

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

5 January 2021

Public Questions and Answers Sheet

Question from Tom Broughton:

While I am pleased that the Chichester District Council has an ambitious target in the Climate Emergency Detailed Action Plan (CEDAP) of an area wide annual reduction of Greenhouse gases of 10%, it is not documented why this target was chosen and what the consequences of this target would be in the district's contribution to the Climate Crisis.

It seems to fall between business as usual and what is needed in order to ensure the district keeps within the carbon budget enshrined in the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement was informed by the latest science on climate change and defined in terms of science based carbon setting. This carbon budget is based on translating the "well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C" global temperature target and equity, principles in the United Nations Paris Agreement to a national UK carbon budget. The Tyndall Centre of the University of Manchester then further sub-divided this carbon budget to the local authorities of the UK. It concluded that the Chichester District needs to reduce its carbon emissions by 13.7% per year from 2020.

If the district continues to cause the emissions of carbon at the current levels, then this budget will be expended by 2025! If the district reduces its emissions by 10% per year then the budget will be expended by 2030, only a further 5 years. So, for example a house that uses gas for heat will expend its budget by 2025, similarly a fossil fuelled car.

The title of the document contains the word 'emergency', it needs to reflect that it its target.

Could the justification of the 10% annual target be explained?

Political expediency or what is perceived as possible is not enough. We are in an emergency, our house is on fire, the scientists have spoken, we need to act as if this has been fully understood.

Answer from Cllr Plant:

Thank you for your question. The climate emergency needs to be addressed at all levels, local, national and international. Our plan sets out actions that the District can achieve, whether as individuals, households, partner organisation or directly by the District Council. The target reflects that. More could be achieved with greater action at the national and international level, indeed we are seeing the emergence of new programmes, policy and funding from the UK government. However we are wary of setting a target that relies on those as yet undefined higher level actions. We are aware that the target will have to increase by 2025 at the latest in order to

catch up with the 13.7% reduction curve you mention. However, setting an unachievable target based on assumptions of action at a national level risks falling short, dispiriting those who want to back our action plan and emboldening those who think local action is not worth pursuing when compared to international action.

We will be keeping the plan under regular review and should regional and national initiatives and policy allow us to increase the District-wide target further and faster, then we will do so.

On a more technical note, we are aware of the Tyndall work and it is discussed in the Supporting Technical Information to the plan. The Tyndall figures do not reflect emissions relating to Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry. Trees sequester significant amounts of carbon emissions in Chichester district as shown by figure 1 in the Supporting Technical Information. This therefore closes the gap between where we are and where we need to be according to the Tyndall centre. Furthermore we are about to embark on a significant tree-planting project in the district which will help still further. That said, we are not complacent. We know that we still need to do more and are developing a pipeline of activities to achieve the target.