

COUNCIL MEETING – 9 DECEMBER 2020

CABINET QUESTION TIME

1. Question from Councillor M S Steel to the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

At the Chelmsford City Council Meeting of 16th July 2019, the Council unanimously passed a motion that declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Among other things, this motion included:

- **Declare a ‘Climate and Ecological Emergency’ that requires urgent action to make the Council’s activities net-zero carbon by 2030;**
- **Support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the City of Chelmsford and surrounding area net-zero carbon within the same timescale;**
- **Ensure that any recommendations are fully costed and that the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny bodies regularly review Council activities, taking account of production and consumption emissions, and produce an action plan within 12 months together with budget actions and a measured baseline;**
- **Establish a baseline for Chelmsford’s ecological status and monitor progress year on year;**

The main declaration was to make the Council’s activities net-zero carbon by 2030. This issue is of great importance and it transcends party politics. Since the declaration was stated in numbers - zero by 2030 - it is logical that progress will be measured in the same way, with a starting point and an action plan to reduce to zero. I will be disappointed if it is not possible to underwrite the plan with starting and current carbon emission numbers. However, Council has not been advised of the original starting points and the following questions seek to clarify the situation.

- a. What was the starting point? i.e., what were the carbon emissions of City Council “activities” in July 2019?
- b. What is the scope of Council ”activities”? What does it include, what does it exclude – e.g., are trees planted by City Council counted towards carbon collection? What if they are not on City Council land?
- c. Are Housing Association activities included – what about the devolved stock of rented accommodation??
- d. Does the supply line count if they serve any Council services?
- e. The scope boundary must not be a fuzzy line so that favourable items can be included and no-favourable ones excluded . Will the Cabinet Member confirm that the scope has been clearly defined up front and advise Council of the details?
- f. As of December 2020, what are the current carbon emissions of council activities?

2. In terms of working with other agencies toward making the City of Chelmsford carbon neutral by 2030, similar questions apply, so could the Cabinet Member advise us:-
 - a. What was the starting point? i.e., what were the carbon emissions of Chelmsford City in July 2019?
 - b. What are they now?
3. Back in July 2019, this was termed an emergency – quite an emotive word. Part of the Declaration was that Overview and scrutiny Committee would be presented with any progress reports. In spite of my requests to the Council no reports have been presented. Could the Cabinet member advise us when the initial report will come to the Committee?

Cabinet Member to respond

2. Question from Councillor S Dobson to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

In the Local Plan there is an allocation of around 1000 homes north of South Woodham Ferrers yet in discussions it appears that this number could increase by 50%. Since the Local Plan has been found sound and adopted by this administration, would the Cabinet member please explain why it intends to ignore the agreed housing numbers and increase them in this location?

Secondly, if the housing numbers are to be increased here, could the allocation of 100 homes in Danbury, a severely constrained village location, be incorporated within this number?

Cabinet Member to respond