

Deputation to FBC Climate Scrutiny Panel Oct 12th 2021

– Anne Stephenson

20 Alders Road Fareham PO16 0SH Tel: 07748631876 secretstanne@aol.com

Thank you for the opportunity to talk to you.

I have come to the meeting today partly because I am keen to hear the presentations and also your discussion of what progress has been made since your last meeting about 4 months ago.

The other reason I am here is to stress the importance of these discussions in the light of recent events. On 9th August 2021 the UN Secretary General described the latest IPCC Working Group report as a code red for humanity. He said “The internationally agreed threshold of 1.5°C is perilously close. We are at imminent risk of hitting 1.5°C in the near term. The only way to prevent exceeding this threshold is by **urgently** stepping up our efforts and pursuing the most ambitious path”

I noted at your last meeting you described the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) as ‘a good start’. I am looking forward to hearing whether you think a good start has truly been made and whether the actions can be described as urgent and ambitious.

I would just like to pick out a few examples from the CCAP and from your discussion at the previous meeting:

At the last meeting you discussed the opportunities to develop stronger links with communities and outside agencies. Today we will hear about the work of the Greening Campaign which will be soon starting in Titchfield. Gosport Borough Council recently held the second meeting of their Climate Change Partnership. I wonder if Fareham might consider something similar. I hope FBC is being inspired by the good practice in other Councils where repair cafes and community energy hubs are part of the town centre amenities.

In the light of the recent news on energy prices I will be interested to hear if the switch has been made to a green energy supplier. This is down as a ‘medium term action’ in the CCAP perhaps because FBC are tied into a contract. One drawback of the CCAP is that it has no clear time scales and no indication of how much Carbon this would save. This action certainly seems an easy one to achieve and would be a way of showing a leadership role.

The CCAP also refers to a sustainable travel plan for employees. Again could the Council lead by example by working with a scheme such as LiftShare as other councils have done?

On the subject of travel: at present only 17% of commuter journeys in the Borough are made by public transport. To meet Government targets this should be at least 35% by 2030 this is not addressed in the CCAP. Any new developments should take travel into account. This is an example of why it is so important that all Council decisions are joined up and taken in the light of their impact on the carbon footprint of the Borough. In this situation it should be mandatory that all new buildings are built to high insulation standards and have solar panels as a matter of course. It is much better to build to a high standard than retrofit. On that subject I look forward to hearing about the progress of environmental upgrades of the housing stock. This is something that you identified as a priority at the last meeting. At present 41% of the houses in the borough are well insulated and to meet government targets this should be 89% by 2030 it would be good to know how this will be achieved.

I would also like to know how the planned road improvements and airport expansion will sit within an aim to reduce emissions. All building work has a carbon footprint; emissions in one area need to be balanced by reductions in other areas. This is why I would like to reiterate:

Every decision the Council makes has climate implications: Every planning application, every policy in the Local Plan, every green space provision and design, every action to meet housing needs and every investment decision. For example Fareham Council contributes to the **Hampshire Pension Fund**.

That fund invests over **£136m** in fossil fuels. HCC should commit to divesting completely from fossil fuels as soon as possible and FBC can make this clear to HCC.

The way to ensure the CCAP is embedded in all Council decisions and in its day to day running is to quickly move forward on Climate Change **Training** for ALL employees and councillors. I am hoping to hear that this has started and what the programme is to roll this out.

I am hoping the today we will see how the Plan has been be fleshed out. For it to be successful I still believe we need to see the following:

- The quantifying of Emission cuts by different actions;
- That all Council and committee reports include the climate impact of the decisions they recommend;
- More detail about how actions in the CCAP will be achieved;
- who will be responsible for each action;
- And when each action should be completed;
- And what interim milestones are which will allow progress to be tracked.

At his speech to the UN in September the Prime Minister said: We are awesome in our power to change things and awesome in our power to save ourselves (...) we must choose what kind of awesome we are going to be.

I hope to hear some awesome presentations and discussion.

Thank you.

(In April 2021 the UK government to set in law world's most ambitious climate change target, cutting emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels and for the first time, UK's sixth Carbon Budget incorporates the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions. FBC needs to play its part to echo support these goals across the Borough and to ensure that the government's words are not just empty promises but actions.)

Sources include: <https://takeclimateaction.uk/near-you/fareham?postcode=po160sh>