



QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Thursday 23 May 2019

1. QUESTION FROM MR ROCHESTER
Re: Marsh Barton and Edginswell Railway developments

"UK government statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2016> show that over 40% of CO2 emissions in Devon are from transportation. Given our impending Climate Crisis it is essential that travel by car is diminished. Can the Council confirm that they will provide sufficient funding for Marsh Barton and Edginswell stations to be developed promptly and indicate how they intend to increase capacity on the Avocet line and rail services to Cranbrook, both of which are anticipated to reach capacity by 2023.

Can the Council also confirm that secure parking for cycles and electric scooters will be provided at all stations, as the latter, combined with rail transport are an effective alternative to commuting by car."

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS

This year the Council has committed over £1m funding to progress detailed design work and gain scheme approval with a view to delivering Marsh Barton station during 2020/21. Whilst the Council is supportive of a new station at Edginswell, this scheme falls outside of its administrative area and would need taking forward by Torbay Council.

The timetable changes planned for December this year will see two trains per hour between Paignton and Exmouth. Together with longer trains, this should provide additional capacity across the Devon Metro rail network, including the Avocet line. The Council are aware Network Rail are progressing a business case for improving the diversionary capability of the Exeter-Waterloo mainline, which will enable increased frequency of trains to Cranbrook.

The Council cannot comment on electric scooters as they are not currently legal in the UK other than on private land but the Council has demonstrated its commitment to improving the interchange facilities at stations through the expansion of the Co-Bikes network, which will continue this financial year – there will be additional bikes and docking stations at Exeter St David's, Exeter Central and new docks at Pinhoe and Digby & Sowton stations. The Council will continue to explore funding opportunities to improved 'last mile' access to maximise use of our excellent County rail network.

2. QUESTION FROM Dr LEWIS
Re: Climate Change Information dissemination

Could the Council commit to active, sustained and wide dissemination into Devon communities of facts and truths about the many different aspects of climate change and environmental damage, to enhance understanding within all communities, small, large and diverse, concerning the scale of the threat, the actual realities and the required urgency facing us for actions and change in context of the Climate Emergency Declaration. And within such a commitment, can the Council, without delay, begin outlining immediate and long term, continuing strategies for this information dissemination.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

Devon County Council has, over many years, actively disseminated information relating to climate change using a range of communications approaches. In particular, the County Council's web site relating to Energy and Climate Change (at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/>) and relevant press releases conveyed via the News Centre (at: <https://www.devonnewscentre.info/>). This process will continue and will include collaborative effort via the newly formed Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, although it is too early to provide any detail of future approaches.

3. QUESTION FROM MR CUTTING Re: Renewable Energy

How much energy does the County Council currently generate from renewable energy installations on its land and buildings?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

The Council currently generate 83.4GWh (Gigawatt hour) of energy from renewable resources.

4. QUESTION FROM MR VINT Re: Carbon Dioxide Emissions

What is the total quantity of carbon dioxide currently emitted annually from waste collected by the South West Devon Waste Partnership and incinerated at Devonport, Plymouth?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS

In 2018 the CO2e emitted by the Devonport EFW CHP plant for SWDWP collected waste was 143 kT. This is a 50kT reduction on that which would have been emitted if the waste was still being sent to landfill – a reduction of approximately 25%.

5. QUESTION FROM MS SPURR Re: Carbon neutral for Devon

The ambition for the county of Devon is to become carbon neutral by the IPCC's own target date of 2050, at the latest.' Could you please clarify if this ambition relates to the whole of Devon or just DCC's own activity?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The ambition relates to the whole of Devon, although its achievement is dependent upon the active engagement of every sector of Devon society. The County Council has commenced work in collaboration with other strategic partners to this end.

6. QUESTION FROM MR COHEN (NOT IN ATTENDANCE) Re: Devon's Carbon Neutral Target Date

We welcome DCC's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

In view of the daily news of melting polar ice and species extinction, will the Council reconsider it's 2050 target date for making Devon carbon-neutral and follow other councils' examples of much more realistic targets (such as Teignbridge's 2025 target and Plymouth's 2030 target)?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The County Council has agreed to facilitate the decarbonisation of Devon by 2050 at the latest. This corresponds with the recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the UK Climate Change Committee. Indeed, the latter describes 2050 as the earliest credible date for decarbonisation. In collaboration with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, the Council will prepare a Devon-wide Carbon Plan. If evidence is presented through that process that demonstrates that decarbonising Devon before 2050 is credible then the County Council will support that ambition.

7. QUESTION FROM MS COOMBS

Re: Carbon Emission Reduction by 2025

What carbon emission reduction targets are the County Council considering meeting by the end of 2025?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The County Council does not have an emissions reduction target for 2025. Its current target is for a 50% reduction by 2030 from 2012 levels: latest performance figures show a reduction of 36%. The Council's Energy Strategy is currently being reviewed.

8. QUESTION FROM MR SCOTT (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: Climate Impacts Response Group

While I welcome both the setting up of the Climate Impacts Response Group and the tone of the language being used, I wonder how quickly 20 organisations in collaboration, each with their own democratic decision making processes, can act, and how quickly they can actually deliver results, free from blocking by cynical vested interests (as has happened for the last thirty years). In this Dunkirk moment we must create the equivalent of a needed-now flotilla of pleasure craft to evacuate an army! What can the Council offer me to allay my concern?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change state that the required scale of change to energy, industrial and infrastructure systems that need to take place to achieve decarbonisation has no historic precedent. The Council assures you of its best endeavours and would expect other members of the Climate Emergency Response Group to do likewise.

9. QUESTION FROM MR NICHOLSON

Re: Climate Action Plan

What date is the County Council setting for the drafting and adoption of a Climate Action Plan to cut local carbon emissions?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

This is not an issue for the County Council alone, but the collaborative decision of the newly formed Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. The current anticipation is that the process is likely to take of the order of 18 months, but early action is expected to be taken by all relevant organisations in the interim. For example, the County Council is due to review its own energy and carbon reduction targets this summer.