

Wiltshire Council

Council

26 November 2019

From Jane Laurie – Climate Friendly Bradford-on-Avon

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for
Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Housing, Climate Change and
MCI**

Question (19-5)

The natural world can play an important role in mitigating and adapting to climate change, but is also affected by the rapid rate of change.

Has the Council taken into account biodiversity and greenspace issues when drawing up climate emergency plans? Eg in flood management, carbon sequestration (tree planting, permanent grassland such as road verges), wildlife friendly greenspace management.

Response

In accordance with the Constitution a verbal response will be provided.

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From Sarah Prinsloo

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Housing, Climate Change and MCI; Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for IT, Digitalisation and Operational Assets

Question (19-6)

The Strategic Assets and facilities management team have put forward a number of measures for limiting energy use and increasing the share of renewable energy within its corporate property portfolio and I welcome this initiative and hope that the Councillors will agree today to its funding in full as well as the additional provisional funding for tackling the residual carbon emissions, and that this work can commence immediately.

My queries:

1. There are 138 properties affected by the Corporate property energy efficiency and generation program. How many further properties are owned by the council on which contractors deliver services on the councils behalf, and what is the requirement in these contracts for them to comply with the councils net zero by 2030 policy?
2. Are the council now also scrutinising these management or service delivery contracts to ensure that they are urgently updated or amended to ensure carbon neutrality and what is the time frame for this?
3. Will the council now consider how to apply incentives to businesses, institutions and companies throughout Wiltshire to follow its lead in aiming for carbon neutrality, with a strong message that we won't tolerate companies which do not control their emissions and aim for carbon neutrality themselves? What mix of information sharing, policy decisions, financial instruments, planning regulations (and a pro 'net neutral' planning environment), reward/award schemes will the council consider to bring this pressure to bear?

Response

In accordance with the Constitution a verbal response will be provided.

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From Bill Jarvis

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Housing, Climate Change and MCI; Councillor Simon Jacobs, Cabinet Member Finance and Procurement

Question (19-7)

You are at present setting your budget for 2020.

In February of this year you acknowledged that we are in a Climate Emergency and committed to a number of key actions, to be delivered on or before 2030 seeking to make the County carbon neutral by that time.

You have set up a Climate Emergency Task group, to review of actions required to tackle CO2 emissions and ecological protections required in the County. Reviewing your Task Group progress report it appears that most elements put forward are from a previous development of plans. It seems therefore that, through lack of resource, it is struggling to collate and plan for the myriad issues arising from the latest reviews taking place.

It is also clear that significant investment in new transport solutions, home and business heating, insulation etc will be required if the County is to meet its reduction commitments. These solutions are, as yet, ill defined and will take time to develop.

However, you do have plans that were developed in 2015 which could form the basis for budget allocation.

As you have only 10 years to deliver your commitments, it would surely be prudent to start building a financial plan and reserves to enable work to be carried out as soon as solutions are crystallised.

Can you confirm:

1. That financial allowance will be made in the 2020 budget for the significant technical and management resources needed to build a fit for purpose climate emergency team to address the target of carbon neutrality. Without these resources, the Task Group and the project management group that must grow out of it to deliver the plans being developed, will fail.
2. That a financial plan will be developed and substantial finance will reserved in the 2020 budget for the major tasks that lie ahead in combating the CO2 emissions from the County.

Response

In accordance with the Constitution a verbal response will be provided.

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From Lou Barry

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for
Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Housing, Climate Change and
MCI**

Question (19-8)

What actions are Wiltshire Council taking, and planning to take, to demonstrate that it recognises the incompatibility between a commitment to a massive road-building programme, and the declaration of a Climate Emergency?

Response

In accordance with the Constitution a verbal response will be provided.

From Lou Barry

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning,
Development Management and Investment**

Question (19-9)

Given that Ancient trees and Ancient Woodland play such an important role in the fight against the double crises of Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss, Does the council:

a) support the proposed SSSI designation by Natural England (NE) (in NE designations Programme for 2016-2018) for Trowbridge Woods to protect the Bechstein's Bat colony there from extinction?"

b) support the provision of a 100m development buffer zone around Biss Barn Ancient Woodland site near Trowbridge (as has been granted to Green Lane and Biss Woods) , since Natural England (confirming its Ancient Woodland Designation) is fighting to have the wood replanted, after it was clear felled in 2017?

Response

In accordance with the Constitution a verbal response will be provided.

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From Christopher Humphries

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning,
Development Management and Investment**

Question (19-10)

Given that Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) have now been afforded equivalent status in planning (NPPF July 2018) to that of an Ancient Monument, and since ASNW play an important part in fighting both climate change (carbon sequestration) and biodiversity Loss (ASNW is one of our most biodiverse habitats), what measures does the Council propose to ensure that Wiltshire's ancient trees and woodlands are properly protected from harmful development and activities?

Response

In accordance with the Constitution a verbal response will be provided.