

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee – 3 November 2022

Agenda Item 4 – Public Questions

1. Buckingham Town Council notes that there is no mention of provision of EV charging points for visitors to residential areas. Would it be possible include in the Action Plan the requirement that developers install (commercial) EV charging apparatus in at least two 'visitor' parking spaces on new developments, at the developer's expense (via condition or S106 depending on the size of the development)? All new cars will have to be electric in 7 years, and the Action Plan will be in force for 5 of these. It is unreasonable to expect a resident to pay for the charging of a guest's car or tradesman's vehicle on their domestic connection.

- Mark Cole

2. I welcome the update report and the Council's continued commitment to address climate change. My question relates specifically to the work carried out towards Action 42: "Improve infrastructure for active travel (such as walking and cycling) and electric vehicles". The progress reported is to be welcomed but, as far as active travel is concerned, it is exceptionally modest compared with the ambitions referred to in previous strategies. The Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan, for example, contains the following ambitions:

'In 2033 people choose to walk, cycle, or use public transport for everyday journeys within Aylesbury, because it is easy to navigate and has an integrated and inclusive transport system. Residents benefit from active lifestyles and streets are people-friendly places. By 2050 at least 50% of trips originating in the Garden Town will be made by sustainable modes.

A web of green and blue infrastructure provides the 'garden' in Garden Town. As a result of the Garden Town project, Aylesbury's communities are better connected to the countryside and the Chiltern Hills. The town's waterways have been revealed and naturalised, streets are greener and outdoor spaces are more accessible, biodiverse and active.'

As someone who cycles nearly every day, both within Aylesbury and to nearby destinations such as Wendover and Haddenham, I have to say that, apart from the Haydon Hill extension, there is no evidence that provision for "active travel" is improving. On the contrary, paths are increasingly taken over by vegetation and the surfaces are breaking up, the signage for Aylesbury's Gemstones cycle routes is deteriorating badly, the 20mph scheme in Thame Road, Haddenham – introduced during the short-lived wave of enthusiasm for active travel during the pandemic – has been abandoned, and no progress has been made in creating the Haddenham station to Thame greenway despite years of promises and thousands of pounds wasted on studies by organisations such as Sustrans. Compared to the vast resources poured into projects such as the South-East Aylesbury Link Road, it is clear that active travel remains a very low priority within the Council. What resources does the Council make available to

ensuring that “active travel” really does become a strategic priority (in the jargon, bringing about a “step change”) and when can a detailed, comprehensive review of all “active travel” requirements, including maintenance, be made available to the Select Committee and to the general public?

- Colin Bloxham

3. It is great to see the introduction of new walking and cycling infrastructure around the county as part of your efforts to tackle climate change, but will this be backed up with a well-funded, consistent and high-profile campaign to promote the benefits of active travel, along with monitoring to assess the increase in uptake?

- Alan Thawley

4. Just this summer, a school in Wendover, which was the subject of a Feasibility Study into decarbonisation and electrification of heat, which was being done in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council, had its gas boilers replaced with gas boilers. How can Councillors and management in the Council help Property and Estates teams to change policy and practice more quickly so that this doesn't happen again as it is in direct contradiction to stated Council policy on climate change?

- Kirsty Shanahan