

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO GENERAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25 January 2021

### Question 1

#### **Mr D Gillam, Peterchurch**

In relation to the Task & Finish Group report on the 'Climate & Ecological Emergency Review'. Under the section 'Recommendations to the executive' 'Resources' on p6, point 4 the report says:

"The executive should ensure that all relevant teams are sufficiently resourced to carry out all recommendations that are accepted."

My question is:

"In relation to recommendation 4 (above), what does "sufficiently resourced to carry out all recommendations" actually mean? In next year's budget (2021/22) will the council establish a separate and significant budget to take forward this work? For example 1% of next year's total expenditure (£320 million in 2021/22), ie £3.2 million? If so, what figure would the Scrutiny Committee recommend that would allow the Council to properly resource the new county-wide partnership body & the many other areas of work they have identified?"

#### **Response**

The recommendation is intended to ensure that all teams have sufficient human resource, to enable them to review and carry out the work from the recommendations in this report. This acknowledges that many recommendations will require officer time to review and implement.

The Task and Finish Group report recognises that the council is making progress towards ensuring all of the council's work is aligned with its ambitions towards the climate and ecological emergency. This has been reflected in a number of early recommendations of the group being taken up, namely;

- Cabinet member Cllr Ellie Chowns has been given specific responsibility to act as a lead on the climate and ecological emergency.
- The council's decision making process has been strengthened to consider the climate and ecological emergency in all decisions.

The group also recognises that council has allocated significant budget within the current capital programme some examples include;

- A solar PV investment programme,
- A corporate energy efficiency programme,
- A recently completed a green fleet project,
- The city centre green space enhancement project,
- A programme to develop up to 8 new Integrated Constructed Wetlands to further treat effluent from village sewage works and to purchase intensively farmed agricultural land for rewilding in order to improve the water quality of the River Lugg and address the issue of phosphates.

## Question 2

### **Mrs C Palgrave, How Caple**

The Task & Finish Group has identified the need for stronger communication about the Climate and Ecological Emergency, and listed a number of recommendations (para 7 (a) through (e)). Would the Committee please consider a further recommendation that this year's mailing of annual Council Tax notices to residents includes a statement from the Leader explaining why the Council has declared the CEE, what goals have been set, and in outline, how can residents and businesses support the Council's efforts to achieve carbon neutrality. And that each subsequent year a statement is sent to residents outlining the progress made in the preceding 12 months.

### **Response**

Thank you for your question, the committee will discuss this at the meeting at 2pm on the 25 January.

## Question 3

### **Mr R Palgrave, How Caple**

Some other local authorities have issued bonds to raise funding for climate-related investments, for example West Berkshire's Community Municipal Investment bond which has reached 50% of its target of £1m and will be used to pay for solar panels on schools. Would the Committee please consider adding a recommendation to the list put forward by the CEE Task and Finish group asking the Executive to investigate the feasibility of Herefordshire creating a similar investment bond.

### **Response**

Thank you for your question, the committee will discuss this at the meeting at 2pm on the 25 January.