

Chichester District Council

Full Council

23 November 2021

Public Questions and Answers Sheet

Question from Sally Pavey, Chair of CAGNE:

The government advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change, has stated to government that there must be constraint of aviation due to the impact its growth is having on our planet. Aviation releases a billion tonnes of carbon a year. Now 2.4%, its share of greenhouse gas emissions is growing so is this council prepared to be party to increasing global warming?

British Airways state (7.11.21 Mail on Sunday) that green jet fuel is up to five times dearer than conventional jet fuel and represents 1% of aviation fuel used globally. Gatwick is 65% down on flights compared to 2019; the hardest hit in the world according to the international aviation body (EuroControl 3.11.21).

So, I ask you again how this council can support the rebuilding of the emergency runway as a second runway when I quote your website – 'as a council we are committed to working with you to tackle climate change. The opportunity to avoid dangerous levels of global warming is closing and action is required swiftly at all levels from the international to the individual. In making its declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019, the council announced its commitment to taking urgent action and asking others - residents, businesses, partner organisations, and the Government'?

There is nothing to stop Gatwick Airport from using the emergency runway in unison with the main runway 24/7 with 326,000 flights a year adding over 1 million tonnes of extra carbon a year with just the emergency runway.

Answer from Cllr Susan Taylor

Thank you for your question. The first thing to say is that the Council has not yet finalised its responses to the consultation on the proposals by the owners of Gatwick Airport to bring the northern runway into use alongside the main runway.

The draft officer responses to the consultation formed part of the agenda to the Council's cabinet meeting of 2 November 2021. At that meeting the leader, Councillor Eileen Lintill announced that the matter would be referred to the Council's Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel on 24 November to ensure that all members have the opportunity of commenting on the consultation questions when it is considered by DPIP. It is intended that all Members comments received will be considered alongside the officers' draft responses and the public questions to the cabinet meeting to ensure that the discussion at DPIP is as informed as possible, after which the Cabinet Member for Planning Services will finalise and publicise the Council's response.

Question from George Hibberd:

I'd like to ask the following question for the CDC meeting on 23rd November:

Having heard the very disappointing news that CDC backtracked on their promise to hold a Citizens' Assembly as part of their Climate Action Plan, campaigners from Extinction Rebellion and elsewhere have been protesting outside the council almost every week to speak to councillors and members of the public. It is clear that public is incredibly inspired by this way of making sure every corner of our community's voices are heard and how they can be used in many different contexts to deal with important issues like social housing, healthcare, air pollution and Brexit. We have a petition calling for the reinstatement of the Assembly which has so far gained over 160 signatures and is growing rapidly everyday.

The official reasoning was that the CA didn't have the required outreach. Having spoken to councillors and the Chairwoman of the Council, it is apparent that councillors don't actually understand how a CA works and what its purpose is. A Citizens' Assembly is about participatory, deliberative and representative democracy to address big issues within our communities – not outreach.

Councillors have said that they have looked at evidence that raised concerns as to the effectiveness of such assemblies. Will the council confirm what evidence this is? As far as we have seen, the many assemblies in the UK (and globally) have been inspiring and successful – the biggest of which, Climate Assembly UK, had David Attenborough speaking at it.

Councillors have also expressed concerns about representation. But having had these concerns addressed by campaigners, there still seems to be no valid reason not to hold the Assembly.

Will the council agree to engage with campaigners and Sortition Foundation UK, who run the Citizens' Assemblies, to address the concerns that councillors have, learn what true the purpose of Citizens' Assemblies are and how they work and to stick to their original promise to hold the Assembly in our city?

Answer from Cllr Penny Plant:

The Cabinet resolved at our September meeting to replace the proposed Citizens' Assembly with an alternative package of measures to seek out and enable feedback on our Climate Action Plan and its future development. We do understand the value in the mechanism of a citizens' assembly. The primary value is in having an informed, representative cross-section of backgrounds amongst the participants. The key question is to what end is the assembly working? The questioner states that many Assemblies have been successful, but success seems to be defined in terms of having the conversation rather than new actions or changes in behaviour by individuals and organisation across the area.

The need for a representative cross-section of society leads to a considerable investment of time in finding participants from specific age and social groups and in organising the assembly in a way that gives them the information and context that

they need to make informed recommendations. This adds to the resources necessary to run such a process, whilst the outcomes other than 'capturing the discussion', risk remaining abstract. For the outcomes to be relevant to a local authority the high degree of boundary setting needed may frustrate participants and for the outcomes to be effective and innovative would require a high degree of 'buy-in' from other organisations across the district and indeed nationally who are not part of the process. Experience from other Local Authorities is that the assemblies have not been found to increase direct engagement or mobilisation of residents above and beyond other methods of communication, and indeed are not always intended to. The business case for an assembly does not demonstrate that the benefits clearly outweigh the costs.

Having said that, the Council is very aware that our communication must not all be one way and that there is a need to engage widely in a dialogue with residents, businesses and community groups. We started this process in September with a meeting of community groups to help form our behaviour change campaign. We have also started a twice-yearly series of meeting for feedback and dialogue on the action plan. The use of the Lets Talk panel and sector specific meetings for businesses and for 'non environmental' community groups are planned for 2022. We are confident that the package of measures agreed in September will enable this, and do so in a manner that can be sustained over time, rather than being a one off event.

Question from Harvey Belcher:

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Answer from Cllr Penny Plant

The question is the same as the previous one, please see previous answer.

Question from Ollie Belcher:

Considering the amount of support we've had in Chichester in such a short space of time, making people aware to Citizen's Assemblies. With over 180 people recently signing the petition to bring back C.A. Will you consider bringing them back. And if so - when?

Answer from Cllr Penny Plant

The question is the same as the previous one, please see previous answer.

Question from Simon Lloyd-Williams:

Now that COP26 has failed to stop or reverse climate change: -

1. *Which villages in the District are in danger of permanent flooding by the forecasted sea levels rises?*
2. *What will the Council do to defend these villages from this threat?*
3. *If the Council is unwilling or unable to prevent these villages being submerged, when will the residents of these villages be told of this decision?*

Answer from Cllr Penny Plant

A predicted rise in sea level and storminess is one result of climate change, and this may put our coastal communities at increased risk of flooding unless action is taken to manage the risk. Although we are planning for an increase in the risk of flooding, there are no communities which are expected to be in danger of "permanent flooding" in the next 100 years.

The Environment Agency (EA) are responsible for managing flood risk from rivers and the sea and the Council is a Coast Protection Authority, with responsibility for managing the risk of coastal erosion. Coastal erosion may contribute to a flooding event, however, WSCC, as the Local Lead Flood Authority, is responsible for managing local flood risk. The Council work closely with all the risk management authorities and together, the Shoreline Management Plan outlines the strategic approach to the management of the coastline in the short, medium and long term taking account of erosion and flooding. Where communities are at current and future risk, the agencies will continue to work together to increase awareness, resilience, and ensure adaptation through additional or enhanced defences where it is both desirable and economically viable.

The Council is currently delivering coastal works to protect the communities in Selsey, Bracklesham and East Wittering, and there are plans for more significant short term investment in the defences in Selsey.

The Environment Agency have also delivered a number of schemes recently, which include new defences in West Wittering and Medmerry which reduce the risk of flooding to local communities.

The Shoreline Management Plan details policy direction for areas, including; “hold the line”, “adaptive management” and “managed realignment”. This is a public document and coastal communities are therefore already able to understand the approach towards coastal erosion in their local areas and the agencies will continue to work with local communities to ensure they have the greatest opportunity to adapt to future changes.