

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

14 July 2020

Question from Adrian Temple-Brown

Agenda Items 5 – Public Participation

Agenda item 6 – COVID-19 Update and Steps to Recovery

Agenda item 7 – COVID-19 Financial Update

Agenda Item 8 – Update on Councils Response to the Climate Emergency

Agenda Item 10 – Statement of Community Involvement

Agenda Item 15 – Stone Circle Company Business Plans; and

Agenda Item 16 – Urgent Items

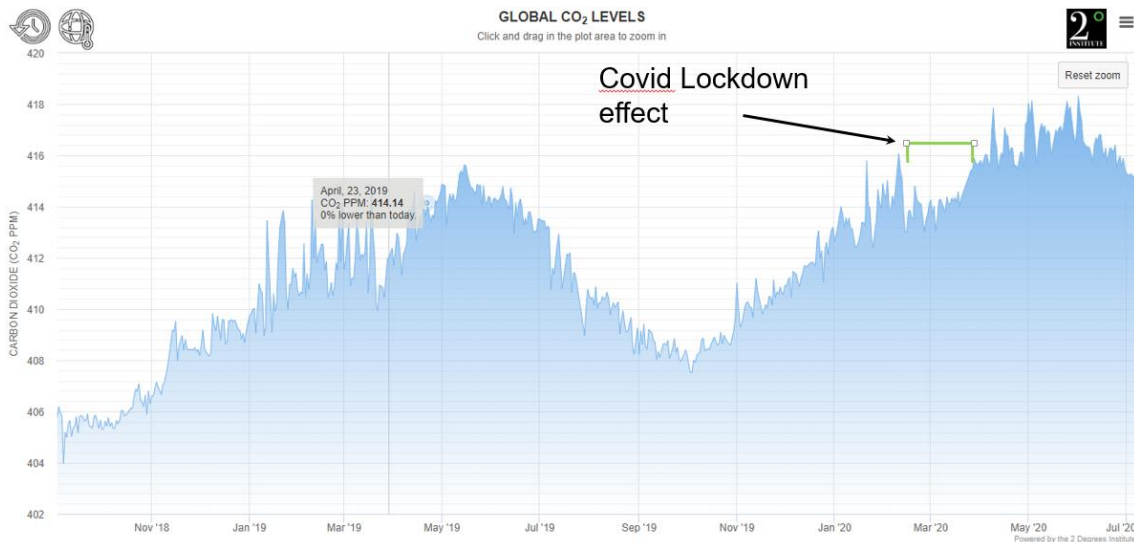
To Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications;
Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts and Tourism, Housing and Communities;
Cllr Pauline Church Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment;
Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property; and
Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste

Statement

For Cabinet members who do not believe that Humans are the cause of Climate Change, this [uTube Video](#) details why the dip shown in the Global CO₂ Emissions Measurements graph below occurred.

My question is to Cllr Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property, for the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 14-Jul-2020 10:00am and is written out below the graph.

It is relevant to Agenda Items 5,6,7,8,10,15 and 16 – please allocate this question so as not to displace anyone else.



On 24-Mar, this cabinet stated that it would *not* add a line item to the Chippenham Eastern Expansion Project Plan (aka HIF Bid) to estimate the carbon emissions from the site clearance and soil excavation associated with building the proposed housing estates, industrial units and roads over what is currently Wiltshire countryside.

Having an estimate of the emissions now (before we get started) really matters. All farmers should already know that the soil beneath ancient woodland, wetland and grassland can contain over 30% sequestered carbon by volume. When excavated and exposed to the atmosphere the carbon locked in soil over millennia can naturally convert to Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). A cubic meter of excavated soil may release more than a tonne of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂).

In response to my question on 24-Feb-2020 (attached), this Cabinet did *not* confirm that it accepts the science behind climate change. It has not and does not intend to call for a Carbon Budget estimate to be made based on the existing, detailed, Chippenham Eastern Expansion (aka HIF Bid) planning model. This detailed model will obviously change over time, but the public in Wiltshire who *do* accept the science behind climate change have a right to know roughly how many millions of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide this huge construction project will release into the atmosphere. Without a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) estimate, this cabinet has no idea at all about the Carbon Cost of building out the 45,000 homes and £200m of roads that UK Government policy is wanting developers to construct across Wiltshire. In this time of Climate Crisis, it is irresponsible for this Cabinet to support any major development without this key emissions information.

By planning for and publishing an independent ROM estimate of the Carbon Cost of site preparation for the Chippenham Eastern Expansion project (aka HIF Bid), based

on the existing detailed model, this Cabinet could demonstrate that it's Actions are as meaningful as it's words when it comes to fighting Climate Change.

An Action such as this in this in our time of Climate Crisis would be termed 'Leadership'.

One small step for This Cabinet could make a giant difference for Mankind.

Setting aside UK Government planning policy and associated planning law (as we all know Carbon budgeting it is not a legal planning requirement),

Question 1

Can this cabinet recall it's declaration of a Climate Emergency, accept that building over ancient countryside will generate immense carbon emissions and show 'Leadership' by executing a full carbon budget for its flagship development project ?

Response

We refer back to the answer provided at cabinet on 23/3/2020.

The Council has declared a climate emergency and set an ambitious target of becoming a carbon neutral county by 2030. To achieve carbon neutrality the council will, among other things, need to account for carbon in its development plans. The council will also look at ways of delivering new development with reduced carbon emissions and will investigate offsetting any residual carbon emissions, so that the net input into the atmosphere is as close to zero carbon emissions as possible.

A programme such as Future Chippenham is the ideal long term enterprise in which we can develop initiatives that demonstrate our commitment to these aspects of development. We will publish as much as we can as soon as we can and will progress our plans with the environmental aspects very much to the forefront.

The Council's ambition is to address such matters comprehensively as the programme proceeds, and is making good progress with its plans for actively managing the environmental impact of the Future Chippenham scheme. Taken together with the answer above, such matters already feature as core elements of the Programme. A specific example might be a biodiversity study to understand how the scheme can achieve a 10% net gain. This would be followed by a Strategy and Investment Plan for natural capital attributed to the scheme. In turn this would allow us to plan the optimisation of different natural and societal assets and maximise the contribution of those assets in to the ecosystems they support

Question 2

The Cabinet had had over a year to consider it's emissions position. In respect of CO₂ emissions from construction, the question arises as to how many tonnes of CO₂ emission per square meter is too many tonnes per square meter to allow a development to proceed. What figures are given in your draft Emissions Policy for different types of completed build ?

I look forward to your considered response.

Response

The Council does not have a policy on the amount of tonnes psm of Carbon in new development or a draft emissions policy for different types of completed build. Nevertheless, the Council has declared a climate emergency and seeks to encourage low carbon approaches on all new build development within the county.