change in control would lead to significant improvement, but am seriously disappointed that you are falling for the Conservative confidence trick that is the freeport initiative. What we need is more local control, not less; more local democracy, not less. Putting our local governance future into the hands of faceless corporations, which are motivated only by profit would, in my view, be a serious mistake.

Response 15:

I do not think the Freeport is a sensible economic plan, its reach is too wide (particularly geographically speaking), and £5.5 million is a lot of tax payer's money to be "borrowing". I think that money could be far better invested in the community.

Response 16:-

Very concerned that the Freeport will not provide the right kind of growth or align with the stated ambition of sustainability etc. Needs the right kinds of businesses - not ones that put profit over community benefits. If we have to have it why can't it be the first "ECO Freeport" open only to businesses that share our values?

Response 17

My two main comments concern housing and freeports. I have addressed the former in Q5 and the latter in Q65. I am deeply concerned about the Freeport areas extending from Plymouth. The ability to circumvent planning restrictions is deeply troubling. This administration may have good intentions, but there are no safeguards for future administrations who may not be well intentioned and have carte blanche to damage the environment with no accountability. This is very dangerous. The fact that an outer boundary has been set without a compelling economic case for such a huge area is far outside the guidance for such a scheme. How has this been allowed? Is it a case of take the money and to hell with the consequences?

Response 18

Not explicitly structuring objectives around Doughnut Economics (<https://doughnuteconomics.org/about-doughnut-economics>) and fundamental human

needs (Max Neef) seems like a missed opportunity. My understanding is the freeports are a neoliberal tool for wealth extraction, so I'd like to see an approach to containing its damage, rather than maximising so-called "benefits". Thanks for your work on this.

Response 19

I am not sure that freeports have any real value for our community. How do they contribute to sustainability or to the character of the South Hams?

Response 20

I cannot find clear and full information about the proposed Freeport which seems to offer commercial interests funding, ease of planning and more which we are not fully informed. Why does the Freeport extend to South Hams and the Moor? Dartmoor, particularly, should be out of bounds. Will the new National Landscape have any authority in the Freeport area?

Response 21

Good to see climate and biodiversity at the top. However, take issue with the freeport. No information on this and what it means for us. Why are we even in it when it's supposed to be for Plymouth?

I am very unhappy with the lack of information around the Freeport. Why is the South Hams within this? Serious concerns about its possible impact (and disagree with them at a fundamental level anyway). This should be going out for consultation. What would be the cost of breaking any contracts already signed?