

3 minutes slot - Climate policy and development scrutiny panel 26/3/26

Im speaking on behalf of Climate Hub in connection with the development of a combined climate and nature strategy.

We welcome the intention to learn from elsewhere and also the recognition of climate injustice and the need for a focus on equity as part of the transition process. We suggest this should include proactively engaging with less often heard, and marginalised groups.

In terms of reference documents we strongly suggest that the 'National Security assessment on global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security' should be added to highlight the urgency of the situation, especially when it comes to looking at resources for tackling these issues.

We support the Big Shifts - but suggest that these will need additional policy shifts across the council, for example, what practical steps might be considered and taken in respect of 'buying and wasting less'; when our high street, especially in Bath city centre is so geared to consumerism. We need to start re-imagining our high streets as places for learning /sharing/growing as communities and repurposing away from the traditional 'buy more new stuff' style shopping street.

In relation to the Enablers - it looks like a good list - but we would like to ask what practical support the council is going to provide to the voluntary and community sector to support their role in communicating with our communities and bringing people and businesses on board?

It is recognised in the strategy that there are many green or eco focussed VCS organisations that are working with and in communities across Banes - in many cases with very little financial support and relying on a vast amount of volunteer input.

Speaking from experience this can be exhausting - from creating and running events and activities to raise awareness and support people to engage positively with the climate and nature crises, to fundraising, keeping organisations going, bringing in new volunteers, and working collaboratively with others.

It would be a great encouragement if the support in writing could be translated into real practical and financial support to back the work of organisations like Climate Hub and others who are working so hard to engage with our communities and to help deliver a more positive future.

For example, funding to put on large events such as the proposed Big Bath screening of the Peoples Emergency Briefing - how is this to be paid for ?
Funding to support VCS led engagement to raise awareness, to train facilitators for climate cafes to support people experiencing climate anxiety, to support networking and to offer some relief from the constant struggle to raise funds to do what is recognised in this strategy as urgent work.

We therefore encourage the council to be imaginative and innovative in developing new ways to bring funding to a strong climate and nature strategy - e.g. green bonds as

developed elsewhere to support green infrastructure, and setting up funds for green growth in the VCS in partnership with other anchor institutions for a start.

Members are very welcome to visit us in Bath bus station to find out about what we do and the many other VCS working in this sector.

Thank you