

NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

17 FEBRUARY 2020

Question submitted to Councillor C Cupit, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change from Anne Thoday:-

Environmental breakdown linked to man-made climate change is now rapidly taking effect across the world, including the UK. We are experiencing an increase in flooding, droughts and un-seasonally high temperatures. Our survival as humans into the future is at stake and the need to act by rapidly cutting our carbon emissions is urgent. North East Derbyshire District Council are to be commended for making the formal declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and for making the commitment to produce a carbon reduction plan.

Unfortunately, the Climate Action Plan published by your Council last month is not adequate for the job and lacks clarity, ambition, defined targets or detailed budgets. There are glaring omissions in the plan, not least in terms of the actions needed to achieve the necessary reductions in CO2 emissions.

The apparent lack of background knowledge and research in this document leads one to question whether the authors have undertaken vital carbon literacy training and whether they have consulted any expert advisors in developing this plan. I would like to suggest some of the obvious changes needed in this document:-

- (1) Under the heading 'Policy Drivers' the plan mentions the Kyoto protocol, but there is no mention of the targets agreed within the important 2015 UN Paris agreement or the role of the UK Committee on Climate Change in setting carbon budgets.
- (2) The plan fails to clearly set out whether carbon measurements are referring to the Council's own CO2 emissions or those of the District.
- (3) There is no detailed breakdown of the Council's own carbon emissions which are necessary in order to set targets and measure outcomes. There needs to be an accurate estimate of how much carbon is produced by each separate area of Council activity.
- (4) The plan fails to reference the Manchester Tyndall science based carbon budget for the District which sets a reduction of 13% of emissions year on year and omits measurements and detail of how this will be achieved.
- (5) Housing targets are unambitious and should surely require all new housing in the District to be built to the highest zero carbon standard and a planned programme to retro fit existing council housing stock.
- (6) The plan should contain a requirement and the Council switch to a green renewable tariff for its own gas and electricity supplies.
- (7) The Council should be undertaking an Energy Saving Trust review of grey and green fleet and considering the cost savings of introducing electric vehicles.

- (8) The plan should include a review of all Council owned land, including opportunities for increasing carbon capture by maintaining and developing wild areas and new tree planting.
- (9) Community engagement is a vital part of any climate action plan. If the local community, schools and businesses are to support this plan there needs to be consultation and engagement with the wider community. This council should be identifying a plan of how to achieve community involvement and engagement.
- (10) The plan has no detailed budget setting out the likely costs and financial benefits for achieving the carbon reductions needed.
- (11) The plan needs a dedicated climate officer who should be responsible for implementing and monitoring the actions, rather than relying on existing council officers to achieve this on an ad-hoc basis.
- (12) Finally, some of the case examples given are ludicrous in a document of this importance: 'a bicycle shelter installed at Mill Lane'. We are told the Avenue at Wingerworth has apparently achieved '*routes for cyclists and pedestrians linking the site to Chesterfield and nearby settlements providing safe, convenient and sustainable alternatives from car use*'. P22.

In fact the Avenue site has been provided with a meandering, scenic leisure route which will in no way encourage the take up of commuting by bicycle.

Since 2014 the Chesterfield Cycle Campaign have frequently written to this Council regarding the lack of provision for commuting cyclists. NEDDC has repeatedly shown no interest or engagement in this issue. According to the Chesterfield Cycle Campaign, rather than being an exemplary site, this case example presents a massive wasted opportunity and failure of leadership.

Would the Councillor explain she intends to develop a credible and serious carbon reduction plan using expert advice and community engagement, which will properly address what is probably the most serious and momentous responsibility this Council has ever faced?