

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

12 December 2023

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation

Questions from Mel Boyle

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning

Question (23-101)

As the Local Plan Consultation only ended on 22 November 2023, why is the below on the disposal list, has all the evidence of the unsound Local Plan been processed already?

"Chippenham Pewsham Lodge Farms south of Pewsham Way 03046, 03057, 030186 Surplus Approval/ The site has been identified in the Regulation 19 Local Plan for development. Declaring the land surplus will demonstrate that it is available for development thereby supporting the Local Plan allocation."

Response

No, the consultation responses are still being processed and analysed to understand the issues they raise as a whole.

Question (23-102)

Chippenham Town Council, Groups and Residents have all put in evidence based reasoning for the plan being unsound for Chippenham, are they being ignored?

Response

No, following the close of the consultation, the responses are being processed and analysed to understand the issues they raise.

Question (23-103)

In a climate emergency with food shortages, flooding and an important health and wellbeing benefit of giving residents access to green space, is this the best use of farmland for housing over the Government Housing Allocations and Wiltshire Council Chippenham need data?

I implore all Cabinet members to think about the destruction of Chippenham for housing over Government allocations in a climate emergency and put this item on hold until after the Local Plan Inspector's Review. This area is valued by the residents of Chippenham and addresses the known flooding between Chippenham and Lacock across this floodplain.

Response

Consultation on the Local Plan has closed, and consideration is being given to all the responses received. A report on the outcome to the consultation will be considered by Cabinet and Council in due course.

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Questions from Cllr Richard Budden

To Cllr Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Question (23-104)

Preamble:

At last month's Cabinet meeting I put a question during the agenda item considering Wiltshire's recent performance, to ask where and how we are accounting for the greenhouse gas emissions created by the Energy from Waste programme that is burning 110,000 tonnes annually of our household waste.

My question went unanswered at the meeting, so I followed it up in email correspondence with Sarah Valdus, Director – Environment, who advised me that these are considered as 'Scope 3 emissions' and told me work is currently being undertaken by external consultants who are expected to report next year.

Despite my interventions, at the end of November a 'Wiltshire Council Climate Emergency update' was circulated to councillors that made no reference to greenhouse gas emissions from energy from waste, nor to 'Scope 3 emissions' generally, nor to the fact that they are unquantified at this time. The document repeatedly claimed the "Council is on track to be carbon neutral by 2030".

Question:

Given that our Energy from Waste programme will continue for 15 years until 2038, with no plan in place to discontinue it or replace it, that we have no quantification of the greenhouse gas emissions released in burning household waste at the rate of 110,00 tonnes/year, and that Councillor Holder is well aware of all this, is it not the case that to claim the "Council is on track to be carbon neutral by 2030" without making any reference to these - or any other - Scope 3 emissions, is an attempt to mislead councillors and residents and amounts to little more than greenwash?

Response

We strongly disagree with your statement that we are green washing. The climate strategy and action planning has been very clear on the emphasis on scope 1 and 2 emissions in our targets for 2030.

Page 3 of the Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-24 states:

'The Climate Strategy sets out the following objectives for the Carbon Neutral Council:

- To become carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030*
- Provide leadership locally and nationally, sharing learning*

The 2030 target covers the council's direct emissions (Scope 1 & 2) however the strategy includes an objective to understand and reduce the council's Scope 3 emissions as well.'

Page 4 and 5 provide a discussion of scope 1 and 2 emissions, demonstrating that although the council's goal is to be carbon neutral in its direct emissions (scope 1 and 2), we are also working to understand and reduce the council's indirect emissions (scope 3).

Paragraph 22 in the October 2023 update also states...

'The council's commitment is to be carbon neutral in its own operations (Scopes 1 & 2) by 2030. In 2014-15 Scope 1 & 2 emissions were 23,758 tonnes of CO2 equivalent and in 2022/23 were 3,568 tCO2e. This means that council emissions have been reduced below the target for 2022/23 (3750t) ensuring that the council is aligned to the pathway to carbon neutral set out in 2022.'

There was also a commitment in the Carbon Neutral Action Plan to start to include scope 3 emissions in our accounting by July 2023. The following work on Scope 3 has been undertaken to date:

- Included a sample of scope 3 emissions from schools in our annual October GHG report https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/11779/Wiltshire-Council-s-Greenhouse-Gas-GHG-emissions-report-2022-23/default/GHG_footprint_report_2022-23.odt?m=1693472809193
- Started to engage with key suppliers (highest carbon emitters) - for existing contracts where the contract does not necessarily have requirements on climate, we can engage with suppliers and contract managers to understand what they are already doing towards being net zero and ask them to share their data, performance and best practice. For new contracts we have the opportunity to include climate considerations into tender processes and new contracts. This is supported by the council's Socially Responsible Procurement Policy. An example is the new contract with Milestone who started their contract in April and have set up their baseline and are reporting on it to the council.
- The Anthesis work identified that Highways and Waste are likely to be the highest emitting contracts. In November, the council held a forum for Highways contractors and subcontractors to showcase their activities and approaches on climate and environment. It was very encouraging to hear what they are all doing, and helpful to start sharing good practice among organisations in this sector.
- Work is ongoing to better understand the carbon emissions associated with current waste management practices in Wiltshire, including those that would fall into Scope 3. This is a relatively new area of interest and activity, and carbon assessment models do not exist for some waste management practices, such as Mechanical Biological Treatment (as used in Wiltshire). We are therefore seeking further consultancy support, via the Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP) to help develop our understanding of emissions associated with that treatment process, to be included in this wider assessment of waste management practice, and potential options for the future.