

Councillor Questions for Cabinet 6 April 2021

Question from Councillor Paul Kimber

I would like to request how many social houses are to be built in Dorset during the next 12 months and what areas will they will be built.

Question from Cllr Sherry Jespersen

The work to stabilise the slopes at Dinah's Hollow, proposed in the Capital Programme 2021/22, will necessitate the closure of the C13 for a period of some months. Traffic will be diverted on to the A350. Past experience has shown that this will have a very severe impact on the residents living along the A350 and in nearby villages; to road users and to the structure of the road itself.

Can I ask for assurance that every measure will be taken to mitigate the impact of this road closure and that a clear communications strategy will be put in place to keep everyone informed; and that these measures have been allowed for within the budget?

Can I also ask for assurance that the existing advisory one-way system for HGVs (A350 northbound/C13 southbound) will be reinstated as soon as possible once the work in Dinah's Hollow is completed.

Question from Councillor Jane Somper

While I support that Dorset Council must take all measures to protect road users who drive through Dinah's Hollow, my questions to the Portfolio Holder and officers are: Although some of the trees will be retained and planting holes created for replacements there will still be a reduction in vegetation. Have you identified other areas where trees could be planted to mitigate the harm to the environment by the loss of this vegetation?

Can you confirm when the works are likely to begin and how long this is estimated to take. The report implies the bulk of work will be carried out 22/23 but is not clear? Have all the background reports been made publicly available and if not could I ask that they should be?

Question from Councillor Gill Taylor

I appreciate that this paper was before P&RS recently but I have a number of questions which were not fully answered there and I would like to explore further regarding office space required by our staff and where these offices are located. This is a fundamental requirement before we decide the future of our office accommodation in any location, not just Dorchester. Without this information it is not possible to make sound decisions.

I also appreciate that some office based staff already have desk space across the county and many do not require desk space however there is a need for more staff to be based closer to the communities they live in and work for. I am arguing for

Weymouth as a Weymouth Councillor on the basis that 20% of the population of rural Dorset live in Weymouth and hence I would expect at least 20% of DC office space to be located here; others may wish to present the cases for their areas. I would request that a proportion of officers are based in Weymouth for the following reasons:

- To have office space, where required, closer to where our staff live is better for the work life balance of our staff.
- To demonstrate our commitment to reducing staff mileage in addition to that saved by working from home and thus address our commitment to reducing CO2 emissions.
- To support the economy of our conurbations. If DC locate offices to Weymouth it demonstrates a commitment by this council to employment in this area and serves to encourage other businesses to set up / relocate. This also takes into account that not too many years ago the council was a major, highly valued employer in the town.

I was told that there are plans being worked on to evaluate the office locations of all our staff. Without this information this paper is short sighted and does not consider the whole picture.

Please can you tell me when a complete plan for our office location will be available for scrutiny which must include the relocation of office space to Weymouth?

Can you also confirm that an evaluation of the office space required in Dorchester has been undertaken with a view to future office space relocation out of Dorchester?

Question from Councillor Brian Heatley

Given that

- the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 25 March decided that when Cabinet and Council discussed the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan there should be added one page to the paper giving the reasons for and against a target of zero emissions by earlier dates as compared to the dates in the plan,
 - Cllr Heatley offered to provide the half page on why we should adopt earlier dates,
 - there is no such page yet in the Cabinet papers, although a report from the Scrutiny Committee is promised
 - and that the deadline for questions to Cabinet is 8.30am on 30 March
- will the Portfolio holder recommend to the Cabinet that the text below be added to the consideration of Agenda item 13?

Why Dorset Council should do better than the targets in the Draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (CEE)

This is about what we should do, not an assessment of feasibility. And I'm sorry but like our financial budget it is irreducibly quantitative; science is like that.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change say we have only a 66% chance of keeping global warming under 1.5°C if the whole world emits a total of 420

gigatonnes of greenhouse gases (tCO₂e) altogether in the foreseeable future from 2017 (CEE page 21). On a simple pro-rata population basis that means Dorset's budget is 21 mtCO₂e (CEE page 21). In 2017 Dorset emitted 1.75mt CO₂e. If we reduced in a straight line from 2018, ie by the same absolute number of tonnes each year, Dorset would need to hit zero by about 2042, not 2050 (trust me I was once a maths teacher). Other trajectories with much greater reductions in the early years since 2017 could make the budget last longer, but we've hardly got off to a flying start. So 2050 for the whole of Dorset is too late.

And there are two good reasons why we in the UK should be doing better than an average country:

- we are counting the figures based on greenhouse gases we produce here in Dorset. But we import from all over the world many things where greenhouse gases are created in their production, which would if counted increase our emissions by over 80%.¹
- we are a rich, innovative, sophisticated country with a comparatively effective government. The country that led the world into the fossil fuel based industrial revolution, and benefited hugely from it, can and should surely lead the world out of it.

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uks-carbon-footprint> accessed 211220.
