

## **Statement on the record of this Council's progress tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies**

Thank you Chair. This is the last Full Council meeting before the coming elections in May and I wanted to commend the progress you have made over the last 4 years in all areas of the Council's work, in incredibly challenging times, most especially on the pressing issue of tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.

I was born and brought up in Bath, I've lived in the City most of my life and I'm active in lots of areas including on the southern slopes which is where I now live, in Southdown ward, but on the boundary with Odd Down & Kingsway and Englishcombe Parish in Bathavon South with Twerton and Whiteway just down the road; All areas of Bath that were completely neglected by previous Tory administrations. All of the Ward Councillors in my area are active in their local communities, supportive and engaging and everything you'd want them to be. Dine Romero and Paul Crossley will definitely be getting my vote in May.

On that point, over the last month, I have been increasingly upset that a right-wing national lobby group has come to Bath to try to create division and spread lies and disinformation I was disappointed but sadly not surprised that the local Tory opposition has jumped on their band-wagon.

The Council has made real progress reducing emissions, improving green infrastructure and helping to restore nature. Including for example doubling renewable energy generation capacity since 2019 with solar panels being installed on homes like mine, as well as businesses and Council owned buildings including schools.

The Council is leading the way, creating the first Clean Air Zone outside London, but accepting that there are issues beyond the Council's direct control, where regional and national action is needed from WECA and the Government, we still aren't on track to deliver net zero or reverse the decline in wildlife by 2030.

Another example, and another controversial issue, is the need to decarbonise transport and reduce the impact of travel on the climate, where again the Council has made progress but more still needs to be done. Road traffic accounts for 29% of carbon emissions and unless there's a rapid shift to more sustainable ways of travel the council won't meet its 2030 net zero target. I walk, cycle, scoot or use the bus, trains or taxis more than I drive. We all need to make big changes and fundamentally rethink how we get around. Liveable Neighbourhoods, more bike parking and storage, active travel schemes, loan bikes and cycle training, more electric vehicle charge points and more e-scooters all help but we all need to do more.

The Tories again, have come out in opposition to so much of this – including the Liveable Neighbourhood trial in Southlands in Weston and the new cycling infrastructure on the Upper Bristol Road. The Council needed to be brave and bold taking action to tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, and has been, but much more needs to be done. I hope that Members will support that aim tonight and vote to approve the action update report before you and that you and voters across Bath and North East Somerset will do the same when they vote in May. Thank you.