

Deputation to FBC Climate Change Scrutiny Panel 9/3/2022

By Anne Stephenson
On behalf of Gosport and Fareham Friends of the Earth

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Deputation:

Thank you for allowing me to make a deputation today. I will not be able to attend the meeting in person as I have a prior engagement so I hope an officer from the Democratic Services Team will read out my words.

I was looking forward to attending today's meeting to hear the update on the Climate Change Action Plan and the presentations on Green Energy Supply and on the LEAP. As I stated in my deputation at the last meeting, I am disappointed that the Agenda Reports Pack does not include any details of these items. Consequently some of the points I raise in this deputation may already have been considered. Also, the inclusion of the reports would mean that Councillors could be more prepared with questions.

Re Item 6. Climate Change Action Plan Update:

We are pleased to see the inclusion of the "Working towards Carbon Neutral by 2030" slide in the banner headline on the first page of the FBC website. This shows a recognition of the crucial part the Council can play in the promotion of the need to mitigate and respond to Climate Change across the whole borough, more of this later.

The minutes of the CCSP meeting in January 2023 refer to Solent Airport. I have referred to this in Item 9 below but mention it here in case it is included in the update this month, if so please see below. There was also discussion of the Christmas tree collection service. I hope any update on this will take into account how stopping the scheme might affect the carbon footprint of the whole borough if lots of households then make a tip run to dispose of their own tree or even resort to fly tipping.

Re Item 7. Green Energy Supply:

On 28 February 2022, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which advises the United Nations, released its second global report on the climate crisis. It makes grim reading and emphasises the need to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees C. However, the report concludes that realistic

solutions do exist and one of these is to urgently stop using fossil fuels and move to renewable energy. The crisis in Ukraine also emphasises the need to make the switch from fossil fuels as fast as possible.

However it is important to check **the electricity supplied by a 'green energy supplier' is genuinely sustainable**. In particular, electricity generated from large scale biomass plants should be avoided. Although this qualifies for certification as renewable, Government research has found that it may well generate more emissions per unit of electricity than fossil fuels (<https://tinyurl.com/yj75cc84>). Power stations may burn vast quantities of wood pellets that have to be imported and there is concern that trees do not grow quickly enough to replace those being cut down leading to deforestation.

It should also be noted that switching to a renewable tariff would only affect the market-based emissions measurement and not the location-based measurement*. Location-based emissions are arguably more realistic and BEIS guidance states that any emissions reporting should include the location-based measurement.

We at Gosport and Fareham Friends of the Earth (GFFOE) would definitely welcome a switch to a renewable tariff, since this helps consolidate demand for renewable electricity and is the only action the Council can take to reduce the impact of the electricity it uses. However, it is important that this is not seen as a complete solution. **Reducing the amount of electricity used will have a far greater impact on emissions, and also has the benefit of reducing energy costs for the Council.** Therefore it is so important that the Council also focuses on measures that will have a meaningful impact on its demand.

**[Explanation of market-based vs location-based [here](#).]*

Re Item 8. LEAP:

We welcome schemes such as this as this. Reducing the amount of energy consumed is the best way to impact carbon emissions and it also reduces energy bills. The key to its success will be to ensure that sufficient resources are put into making sure as many people as possible are referred into the scheme. Perhaps using posters on bus stops etc. would help get the message out.

We would also like to see similar schemes available (at a low cost) to provide trusted personalised advice for those who are not eligible for LEAP but want to reduce their energy bills. Can FBC help people get the information they require to pay now (on insulation or ground/air source heat pumps etc.) to save later (on fuel bills) forever? The council could provide a 'Superhome' scheme such as this one in Petersfield: <https://petersfieldcan.org/superhomes>

Re Item 9. Executive Business: (although may be this comes under the heading Item 6. CAP update?)

At the last meeting I posed the question: how does Solent Airport sit within the aim to reduce the Carbon footprint of the borough? Having looked at the agenda of the Executive meeting on 7th March it includes an item on the airport so I would like to ask this question again. I scanned the documents provided for the meeting and at no

point is there any mention of the impact of the airport development on Carbon emissions. The only references to sustainability are those concerned with financial sustainability. Unless we pay attention to mitigation now; we will pay even more for adaptation in the future. For example we will have to find more money to improve the sea defences such as those at Fareham Quay as discussed in the Executive meeting on the 7th of February.

Re Item 10. Priorities

We would suggest the following future priority areas:

Waste: currently only 33% of household waste in Fareham is reused, recycled or composted compared to 70% in the best performing similar local authority. What are FBC's waste reduction plans?

Divestment: what can FBC do to put pressure on Hampshire County Council to divest the pension fund from fossil fuels as soon as possible? Talk of sanctions on Russian investments focuses attention on how important investment is in enabling business as usual. We need to encourage HCC and individuals to look more carefully at what their money is funding (e.g. see <https://switchit.green/>).

Influencing the wider Borough: through local business links, community groups, schools and college etc.

Biodiversity: hand in hand with the climate emergency is an ecological emergency. The IPCC report states that with a global temperature rise of 1.5°C, up to 14% of species on land will be likely to face a very high risk of extinction; with a 3°C temperature rise, this goes up to 29%. At present one quarter of UK mammals, including the hedgehog, are at risk of extinction. FBC needs to ensure it is playing its part to safeguard and increase biodiversity within the borough.

Thank you again for allowing this deputation and for the support of the Democratic Services team in reading it out.