

**Response from the meeting of the Cabinet on the
O&S Committee's Comments – 10 February 2022**

Item Number: 9 – Net Zero Carbon Development Plan Document

Requested by: Chair- O&S and the Green Group

Reasons Considered:

Chair, O&S:

Because this is a significant goal in the areas of work the Council wishes to achieve and because information on two key priorities needed detail (viability and the sustainability assessment).

Green Group:

Call-in questions:

1. The proposed new standard is defined as percentage improvements on 2021 regulations. How do these percentages translate into minimum carbon emissions or energy usage in operation? Is it possible to replace percentages or provide alternative quantified standards in terms of maximum carbon emissions or energy demand, such as the one mentioned in the report by the CCC for desirable space heating demands of 15-20 kwh/m²/yr.?
2. Can you give a more precise range of carbon offsetting mechanisms that would be supported by or included within the WDC Carbon Offsetting fund?
3. The words 'feasibility' and 'viability' are used throughout the document. Feasibility is not dealt with separately, and section 11 'Viability' does not define 'viability'. It leaves the decision-making procedure for deciding upon what is 'viable' or 'non-viable' open to subjective assessments based on different accounting mechanisms and assumptions. Can the definition of these terms be strengthened or reference given to published guidance on these terms?
4. Recommendation (3). As an important part of WDC's Climate Action Plan, can we include the Climate Emergency PAB in the consultation process that makes amendments to the draft DPD? i.e. "... in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and the Climate Emergency PAB".

Scrutiny Comment:

Appendix 4 - Net-Zero Carbon Development Plan Document: Revised Viability Study, a lengthy document, was only circulated late on the day of the meeting. This gave Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee insufficient time to review it properly. The Committee was informed that the delay was due to unavoidable staff absence. The Director for Climate Change provided a brief verbal summary of the content.

It was explained that Recommendation 3 in the report, that delegated authority should be given to the Head of Place and Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change to make further non-substantive amendments to the draft DPD prior to consultation commencing, meant that Members would have the opportunity to feed through comments once they had been able to properly review the Appendix. If the changes requested were substantive amendments, then these had to be approved through Cabinet.

The Committee supported the report.

The Committee expressed concern about maintaining the 40% affordable housing commitment when viability was questioned and asked that the Council investigated mechanisms to defend this through the planning process.

Cabinet Response:

The recommendations in the report were approved.

Item Number: 13 – Decarbonisation of Council Assets

Requested by: Green Group

Reasons Considered:

Call-in questions:

The Director for Climate Change wrote: “There is no doubt that the net zero ambition for 2025 is a big challenge”. This could be interpreted as there is a serious risk of falling far short of this target. What ongoing monitoring can give us confidence that this ambitious programme of work is on-track?

2. Can the already-secured decarbonisation funding for replacing existing heating systems with air source heat pumps be included in the review?
3. Shouldn't the council work to official decarbonisation/retrofitting standards for non-commercial buildings, e.g. the Government's PAS 2038 guidance?
4. What proportion of 'old-fashioned' WDC lights have been replaced with LEDs since the climate emergency declaration in 2019?
5. Which is the provider for WDC's green tariff 100% renewable electricity?
6. Recommendation (4). As a key aspect of the WDC Climate Action Plan, can the Climate Emergency PAB be included in the development of specific schemes? (this is likely to be more important for Phase 2 than Phase 1 schemes, so the recommendation may need to be reworded.)
7. Can a recommendation be added that requires the council to publish annually the council's total energy usage (from all sources) as well as the carbon emissions from these properties. This should start for 2021 or earlier so there is an appropriate baseline.

Scrutiny Comment:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommended that:

- (1) Standards set out by the Government for de-carbonisation and retrofitting and those the Council would apply, should be included within the report.
- (2) The Climate Emergency PAB, within the terms of its remit, be involved more in developing some of the schemes outlined in the report.
- (3) A schedule/plan showing when stages of the process would be implemented, and the expected impact as a result should be produced.

Cabinet Response:

The recommendations in the report were approved along with the recommendations made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.