

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2020

Statement from Bill Jarvis

Agenda Item 8 – A350 Melksham Bypass

To Cllr Bridget Wayman – Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste

Statement:

It's disappointing that the report made by your Climate Change Task Group is not on the agenda for endorsement and action by the relevant Cabinet Members.

The report is comprehensive and not to take it into this meeting seems to show a lack of respect for the huge effort the CTG has put into it.

The report went to O&S last week, as you are well aware as a number of you were there. There were no adverse comments.

Interesting, there were over 30 attendees at that meeting. Real interest from Councillors in how climate issues are going to be addressed by you.

The report addresses specific items being discussed today on highways development.

Their recommendation is clear, "a significant proportion" of the Council's transport budget should be focussed on encouraging alternative modes of travel and away from fossil fuel use.

Your focus on highways is detrimental to the people of Wiltshire, not a boon as you seem to be suggesting.

It will have a major carbon impact; increasing traffic of the type we can do without and the reverse of your commitment to seek to make the County carbon neutral by 2030.

New roads deliver more vehicles to drive on them, ultimately creating more traffic problems to deal with.

Integrated transport, balancing all travel needs and their carbon impact must surely be the focus of this Council, not this obsession with fossil fuel transport

Unless of course, this Council is going to ban all fossil fuel vehicles in the County immediately. In which case maybe making this policy would alleviate some of this reckless addiction to an expansion of roads.

The report to this meeting highlights a number of misplaced “benefits” to the adoption of the roads expansion. What it fails to do is measure the significant increase in car and goods vehicle traffic that these “improvements” will bring, or their carbon impact

The Leader will argue that the cash would not be available for use in other, more people friendly ways. Has he asked?

The money is available, otherwise it wouldn't be on offer.

Maybe it's also to do with maximising the return from Council land sales. Perhaps value could be generated from this land, held for the benefit of the people of Wiltshire, in other ways, rather than selling off the family silver to balance the books.

Maybe it's to do with delivering Government targets for housing. Perhaps consideration of more balanced developments on brownfield sites should be a priority, not simply taking greenfield sites, an easy fix to the problem.

Maybe it's time for the Council to step back and completely revisit its travel investment, delivering a more balanced solution of integrated travel for all, not just motor vehicles.