

## **Place Scrutiny Committee – 23 July 2020**

### **Public Participation – questions and statements**

#### **All statements and questions are related to agenda item 6 – Draft Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy for Public Consultation**

##### **Questions from Sarah Daniels**

###### **Question 1**

I welcome the draft strategy and the Council's commitments to carbon emissions reductions. Will there now be a re-evaluation of the residual waste treatment options identified within the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Dorset 2008 – 33, to ensure that Dorset Council is not committing to activities and operations in Dorset that would lead to an increase in carbon emissions?

##### **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan was adopted by Dorset Council in December 2019. The preparation of this Plan included an assessment of the need for new waste management facilities to address waste arisings over the next 15 years. The Plan estimated a significant shortfall in capacity for managing non-hazardous residual waste. The Plan has identified four sites for new or expanded facilities for the management of this waste. The site allocations are flexible and will allow for a range of waste recovery technologies. This will allow for technology advances in the waste industry, new legislation and regulations.

The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Dorset was updated in 2017 and will be updated again in 2022 (every 5 years) or before then if there are significant changes to the industry. For example, the Government's Waste and Resources Strategy for England (2019) could prompt a review of the strategy ahead of 2022.

Policy Objective 4 of this strategy is: Ensuring that residual waste treatment takes into account the waste hierarchy and cost in maximising the value recovered from waste in terms of resources and energy.

###### **Question 2**

How will Dorset Council apply the commitment to carbon emissions reductions in all new planning permission applications, particularly where proposed developments could lead to an increase in local carbon emissions levels?

## **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

The Climate Change Executive Advisory Panel are meeting with representatives of the Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel to discuss the impacts of the emerging Local Plan on Carbon emissions and the ways in which the Councils commitment to carbon reduction can be implemented through the local plan and planning policy in August.

### **Questions from Philip Jordan**

As Covid 19 (the Climate Emergency's junior partner) still shows ,  
Emergencies are "difficult":

- related action involves more than a 999 call (like that a DCC Chief Exec advised a County Councillor to make 30 yrs ago!);
- but, today is 14+ months on from DC Dorset Council (1<sup>st</sup> ever full Council Meeting) declaring this Climate Emergency!

& similarly, it's almost exactly 12 months on from the 2<sup>nd</sup> full DC being pointed to:

*"the WHO (UN World Health Organisation) definition of "Emergency" i.e.*

*'Emergency is a term describing a state. It is a managerial term, demanding decision and follow-up in terms of extra-ordinary measures (Oxford Pocket Dictionary, 1992). A "state of emergency" demands to "be declared" or imposed by somebody in authority, who, at a certain moment, will also lift it. Thus, it is usually defined in time and space, it requires threshold values to be recognized, and it implies rules of engagement and an exit strategy. Conceptually, it relates best to Response.'*

*& given too your reported lack of Climate Emergency application, when making decisions on a range of matters, including e.g.*

*Neighbourhood Plans, your own Forward Plans & Government funding for Norchester – a "Greenfield site" of the type that one can't imagine being backed by the current Climate Change Committee Chair now, or for that matter as perhaps our most distinguished Environment Minister over 20 years ago (when he specifically backed brownfield site development)"*

& the DC was then asked the following related "**Question:**

***How & in what ways are you engaging/progressing towards sustainable success & for that matter equally sustainable exit?"***

## **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

As included in the Next Steps section of the Climate Strategy, work is now taking place on a costed detailed Action Plan which will map out Dorset Council's journey to being Carbon Neutral by 2040.

(wording of question from Philip Jordan continued)

i.e. what "Action" was DC planning? &, today, post some perusal of DC's "23 July 2020 Draft Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy for Public Consultation" it seems only on it's page 57/63 do we see anything on Action Planning - & then, albeit in the officer's accompanying email did I find 8 prime points - but in both:

I've seen little hard/practical yet inspirational/exemplary "*quick win*" or staged action plan solution proposals halting/preferably reversing Climate Change & Ecological Destruction - like DC itself, leading/encouraging others to switch to RE Renewable Energy proposal - in the light of what the market says, & the UN's 26 Nov 19 Emissions Gap Report e.g.

