

APPENDIX 2
Council

Monday, 24 June 2019

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Roger Bennett (Mayor), Councillor Gareth Prosser (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Debbie Chance, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Mike Rouse, Yvonne Smith, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jennifer Wheeler

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Chris Forrester and Sue Hanley

Committee Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

21. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)

The Leader responded to a question that had been submitted by Mr M. Bennett in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2.

Mr Bennett asked the following question of the Leader:

“Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to the increased risk of flooding and localised extreme weather - the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale.

Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.

More alarmingly, there is evidence that important tipping points, leading to irreversible changes in major ecosystems and the planetary climate system, may already have been reached or passed.

In October 2018, The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a report based on updated research

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around the impacts of global warming. While previous estimates focused on estimating the damage if average temperatures were to rise by 2°C, this report shows that many of the adverse impacts of climate change will come at the 1.5°C mark.

With clear benefits to people and natural ecosystems, the report found that limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared to 2°C could go hand in hand with ensuring a more sustainable and equitable society.

Since the IPCC report was published, 85 local authorities have passed motions declaring a Climate Emergency and proposed steps to cut emissions. This has happened in councils ruled by all the major parties and has often been organised on a cross-party basis.

Is it not time that Redditch Council acted to protect the lives and property of Redditch residents by declaring a Climate Emergency and committing to a series of concrete measures designed to reduce carbon emissions to net zero as soon as possible?"

The Leader responded as follows:

"We absolutely agree with Mr Bennett that the IPCC state with high confidence that a manmade carbon dioxide increase is causing rising global temperatures, the results of which we are starting to witness.

In light of this, it is entirely appropriate for Redditch Borough Council to declare a Climate Emergency and commit to working towards the IPCC report global requirements.

The IPCC report recognises however, that this is a significant challenge, which requires action and co-operation at every level. Redditch Borough Council cannot rise to the challenge alone.

The more that Redditch Borough Council can achieve prior to 2030, the lower the risk of being locked into carbon-emitting infrastructure, having assets which become useless or devalued and having less options, with higher costs.

I have therefore asked officers to set out a Sustainability Action Plan for the council showing short medium and long-term measures to reduce emissions from our own operations, estate and contracts. Where we have no direct control, we will look at how we can work with residents and businesses through our services to help them to reduce their emissions.

Redditch Borough Council has been working on this agenda for many years and more detail can be provided to Mr Bennett after the meeting."

A copy of the Leader's response was circulated at the meeting, together with a list of actions that the Council was already taking to address climate change (Appendix 2).

Mr Bennett subsequently added a supplementary question which asked the Leader whether the Council would be willing to engage with concerned residents about actions that could be taken to mitigate climate change.

The Leader responded by suggesting that the Council would probably be open to engaging with concerned residents but that he would ask Officers to respond to Mr Bennett about this matter.

The Meeting commenced at 7.05 pm
and closed at 7.27 pm