

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**2 February 2021**

**Agenda Item 14 – Update on Council's Response to the Climate Emergency**

**Additional Statement from Amy Davis**

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and  
Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism,  
Housing and Communities**

**Statement**

My question related to the use of the word 'sustainable' to introduce the 'Future Chippenham Project' to the public for consultation. In addition, the word 'inevitable' was used to describe levels of predicted growth for Chippenham over the plan period, and to claim that the expansion is essential.

I continue to feel that the use of these words attempts to mislead and to greenwash what is, in any everyday sense of the word, an 'unsustainable' plan.

The community should not be expected to appreciate that your use of 'sustainable' in plan proposals invokes a nuanced concept, taken from the National Planning Framework, and I think it a further dishonesty to claim that it has been used purely in this light.

The proposed road and associated housing development in Chippenham, if we are honest with ourselves, constitutes **the opposite of** what is **generally considered** 'sustainable'.

Today I expect the Cabinet will endorse the update report on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency. But where is the full, honest, and unflinching appraisal, and rigorous governance needed to manage what is, I feel the need to stress here, an **existential emergency?**

I have been watching this closely over the last few years and observe interrelated and alarming barriers to an appropriate and effective Council response.

The appointed Task Group ticks one requirement of the Feb 2019 Climate Emergency motion, but the Executive seem content to avoid or minimise take-up of their recommendations, even when this makes no good sense. So how are we to proceed?

The key decision-makers and Head of Climate Change appear in public statements not to support or understand the need for the 2030 net zero goal, and therefore do not lead

on, or inspire others to embrace the bold vision and fast-paced change that is required. Addressing climate change and the biodiversity crisis still appear to be tagged-on considerations, secondary to a perceived greater emergency related to short-term economic drivers, which only deepen the problem and its many costs for all of us in the future.

I could go on.... but I would instead like to ask any members of the Cabinet who have yet to watch the David Attenborough film 'A Life on our Planet', which is available on Netflix, to watch it. The film neatly depicts the harrowing impacts the world, and we, can expect to suffer over forthcoming decades and leaves no room for doubt about what the nature of our response must be.

I have two children who are 13 and 10. None of us want this future and it is very frightening, but I do need to ask you to act on it with upmost integrity, courage, and urgency, as I believe is your duty to the young people of Wiltshire and the wider world.

Thank you.