### Question

Where's the "*Call for Ideas*" suggested switch of DC/other Dorset Consumers to RE at seemingly little extra cost? **i.e.**

enable at least some cross sector Emissions reductions, without the reported "*significant investment at all levels of society*": whilst work can be done, at some extra cost on bringing to fruition Imperial Colleges GIFTs "*Call for Ideas*" submission - harmonized with e.g. Deep Green Bldg Retrofit/Transport & Navitus Windfarm, with W&P as it's thus revitalised base!

## **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

Dorset Council have secured a certificated Renewable Energy provision from 1st October for 12 months (subject to extension if requested) for all Corporate sites and some schools subject to request.

### Question from Tony Walter

Dorset Council's draft *Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy*, intended 'for consultation', is very well written and set out, but at 60 pages long, only a minority in Dorset will read it in full.

Question: What actions will the Place Scrutiny Committee be expecting in order for the autumn consultation to be meaningful and for as many

stakeholders in Dorset as possible to participate? What abbreviated or summary formats are proposed for communicating the strategy?"

### **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

The public consultation will be carefully designed to allow qualitative and quantitative data to be easily collected and analysed. The consultation will be web based but every effort will be made to ensure that the exercise is fully inclusive with opportunities to engage with as a diverse an audience as possible.

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy forms the public facing document and is a summary of the full technical analysis, found in the accompanying technical papers, which can be accessed using the links in the Strategy. There are numerous images, diagrams and video links along with a glossary & index to make reading the document as easy as possible, but which unenviably adds to the length of the overall document.

The consultative questions will be clearly linked to the relevant sections of the strategy to make answering the questions as easy as possible.

### **Question from Caz Dennett on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Dorset**

#### **Climate and Ecological Emergency Awareness Campaign and Training for Dorset Council Staff**

We recently had an email exchange with Dorset Council CEO Matt Prosser, where trained facilitators from Dorset Extinction Rebellion (XR) offered to provide DC staff with the latest science-based facts and impact scenarios relating to the climate and ecological emergency. This offer of free training, a version of which was delivered to the Climate & Ecological Emergency Executive Advisory Panel in Sept 2019, was declined by Matt Prosser, although he thanked us for the "useful prompt".

In his response Mr Prosser informed: "I agree that it is a good idea to engage as many colleagues as possible in how we can all work together to tackle climate change. We will continue to explore how we can engage Dorset Council employees in learning more about the climate and ecological emergency."

In Dorset Council's draft Climate & Ecological Emergency strategy document it states: "We will improve the awareness, engagement, and knowledge of our staff and service providers through staff awareness campaigns, with a focus on how employees can reduce their carbon emissions. This is in addition to increasing their climate resilience in the workplace and at home and integrating key climate change messages into induction programmes. Furthermore, we will organise targeted briefings and training sessions for officers, members, and decision makers on the benefits and opportunities of tackling climate change, highlighting this contribution to other Council priorities. We will also establish an internal climate change champions programme."

We hope the Scrutiny Committee shares our concern, that 14 months after declaring a climate emergency, Dorset Council staff have not yet received comprehensive training that provides a common understanding of the emergency and how it relates to their job and responsibilities.

Question: Given that this strategy is fundamental and will be embedded in all aspects of the Corporate Plan, what measures do the Scrutiny Committee believe need to be put in place to ensure staff receive adequate initial and ongoing climate and ecological emergency training, to help them deliver the strategy and forthcoming action plan?

### **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy has been developed with staff who have been engaged in the baseline data gathering exercise. The Strategy will be presented to staff using a variety of well-established staff engagement tools and included in induction training, it will form part of a DC Leadership Forum, Senior Manager workshops and be the subject of topic specific all-staff briefings.

The results of the annual monitoring and review against the action plan will be communicated to Members, staff and the public.

### **Question from Julie-Ann Booker on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Dorset**

In the Dorset Council draft Climate Strategy it states “Within the UK, the government advisory panel on climate change, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), has highlighted that the world’s current emissions trajectory is likely to lead to a 4°C rise of worse impacts and scientists are concerned that rising temperatures could lead to further releases of greenhouse gas emissions from natural sources. This, in addition to a reduction in polar ice caps may lead to ‘run away’ climate change. Time is short ..... Therefore, we have only 8-10 years at the current rate, within which serious action is required to avert this crisis and avoid the worst impacts.” (p.11).

