

93 Englishcombe Lane

BA22EH

bankses955@btinternet.com

Statement for the BathNES Cabinet Meeting, 08/10/2020

The Authority's declaration of an ecological emergency is a welcome and much-needed response to the rapidly deteriorating state of our environment at both local and national level. It is exactly in step with the mood of the nation and especially our young people.

Emergencies require urgent and decisive action, and that is now the task before us.

Our response to this emergency will define us in the eyes of our children and our children's children. Why did they wait? What were they thinking? How could they let this happen? These are the questions we don't want to be asked in the future.

And yet we know there are many immediate challenges to our needed actions. How do we create healthy affordable housing, how do we care for the least fortunate, how do we rebuff outside pressures from vested interests and political centralisation?

And of course, how do we react to the prospect of the successive and enduring pandemics and climate change events that we will be facing for the foreseeable future.

The plans of even one year ago now seem to be a distant wishlist. We have yet to see the full economic impact, all we know is that it will be a burden for generations and will provide even greater challenges than we have faced so far.

So our response must be rounded. We must find ways of monetising our assets in a sustainable way, leveraging our universities to create local new employment, create the conditions to house all our citizens according to their means, imagine and deliver new transportation systems and above all make the City a healthy and enjoyable place to live.

In summary, we need a new vision. The kind that drove our reconstruction after the second world-war, for, in its own way we are at war now.

It will not be easy. It will need brave decisions from you, pain for some, patience with the frustrated and robust defence against the naysayers.

I have suggested to the Leader that now would be the right time to pause, call a moratorium on urban Green Space development, and use that time to formulate a new vision drawing on local expertise and engagement.

You have talented and imaginative people in your officers and advisers. Challenge them to come up with new ideas and free them to take the actions we need to deliver your vision.

Get it right and we can lead the way for everyone, get it wrong and our children will be asking, "How could they let this happen?"

Simon Banks