

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

11 January 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Andrew Nicolson

To Councillors :

Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic Planning and Climate Change

1. COP26 Attendance

As Cabinet has apparently not hitherto received an announcement of the outcomes of Wiltshire Council's attendance at COP26, I'd like to congratulate the Council for attending and for showcasing its Community Environmental Toolkit and the Salisbury River Park partnership project. I am sure that Members and citizens would like to read news and see photos or video of the attendance.

May I also ask a "Who What When Where Why" question:

Question 1 (22-019)

- a. Who made the decision to attend and who did attend from Wiltshire Council,
- b. how did they travel,
- c. how long were they in Scotland and
- d. how long and where were Wiltshire's materials on display,
- e. what meetings did they host, present at or attend,
- f. what were the outturn budgets for travel, accommodation, subsistence, exhibition fees etc.,
- g. why did Council decide it was the right thing to do, and
- h. how did the attendance and its outcomes add value to the Council's climate change efforts and commitments?

Response

- a. Who made the decision to attend and who did attend from Wiltshire Council, Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader made the decision to attend as leader of Wiltshire Council and Chair of the CCN.
- b. how did they travel,
By car
- c. how long were they in Scotland and
2 days
- d. how long and where were Wiltshire's materials on display,
Wiltshire Council's materials were on display at the Local Government Association stand as part of their digital exhibition during the conference.
- e. what meetings did they host, present at or attend,
Cllr Clewer attended and presented at the UK100 fringe event on a number of topics as Chair of the Countryside Climate Network and Leader of Wiltshire Council including an event with the Mayor of Lodz. He also gave a speech as Leader of Wiltshire Council (alongside the Mayors of Liverpool and London) at a well attended event at Glasgow City Hall to other Council Leaders across the United Kingdom. Finally, he attended part of an international event bringing together 'Conservatives' from different countries detailing how we are all responding to Climate Change.
- f. what were the outturn budgets for travel, accommodation, subsistence, exhibition fees etc.,
Costs incurred: £578.62
- g. why did Council decide it was the right thing to do, and
Wiltshire Council has acknowledged the climate emergency and has prepared a Climate Strategy to tackle this at a local level. The Climate strategy will be considered at Cabinet meeting on 1st February 2022. Climate change is a global issue which Wiltshire Council cannot solve on its own, therefore meeting and collaborating with others at this international conference was an important opportunity. Cllr Clewer attended specifically reflecting the pressures faced by rural authorities in adapting to Climate Change.
- h. how did the attendance and its outcomes add value to the Council's climate change efforts and commitments?
By attending, the council was able to highlight the role of local government to national and international stakeholders. As our Climate Strategy points out (p 17), national policy and legislation are crucial enablers of action at a local level. Therefore using opportunities such as COP26 to influence these is key. The council was also able to use the conference for networking and sharing best practice with other stakeholders, making valuable connections with others who are also working to tackle the climate emergency.

2. Global Methane Pledge

The United Kingdom announced at COP26 that it has signed up as a Participant in the Global Methane Pledge, which has been billed as, and may indeed be the world's best hope of "keeping 1.5 [maximum degrees C of global heating] alive" in the short term, under the Climate Emergency acknowledged in 2019 by Wiltshire Council;

With a target anthropogenic methane emissions reduction of at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030, Participants commit, among other things, to "take comprehensive domestic actions to achieve that target, focusing on standards to achieve all feasible reductions in the energy and waste sectors and seeking abatement of agricultural emissions through technology innovation as well as incentives and partnerships with farmers."

Wiltshire has significant activity in the energy, agriculture and waste sectors, all of which result in methane emissions; methane is a "short-lived greenhouse gas" with a short-term climate forcing effect four or five times its standardised CO₂ equivalent measured over a 100-year period.

Full Council called on Cabinet in its 2019 Resolution, "Acknowledging a Climate Emergency and Proposing the Way Forward" to among other things,

"5. Work with other local government authorities (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C.

6. Continue to work with partners in the private sector and civil society across the County and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans."

Question 2 (22-020)

- a. Does Wiltshire Cabinet endorse the rationale and commitments of the UK's and other states' Global Methane Pledge, and
- b. Will Cabinet use its best endeavours to seek to ensure that Wiltshire plays its fair part in fulfilling the Global Methane Pledge and that

methane emissions resulting from the County of Wiltshire's economic and other activities are reduced at least in line with a fair share of the UK's methane emissions?

Response

Wiltshire Council's emerging Climate Strategy acknowledges that we need to stop all greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere and mentions the Global Methane Pledge. The strategy states that the measures that we put in place to tackle carbon dioxide emissions will also decrease the other main greenhouse gas emissions. Delivery plans are being developed, based on the Climate Strategy, and these will provide the opportunity to look specifically at decreasing methane in line with the Global Methane Pledge, and to understand more about agricultural and land use emissions in Wiltshire. The council is already tackling methane emissions specifically through its household waste management strategy, which has a key objective of reducing waste to landfill, a known source of methane.