In 2015 the Paris Agreement committed those signing to keep global warming below 2°C and pursue efforts to keep it below 1.5°C The prediction now is that we could hit 1.5°C as early as 2025. Scientific concern is that we are rapidly approaching (if not already having reached some) key ‘tipping points’. The climate and ecological emergency we are facing is not a static phenomenon. We are already experiencing a 1.1°C rise in average global temperatures since pre-industrial levels.

It is still difficult to model what would happen to global warming should a number of these tipping points (1) be reached, for example disappearance of the West Antarctic ice sheet or the switch from rainforest to savanna. But it would drastically adversely impact on models for global warming

temperatures. This doesn't even touch on smaller tipping points and feedback loops (2).

It is going to be at least another six months before the draft strategy has completed public consultation and been approved. The baseline monitoring data and detailed action plans have yet to be added and scrutinised. It has already been 14 months since Dorset Council declared an emergency. However the climate and ecological emergency is moving fast – in the wrong direction!

Question: Given that the draft and coming action plan will have to be flexible enough to keep abreast of moving scientific information, would Scrutiny Committee be more assured that the strategy could be achieved if monitoring and updating plans/targets in the strategy were spelt out now in a clearer, transparent and more robust manner?

(366 words)

(1) <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03595-0>

(2) <https://climaterealityproject.org/blog/how-feedback-loops-are-making-climate-crisis-worse>

### **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

Progress against the action plan will be reviewed quarterly internally by officers to ensure projects remain on track and to identify any areas of concern, where actions may have to be amended or enhanced, and to allow the flexibility to take into account scientific developments and changes in central government policy.

The annual monitoring and review process will be measured against the commitments in the action plan, the results of which will be made public in a clear robust and transparent manner.

### **Questions from Debbie Tulett**

To address the climate emergency, energy provided by fossil fuels for electricity generation, must come from low carbon renewable sources, such as solar, wind, and hydro. Dorset is one of the best counties in the UK for solar with good resources for wind and biomass. In theory, we have enough available resources to be self-sufficient in energy, to enable Dorset to achieve its carbon neutral ambitions in line with national aims. Dorset County could improve the renewable energy position using solar, onshore wind, offshore wind, and potentially tidal energy. Additionally there is potential for hydrogen generation from renewable electricity, utilising seawater and wind turbines, which could make Dorset a net exporter of energy, placing it in a strong economic position. Dorset Council's strategy on the climate and ecological emergency, is to achieve a wider carbon neutral County by 2050. However a

large contributor to GHG emissions comes from the waste sector, including incineration and transportation of waste. The proposed Portland waste incinerator's stack, will not only release GHGs into the air, but also, due to its distance from the source of any refuse-derived fuel, will require 80 HGV movements everyday to fuel it, thus increasing vehicle emissions across Dorset. The Portland waste incinerator capacity of 180,000tpa will emit 180,000 tonnes of realtime carbon emissions, (which will, no doubt, be "greenwashed" on paper, to zero net carbon emissions through mitigation).

#### Question 1

In view of the fact that the 2020 EU taxonomy excludes waste incineration from their list of green or sustainable activities, can the council confirm that they will support this stance and oppose the proposed Portland energy from waste incinerator?

#### **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan was adopted by Dorset Council in December 2019. The preparation of this Plan included an assessment of the need for new waste management facilities to address waste arisings over the next 15 years. The Plan estimated a significant shortfall in capacity for managing non-hazardous residual waste. The Plan identified four sites for new or expanded facilities for the management of this waste. The proposal mentioned does not lie within an allocated site and, once an application is submitted, will be considered on its merits taking into consideration national policy and the Waste Plan policies including the spatial strategy and guiding principles of the plan, including the waste hierarchy and managing waste in line with the proximity principle.

As a result of Dorset declaring a Climate and Ecological Change emergency, the applicant has been advised that any application should be accompanied by an assessment of how the proposal will help to reduce the carbon footprint in terms of the management of waste in appropriate facilities and locations. Proposals will also be expected to demonstrate that the site design, layout and operation will make provision for climate change mitigation and resilience. Consideration should also be given to utilising landscape design to offset carbon emissions.

