

## Public Questions (With Notice)

1. The people of Radcliffe have long been told that Bury Council can do nothing to re-vamp the high street businesses in Radcliffe because the shops are all owned by a private company in London. Following a reply to a recent Freedom of Information request I can now confirm that Bury Council Property Services own 47 retail/commercial properties in the very centre of Radcliffe and other retail/commercial properties on the outskirts. I am therefore struggling to see why the Council are claiming to be so helpless. It has crossed my mind that in fact the Council is actually not interested in helping Radcliffe to retain its town centre and would instead prefer the high street properties to simply become residential properties. Is this the case? **Carol Birchmore**
2. Noting that Bury has a carbon budget of 5.4 million tonnes (MtCO<sub>2</sub>) for the period of 2020 to 2100, requiring a 13% annual reduction in emissions per year (Tyndall Centre's Carbon Budget Tool), what is Bury's current estimated carbon emission reduction target for 2020?

**Susan Sollazzi**

Supplementary question: What urgent actions were taken in 2019 and/or will be taken this year to achieve that target?

- A. A council restructure of positions in order to meet the demands of the climate emergency is currently being devised. This is likely to include additional focused resource but development on this is not ready to share at this point.

The Council are actively looking at our own estate and operations to identify the most effective actions to move the council to carbon neutrality. This will include reducing energy use and developing a much larger renewable energy generation capacity on our estate. We will be looking at opportunities to develop exemplar carbon neutral buildings on our own land as an example to local developers and so that our local communities can see what is currently possible.

### Supplementary

- A. We are currently implementing plans to increase our electric vehicle charging network commencing over the next 12 months and as part of our GM Clean Air Plan proposals we will be seeking Government funding for a further 300 dual headed chargepoints across GM which will provide a further 60 charging outlets in Bury. In the near future we will be consulting on our proposals for a Greater Manchester wide Clean Air Zone which will present a major step forward in controlling emissions from vehicles across our region. Current proposals are that the Clean Air Zone will commence in 2021 and will be supported by funding measures to help

our communities to upgrade their vehicles and a raft of measures to help people to choose walking and cycling for those shorter local journeys.

We recognise the importance our young people can play on this agenda and we are in the process of organising a Bury Environmental Youth Conference for early 2020 so we can find out what their priorities are and harness their enthusiasm and drive to help us meet our carbon targets.

We will develop appropriate plans and land use controls to help meet our targets as we develop our local plan in conjunction with the development of the Greater Manchester Spatial framework. We will continue to actively plant trees as part of the Manchester City of Trees project and we are proud to say that our recycling rate is currently 58% and rising and further education work taking place to increase.

We shall be establishing a Climate Action group within the next few months encompassing business, education, health and council partners and formulating a Corporate response, plan around this will be shared asap

3. Will the Council provide an update on all action points from the Climate Emergency resolution, including a timeline for implementation of each one? **Jim McDougall**

Supplementary question: Can the report on progress be made available to the public by the next full Council meeting?

- A. We will develop appropriate plans and land use controls to help meet our targets as we develop our local plan in conjunction with the development of the Greater Manchester Spatial framework. In relation to Transport and Air Quality, it is expected that we will; be publishing a GM Clean Air Plan for consultation in Spring this year

We shall be establishing the Council's Climate Action Group within the next few months to include business, education, health and council partners. The stakeholder panel will be formed in the next few months

This is an ongoing task – Councillor Quinn has recently been a signatory to a letter to Government requesting that the powers Councils have to enforce anti idling are improved

4. Will the Council meet the *Climate Action Bury* group within the next 6 weeks to define an urgent short-term Climate Action Plan, addressing key low-cost/no-cost measures that can be acted upon immediately? While we recognise that long-term strategic visions are essential, the Council must

act in a more agile and participatory way with its citizens to address this crisis, and we are eager to be part of this? **Laura Chepner**

- A. The Leader and myself as Cabinet Members are happy to meet with the Group. The council welcome the input from local residents and would be keen for Climate Action Bury to be represented on our stakeholder panel so that we can actively progress this agenda together. We will invite Climate Action Bury to join our stakeholder group once this is established.
- 5. Can a commitment be made to ensure all future decisions will take into account the full ecological ramifications and embed this into the future culture of the organisation eg by training staff and disseminating information across all media to staff and citizens alike. **Michelle Phillips**
- A. We are currently working to produce an Environmental Strategy in response to our declaration of a climate Emergency and our carbon neutral target. This strategy and plan will ensure that the implications of our significant decisions will always take into account the environmental impact. We are also keen to develop carbon literacy training for our employees to help further embed carbon reduction across our organisation and activities.
- 6. Can the Council set up a citizens assembly/working group (with accountability built-in) to work / discuss / suggest areas that can be changed. Quick wins & long term goals with an agenda set for actionable changes with timescales? **Adam Rose**
- A. Yes I can confirm that as part of the development of our corporate response to the Climate Emergency we will be setting up a stakeholder working group to help us to deliver our carbon neutral targets
- 7. Which councillor(s)/officer(s) have been allocated the task(s) within BMBC to handle the climate & ecological issues, looking at all issues across all dept of the council? We are missing out on lots of available funding a good eg is £160 million of funding that was initially available across GM boroughs to reduce traffic and air pollution via the Bee Network Initiative. Bury has thus far only secured a rather modest amount and is falling behind more active councils such as Salford, Stockport and Wigan. With congestion costing businesses in Greater Manchester £1.3 billion annually, 30% of all GM journeys of less than 1km currently made by car and 3 people in Greater Manchester dying early from the effects of air pollution, we want to work with the Council to support the vision for a sustainable and joined-up city transport system that prioritises walking and cycling. We have had several meetings over the last year with promises of support. Former leader Rishi Shori attended these meetings and was very keen to promote the active travel agenda in Bury. We have liaised with

officers from e.g. the Wellness & Environment departments and welcome their enthusiasm and commitment from a clean air and physical activity perspective. Unfortunately we have struggled to make contact with the Planning/Highways team who are responsible for actually developing and submitting the bids for active travel schemes. **Nick Hubble**

