

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

13 January 2021

**Agenda Item 10 – Executive Response: Global Warming & Climate
Emergency Task Group**

Statement from Bill Jarvis – Wiltshire Climate Alliance

Statement

This report is one previously discussed in meetings with the Executive to which there have been statements made and questions asked by members of the public, many of which have yet to be satisfactorily answered. Hopefully, this will eventually be addressed.

To achieve their stated aim of seeking to make Wiltshire Carbon neutral by 2030, the proposals made by the Climate Task Group need the unequivocal support of the Executive, both in programme and finance.

The Climate Task Group recommendations are solid, realistic and deliverable, if the Council put their mind to them.

At present the Executive responses fall well short of full endorsement of the recommendations. There are many examples, a few are given below.

On housing

Words such as, “Where possible”, “viability”, “aim to achieve/deliver”, “considered in the round”, “move it towards” etc etc really do not provide the reassurance that the Executive is committed to supporting and delivering them, either in a timely manner or ever.

There is a known lack of local skills in the Wiltshire area to deliver the retrofit and new build carbon reduction measures. In spite of this, the Executive response shows no commitment from to support local businesses developing the skills needed. It is simply “encouraging local business...” to register for the TrustMark.

On Energy

“...will be developed through the new Climate Strategy...”, no programme, no commitment to achieve.

“...aims to commission an energy and heat study...”, when and to deliver what?

On EVs

“...needs to develop a strategy..”, “...is being investigated ..”

when will the Executive deliver the recommendations?

A later comment on “..charging points for new development..” suggest a complete lack of understanding of the needs of the potential EV community

A recent WCA survey demonstrates that the public view of the Council’s EV support provision is that they are poor or very poor, significantly discouraging EV adoption in the County.

On Public Transport and Active Travel

Where is commitment from the Executive to deliver on the vision of a new integrated transport solution envisaged by the Task Groups recommendations?

There are many soft words but no commitment to the radical changes needed.

On Air Quality

Also relating to active travel, the recent vacillations around people friendly streets suggests that the Executive needs to clarify its commitments to this and other measures to support a wider adoption of active travel.

Of particular concern, also mentioned by my WCA colleague Christian Lange, is the likely impact on air quality from the proposed new incinerator in Westbury.

If this is approved by the Council, then the pollution in the area will be significantly impacted for the next 25 years. It may actually be the major emissions source in the area once traffic pollution is brought under control.

On the Proposal

If the only requirement of the Environment Committee is to “note the executive response” it will be failing in its duty as a Scrutiny Committee, as the Executive response to the reasonable proposals of the Climate Task Group is weak at best and should be challenged on that basis.