#### (Pre-amble to question 2 from Debbie Tulett)

Burning waste means potential resources are permanently lost and the rate of disposal is unsustainable, thus waste incineration is not a renewable energy. Fuel hungry waste incinerators often undermine the need to recycle, for example Portsmouth City Council recycling rates 2018/19 were just over 25%, the waste incinerator in Portsmouth incinerated 615,396 tonnes of waste last year. Dorset has no incinerator and Dorset Council Waste Services environmental performance of their waste and recycling services, has been measured as the best performing local authority in England, Wales, and NI and their recycling rates were recently reported as just under 60%.

Question 2: Does the council agree that the Portland waste incinerator proposal is an environmentally unfriendly proposal, which vitiates the County's strategy on the climate and ecological emergency?

**Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan has identified a need for additional capacity for managing residual waste even taking into consideration the high recycling rates that Dorset Council Waste Services has managed to achieve. Applications for waste treatment facilities will be considered against the policies of the Waste Plan. Policy 6 'Recovery Facilities' ensures that proposals do not displace the management of waste which is already managed, or likely to be managed, by a process which is further up the waste hierarchy than being proposed, unless the proposal would result in benefits sufficient to outweigh the displacement.

**Questions from Dave Warren**

On page 55, under The Waste section of this paper, is an Indirect Action to "*Establish appropriate infrastructure to support circular economy as part of Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Dorset 2008 – 33*". In Section 9 - Residual Waste, of the same 2008-33 report is a league table that ranks Energy from Waste Incineration (aka Direct EfW) as the Council's No1 preferred option for the future management and treatment of residual waste (see page 39).

Energy from Waste Incineration appears to be the Council's No1 choice for treating residual waste, but the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy paper makes no reference to this process.

Question 1

Could the Advisory Panel confirm that they have specifically researched and documented the environmental and ecological effects of EfW incineration?

**Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

To clarify, EfW is Energy from Waste. As part of any future waste treatment solution a range of technologies and different solutions would be explored taking into account environmental and ecological impact assessments, not just Energy from Waste.

(Pre-amble to question 2 from Dave Warren)

To prevent greenwashing and help investors make environmentally friendly investment choices, The EU has recently passed a set of laws and regulations that list, by name, all sustainable economic activities. Along with nuclear, and fossil fuel activities, The EU has also excluded energy from waste incineration from its Green List, as they have established that it is neither a sustainable or an environmentally friendly activity. One of the reasons The EU has given to justify its decision is that EfW activities act as an obstacle to the development of the circular economy, and as we can read, Dorset Council's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Dorset 2008 – 33 and the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy papers make regular reference to the importance of moving to a circular economy as part of their strategy.

### Question 2

If the Advisory Panel disagrees with The EU Technical Expert Group's decision to exclude EfW from its green list and classify EfW as an obstacle to the circular economy, please could they explain how they justify their position?

### **Response provided by Corporate Director for Place Services**

The Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Dorset was adopted in 2008 and revised in 2017. This was prior to the Green List being developed and prior to the Council declaring a Climate and Ecological change emergency. The Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Dorset sets out the strategic direction for the DWP up to 2033, however it has already been updated and is due to be updated every 5 years, or if there's any significant change. A significant change in the waste industry is the Government's Waste and Resources Strategy for England, 2019, therefore any updated strategy (due in 2022) will take into account all of these local, national and international changes.

### **Statement from Bernard White**

Leading climate scientists tell us that climatic conditions are deteriorating so rapidly that the planet will no longer sustain life in the same way unless urgent action is taken. (See The Future We Choose – Figueres & Rivett Camac). It is essential to focus on this central and key issue.

It is imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by half before 2030, by three quarters by 2040 and eliminate them by 2050. This is not reflected in the words and actions of governments who are disregarding the urgency. I urge the Council to lobby central government hard. The Strategy document refers to "Key Issues" at a national level which are holding back progress. There are no evident government policies and action plans which will lead, demonstrably and measurably, to the above imperatives.

Dorset's progress so far in relation to Buildings and Assets (page 28) is most impressive. I understand that a/the major contributor to greenhouse gas

emissions in the United Kingdom is domestic housing, both in terms of the fossil fuel sources of the energy we use and the energy that is wasted by inadequate insulation.

