

Environment and Sustainability Committee – 28th May 2020

Public Questions

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question/Subject
1.	Ms Marilyn Smith, Chair ARERA	Environment and Sustainability Committee.	<p>Dear Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Policy and Service Committee,</p> <p>I write as Chair of Arbury Road Residents Association. During the seven weeks of Lockdown, many residents came to appreciate fresher air and reduced noise as a result of the drastically reduced traffic on the road. But now as the traffic has gradually increased over the past three weeks, a marked change has occurred already in both noise and traffic fumes. While both walking and cycling more within the community itself for essentials, we have become also acutely aware of the strong smell of diesel. This is a particular concern for children using the street to walk/cycle to and from schools and the shops, as well as residents' children who have to live with it daily.</p> <p>We normally have severe congestion on a daily basis on this narrow part of Arbury Road where there are no cycle lanes. So children in prams and on cycles are a particular concern too. Havenfield, a sheltered elderly facility is on this narrow stretch and many residents are afraid to walk to the shops nearby because of the congestion.</p> <p>The Climate Change and Environmental Strategy section 5,4.2 says that the Council is planning to tackle the problem of air pollution. Now the problem is more urgent than ever because of the pandemic. Scientists have shown a link between air pollution and virus transmission, and we are concerned things will become worse.</p> <p>Our families need to be able to safely breathe when we go outside for essentials, exercise, work or school. So we ask how the Committee intends to protect and improve the air quality on Arbury Road for the residents, as well as those local businesses on the road. We feel this is now a matter of great urgency for our well being.</p> <p>Yours Faithfully,</p>

			Marilyn Smith Chair ARERA.
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	Response from:	Response to:	
1.	Cllr Joshua Schumann (Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee)	Ms Marilyn Smith, Chair ARERA	<p>An Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) 2018-2023 for Cambridge was originally published in 2018 and subsequently updated in March 2019. Cambridgeshire County Council and Public Health both inputted to the development of the strategy and its implementation. Here is a link to the AQMP https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/3451/air-quality-action-plan-2018.pdf</p> <p>There are 7 main areas for action including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce emissions from Taxis by requiring low emission taxis 2. Reduce emissions from Buses and Coaches 3. Reduce emissions from HGVs 4. Reduce emissions from all traffic/other traffic by providing better public transport 5. Maintaining Low Emissions through the planning process and long-term planning 6. Improving Public Health 7. Leading By Example <p>In support of these main areas for action, Cambridgeshire County Council is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering the following cycle schemes across Cambridge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brooklands Avenue – New cycle marking for shared use path ○ Rustat Road – Widening gated access to enable cyclist easier access ○ Maids Causeway – Cambridge – parallel crossing. ○ Oxford/Windsor Rd – Cambridge – enhance traffic calming with cycling friendly measures. ○ Storeys Way – Cambridge – redesign traffic control measures to improve cycling links. ○ Barton Rd – Cambridge – Improve ped/cyclist crossing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an immediate response to the Covid 19 crisis, a number of pop up cycle lanes will

be delivered starting this week, to increase safety and uptake of cycling:

- Shelford Road;
- Milton High Street;
- Girton Road, Girton,
- Chesterton Road;
- Kings Hedges Road;
- Trumpington Road
- Trumpington Street;

In addition, the Council is:

- Looking to agree a new policy in July 2020 for additional tree planting on the Highways, working to a 2 for 1 replacement where trees are removed.
- Progressing plans to allow two wheelers and electric cars to use bus lanes to encourage clean vehicles.
- Working with the Greater Cambridge Partnership to trial electric buses ahead of closing access to bus lanes for non- electric buses after 2021
- Looking to work with schools to plant trees from October when schools are re-opened as part of a project called Rooting for the Future.

I hope you will see from the actions that this council has and continues to take we are making significant changes and commitments to tackle what we believe is an important issue. Thank you for highlighting your particular concerns and we will continue to monitor and evaluate the changes that we are making to improve the air quality at this location and throughout the county.

