

## Press Release

### Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy

#### An Initial Response from Wiltshire Climate Alliance

Wiltshire Climate Alliance (WCA) welcomes the fact that Wiltshire Council is developing a Climate Strategy but laments its lack of ambition and commitment to achieving its goal of seeking to make Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. Bill Jarvis of WCA's Steering Group described it as: *"Recognising that major changes are needed but lacking any commitment or timescale for reducing emissions outside of the Council's own operations,"* adding that *"There is little sense of the urgency needed for taking action, and a dependency on future plans and policies that may take us in the opposite direction."*

The recent IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) predicts that the world will reach or pass 1.5C between 2030 and 2035 and is likely to exceed 2C between the early 2040s and early 2050s. Every fraction of a degree of warming leads to more dangerous and costly impacts. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the report was nothing less than ["a code red for humanity"](#). The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable." This renewed urgency does not come across in Wiltshire Council's Strategy, which speaks of 'exploring' and 'investigating' the kinds of policies and actions that should by now be in place and well underway.

The Tyndall Centre<sup>1</sup> calculated, **in 2019**, that "with no change to current emissions Wiltshire would use up all its budget [to 2050] **within seven years**". As it seems there will be no significant change to policy or action for at least another 2 years where is there any sense of urgency?

Stabilising the climate requires rapid, deep and sustained emissions reductions. It is particularly concerning that the Strategy provides no detail of how its objectives will be delivered, referring simply to 'future delivery plans'. It seems clear therefore that Wiltshire Council's decarbonisation objectives will be no more than a 'wish list' in the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and other plans, most of which have completely contrary objectives and will not be in place for at least 2 years.

Setting the scope and direction of other plans, policies and programmes, should be at the top of the list of key principles<sup>2</sup> if the Strategy is to achieve it's aims. In fact, WCA would like to see the Strategy go further, and recommend a moratorium on implementing climate destructive, high emission plans and policies until such time as detailed carbon reduction delivery plans have been adopted.

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<sup>1</sup> p12 Wiltshire Council Climate Strategy 2021; [Tyndall Centre](#)

<sup>2</sup> P8 Wiltshire Council Climate Strategy 2021

Amongst WCA key concerns were:

1. No mention of the Council's own Climate Emergency Task Group's recommendations, which included evidenced examples of the kinds of policy changes and investments that are needed;
2. A lack of measurable objectives, and associated milestones and proposed investments, with the prospect of no detailed plans until 2022/23, 3-4 years after declaring a Climate Emergency;
3. no plan to implementing the necessary policy changes (e.g. on net zero planning policies, renewable energy support – simply 'aspired to') or channeling the necessary investment (e.g. into EV charging or active travel infrastructure);
4. Little more than 'encouragement' for active travel and no clear path for improving public transport (over 40% of Wiltshire emissions come from vehicles);
5. No mention of enabling zero emission taxis through investment in charging points and changes to licensing;
6. No mention of the potential for Wiltshire Council's farms and County farms to generate renewable energy, plant trees, apply regenerative agriculture or produce food for local consumption;
7. Complete dependency on other plans and strategies that are yet to be developed which in themselves present a significant risk of increasing the County's emissions (e.g. though more commuter based development and road building);

Wiltshire Climate Alliance is keen to continue to support Wiltshire Council and its councillors in taking the urgent action that is now required. The solutions are clear, achievable and a large number are touched on in this document. However, they require political will to make them happen. There is limited need for more evidence gathering, investigations and assessments. But there is an urgent need for more ambition and immediate action in areas in which others are already showing leadership.

Climate denial must not be replaced by delaying climate action. We urge Wiltshire's residents and its elected representatives to join us in demanding better.

## **WCA Steering Group**

1<sup>st</sup> September 2021

**ENDS**

### **Contact Information**

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Link to the Climate Strategy Consultation on Wiltshire Council Website:  
<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/1004/Climate-strategy-consultation>