I am pleased by the areas for action on page 27 of the strategy document and, in particular;

“Produce a supplementary planning policy to insist upon renewable energy being integrated into all new buildings—unless the Future Homes Standard prohibits it”

I would like to make two comments:

- It is essential that renewable energy is integrated into all new buildings and that the Future Homes Standard must not be allowed to prohibit it. We must meet the timelines to reach net zero by 2050. We have no choice and planning permissions must get right behind that;
- The cost of retrofitting the existing housing stock will be huge. The recent announcement by the government of funds to retrofit existing homes has been reported to cover only 650,000 homes, whereas there are approximately 15m homes which require retrofitting.

As a general comment, the table on page 28 provides welcome information on Dorset’s progress so far. Since it is imperative to meet the three stages of greenhouse gas emissions at 2030, 2040 and 2050, I would very much like to see the effects of all the measures in place and proposed by the Council for all sectors in Dorset expressed in terms of those three stages of greenhouse gas reduction, if that is possible. That would provide focus for the measures and make progress measurable by reference to the objectives that must be met.

I thank the Council for this opportunity to comment.

### **Statement from Richard Belding**

I would ask that the Place Scrutiny Committee consider my following points when they meet on the 23rd to consider Dorset Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy.

We should be looking at hydrogen as the future fuel for vehicles and heating using renewable energy to produce it. Electric vehicles are not as green as many would like to think with the cost and a relatively short battery life and the used batteries storing up a potentially major disposal and pollution problem. Not to mention the infrastructure required and cost of charging points.

Biomass is also rapidly becoming rarely a green low carbon alternative for heating. As demand increases with more boilers installed the use of waste timber and sawdust for pellet production can't meet demand. So sadly areas of ancient and environmentally important forests are being cut down to produce fuel pellets that are then shipped around the world – crazy. Planting new woodland does not replace their value to wildlife and carbon capture and

storage. There is also the issue of ash disposal from the burnt pellets. So in my opinion this is not a route the Council should be considering.

Hydrogen (Worcester Bosch are already producing gas boilers that can be easily converted to run on hydrogen), air and ground source heat pumps, solar and wind are the only technologies that currently should be looked at for heat and power. Couple this with sustainable transport policies and better insulation of new and old buildings will all reduce our impact on climate change and its ecological damage.

Should you have any follow up questions I would be happy to try and answer them.

### **Statement from Rob Smith**

I would like to thank Dorset Council for the preparation of their "Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy" and the chance to submit comment at this meeting. I would like to make the following observations:

1. I would encourage the council to adopt more ambitious timescales.  
The IPCC tells us that world needs to be at net zero by 2050.  
Realistically, Dorset, as one of the leading counties in the UK, which is one of the leading countries in the world, can aim for much more ambitious timescales.
2. This report seems very "land based", yet Dorset has a huge marine resource. We should consider the environmental impact of marine activities. We should also consider the opportunities for marine carbon capture through aquaculture, which reduces ocean acidification, improves water quality, enhances marine eco-systems, and provides commercial by-products. The report only considers land based carbon capture.
3. Although waste and recycling is considered, I feel more attention needs to be given to overcome the insidious affect of plastic and micro-plastic pollution which becomes bound up in our soils and destroys marine environments. The ambition to remove single use plastic should not be confined to the council - but should be extended to Dorset as a whole. I suggest Dorset Council should seek Plastic Free status for the county.
4. I was pleased by Dorset Council reducing its energy requirements by replacing street lighting with LED lighting. Even greater saving could be made by reviewing all street lighting and (in consultation with communities) removing unnecessary lighting. This would reduce electricity and maintenance costs, and would help support wildlife disrupted by street lighting. A wider review of light pollution would further support wildlife, and help overcome people's disconnection with nature by improving their view of the night sky.
5. Dorset has many small towns. I welcome efforts to improve cycling within tier 1 and 2 towns. Dorset needs a strategy to improve cycling between towns. Dorset's busy roads are designed only for cars and leave little space for cyclists. To encourage active transport, the council

can provide alternative routes by improving bridleways, re-purposing disused railways and working with Sustrans. Where there is no cycle alternative to a busy main road, speed limits could be dropped by 10mph to improve cycle safety and encourage active travel.

Thank you for considering my points.