- A. From the GM Mayor's £160m Challenge Fund, Bury has 'programme entry' status for schemes totalling about £12.5m. The Borough will also benefit from TfGM-led schemes to be implemented in all districts. The final figure will depend on the completion of 'delivery agreements'. Larger proportions of the fund have been allocated to schemes on the south side of Manchester City Centre, where TfGM believe there are more opportunities for encouraging walking and cycling. It is understood that there will be an announcement on the current position by the GM Mayor on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

8. Is there scope within local planning to ensure new built & conversion developments are built to future requirements going further than current systems to bring them in line with the new scientific evidence of CO<sub>2</sub> usage and the shorter deadline for change we now know needs quicker action to take place? Looking further into water retention schemes, heating through the ground, solar on all properties, maximum insulation available, green roofing projects or walls with vertical gardens, especially high rise & commercial builds, discourage heating systems that use CO<sub>2</sub> releasing energy sources etc. Incorporate planning without any loss of woodland. Potentially look to use rainwater storage in garden etc for use in toilets. Use pipes under the garden to capture warm air and feed back into the building....free heat etc. Build everything new to the highest (not just enough) ecological standards. **Joel Instone**

- A. Unfortunately not. Planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material planning consideration indicate otherwise. The current local plan is out of date and does not include policies to enable such issues yet to be secured. Nationally, the National Planning Policy Framework does not include such detailed specific requirements either, which if it did would have an overriding effect on the development plan.

Policies are being formulated which are intended to make their way in to a new local plan. This plan would go through the normal legal steps before adoption and would seek to raise the bar above the current plan. However, policies would have to be in line with National policies and would be able secure what it legally can in conformity with those requirements.

9. With reference to David Attenborough's call to create a Nature Recovery Network (and change laws), to make it a precedent to plan a wild-life-rich natural world which he says is vital to our well-being and survival with

connected sections...what steps can/are Bury taking to ensure this much needed outcome is achieved? Has BMBC looked to see what grass verges as an example can be used to allow wildflowering...to help pollinators... provide insect boxes for overwintering etc. Is there a plan for encourage the retention of and planting of more tree, with the right type of trees, with allocate land. Is there potential funding for this?...and encourage schools and other groups by fund to support these initiative (schools/permaculture group/farmers etc). **Lydia Instone**

- A. It is believed that central government intends to introduce a requirement to create 'Nature Recovery Networks', but what it will require Local Authorities to do is not yet certain. In the meantime, districts, at county and at local level have for some years been identifying 'green infrastructure networks', a key element of which is wildlife corridors.

In respect of Trees, there is a real commitment to the planting of more trees across the Borough in partnership with the City of Trees. Planting has gone ahead in St Mary's Park, Prestwich and Boz Park, Whitefield in conjunction with local schools and community groups.

Tree planting has also happened recently in Radcliffe at Outwood, Bolton Rd Park and Coronation Park.

These schemes are aimed at planting native species and any new plans will do the same such as the Urban Tree Challenge, again in conjunction with the City of Trees

10. Reduction & assessment of use and type of pesticides etc that affect our pollinators and people's health. Can we become a pesticide free town as a matter of urgency and ban unnecessary use of all pesticides? We have had several meetings over the last year with promises of support from then leader Rishi Shori. **Rachel Getliffe**

- A. I can advise that the Council's Pest Control Service has a valuable role in protecting public health; for example carrying out treatments for bed bugs, cockroaches, fleas, rats and mice. It is unlikely that the Borough could become pesticide free. However we do try to minimise the use of chemicals and we always carry out surveys and risk assessments to ensure pesticides are only used where there is a real problem. Nowadays there are strict controls on pesticide usage, with some pesticides being withdrawn from use to improve the safety of people, wildlife and the environment. Our pest control officers are fully trained and up to date on current recommended practices and always take precautions to ensure non target species are not affected by pesticides. We do not use insecticides to treat for wasps outside nor do we treat for bees. We also consider the use of chemicals

against trapping to ensure the safest and most humane method of pest control is used.

11. Can BMBC look into & ensure via education in schools/colleges and citizens through all current media outlets at the councils dispose the ecological & environmental facts. This is to ensure an understanding of why there is a need for change & buy in by our citizens on projects to protect this earth. In school by encouraging project work & looking at the new GCSE currently being developed etc. **Judith Instone**

- A. We are keen to enlist the assistance of schools to help us to respond to the climate emergency. We will be holding a Youth Environment Conference in March this year where we will invite the valuable views, ideas and actions from our young people. We will aim to build on this event and develop an ongoing active relationship with our schools where we work with them to achieve real and lasting improvements to our Environment.