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2.	Ms Nicola Elliott	Environment and Sustainability Committee.	On behalf of the Cambridge Green Party, I would like to raise questions about biodegradable packaging waste management. In response to an FOI request, it has been revealed that the composting facility at the Waterbeach Waste Management Park cannot compost biodegradable plastic packaging and this is sent to landfill instead. What steps are being taken to address this lack? In the post-COVID-19 world we will need to urgently address environmental issues and as more businesses switch to 'biodegradable' or 'compostable' packaging, it will be vital that waste management develops to be able to process this waste, otherwise the efforts of businesses and individuals are diminished.
	Response from:	Response to:	
2.	Cllr Joshua Schumann (Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee)	Ms Nicola Elliott	<p>Resident must not put Biodegradable plastics into their green waste bins, as it is impossible for collection crews to differentiate between biodegradable and non-biodegradable plastics and the bin will not be collected. Even if the plastics are EN13432 certified or display the compostable seedling logo, they do not compost quickly enough to completely break down in our In Vessel Composting process.</p> <p>The compost material that is produced from the In Vessel Composting process has to be tested in order to meet the The British Standards Institution's Publically Available Specification 100 (PAS 100) composting standard. If the tests show that the composted material contains more plastic than the standard permits the whole batch is considered not fit for purpose and cannot be used as a certified compost. If the compost produced repeatedly fails the test the accreditation for the Waterbeach In Vessel Composting facility will be lost.</p> <p>We ask residents to put biodegradable plastics into their general waste "black bin" as this waste is processed through a Mechanical Biological Treatment facility where the waste also goes through a composting process before the product is landfilled. Even though the biodegradable plastics will not completely decompose in the Mechanical Biological Treatment composting hall their mass will be reduced before landfilling.</p> <p>Our District and City councils request residents not to place biodegradable plastics into their mixed dry recycling "blue bin" as the sorting machinery at the Materials Recycling</p>

			<p>Facility only selects recyclable plastics (e.g. PET & HDPE) so biodegradable plastics will end up in the rejected materials that are then sent to an energy recovery facility.</p> <p>Links to videos showing what happens in the In Vessel Composting and Materials Recycling Facility processes are available on the RECAP waste partnership website (https://www.recap.co.uk/what-happens-to-waste)</p> <p>The Government's Environment Bill introduces a series of measures that will fundamentally change the way government, businesses and individuals produce and consume products. New government powers will set resource-efficiency standards for products that will help drive a shift in the market towards products that can be more easily recycled, as well as products that last longer and which can be re-used and repaired more easily.</p> <p>Consultations are in progress on measures such as a plastic packaging tax, deposit return scheme and consistency in the materials that are collected for recycling. The proposed extended producer responsibility scheme will seek to make producers responsible for the full net costs of managing their products at end of life. The Bill will help move our economy away from the 'take, make, use, throw' system to a more circular economic model.</p>
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3.	Ms Susan Wells	Environment and Sustainability Committee.	<p>On behalf of the Green Party, I would like to ask the question:</p> <p>"The County Council Updated Draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy acknowledges that 'The demand for water resources to support growth could place our region's natural capital at risk.', and that "By the 2050s, there is predicted to be a shortfall of 5-17% in the amount of water required to meet demand". Our valuable chalk streams, a key part of Cambridgeshire's natural capital, are directly threatened by over abstraction. Last year, there were major reductions in flow with some streams drying up. Even after a wet winter the flow in the Cam lags behind that of other rivers in the UK. The strategy only promises to work with other bodies to 'consider suitable actions to manage this risk' whilst the evidence points to an urgent need for action to dramatically reduce abstraction and develop new approaches, many of which are being used in other parts of the world. How will the Environment and Sustainability Committee address this issue and will the Council give a timetable and commit to implementing recommendations?"</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	
3.	Cllr Joshua Schumann (Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee)	Ms Susan Wells	<p>This is a national, regional and local priority that Water and Sewage Companies and the Environment Agency are tasked with working on. Our partners are already working hard to manage water resources whilst protecting natural capital and enhancing environmental benefits. Cambridge Water's 2020-2045 Water Resource Management Plan (https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/our-water-resources-management-plan) sets out plans to meet water demands for growth for the next 25 years through optimising supplies, demand management and leakage reduction. The water company has amended their chalk aquifer abstraction licences so that more water remains in the environment during periods of low rainfall. In addition, our water companies are committed to working with councils and developers to support and incentivise water efficiency in new developments. Further questions on the WRMP will need to be directed to Cambridge Water.</p> <p>Water Resources East (a multi-organisation water resource partnership) is working on a regional water resource management plan, which will be reflected in Cambridge Water</p>

			<p>and Anglian Water's 2023 update to the Water Resource Management Plans. These plans will consider opportunities to deliver enhanced environmental outcomes, such as restoring flows in Chalk streams. We intend to work closely with its partners and this year we are seeking to establish a project for the River Granta with Water Resources East to try and deliver local improvements. The project brief is currently being prepared by the partnership and project timescales have not yet been set. The council's aim is ensure that the project delivers benefits for nature and has a clear understanding of the impacts of the intended future increase in river and groundwater levels on flood risk. Our role in the project will also involve supporting local engagement and seeking to understand how to maximise the natural capital/multi-benefits of future schemes.</p>
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