

Climate Action Plan, Climate Conversation Meeting (Penrith Town Hall), 24.10.23.

Giles Archibald (GA, LD, Climate Change and Biodiversity Portfolio Holder): There are 3 green gases : CO₂, NO₂ and methane. Emissions of these continue to rise. The Paris Agreement put the limit of temperature increase to 1.5 centigrade. We have already had a 1.1 degree increase. We will need to have a dramatic reduction in green house gases but the emissions are predicted to continue to rise.

We have already seen the consequences : more rain in the UK, forest fires, droughts etc. Unless we do something drastic, things will get a lot worse. We are on a pathway to Greenland melting. Freshwater sources will get polluted and the Coral Reef will die. We can be part of the solution.

Tim Gale (TG, Zero Carbon Cumbria): We need to understand where these emissions are coming from. He discussed Cumbrian residents' carbon footprint. 6.8 million tons are released by Cumbrian residents per year: 20%: from fuel for transport, domestic food (?cooking), services: 25%. Visitors to Cumbria: vehicle fuel: 50%, flights: 30%. Cumbrian residents have a higher emissions rate than other areas: Cumbria: 13.6 tons CO₂ per year compared to the average for the UK: 12.4. This is due to higher vehicle fuel use and household fuel.

Cumbria Action for Sustainability(CAfS) and other groups are working up a carbon reduction plan to net zero by 2037. There is a zerocumbria.co.uk website. CAfS is a key partner and has had funding from the National Lottery.

GA: The solution is pretty straightforward: energy from the sun and wind. We (WAFC) have to look at our estate: buildings and transport. We will have to see how much it costs. Our emissions are well below 5% of the emissions for the area. We would like to be a beacon for change. All our policies will consider climate change. We have committed to a large solar farm in the Barrow area. We will commit £900k to climate and nature schemes. £4 million will be spent on EV charging points and this will be focused on residents (EV chargers in housing estates, I presume). We will plant a tree for every resident. We want to encourage people back onto buses by supporting public transport.

V Taylor (VT, LD Councillor): Voreda House (the new Eden area headquarters) is having a low carbon retrofit, one of the first of its kind in the country. Eden Locality Board have a very limited budget. It is the political will that is preventing us from doing more. The government was quite wrong to go back on the commitment on reducing climate change. Housing is one of the keys. We are leading on schemes to retrofit houses. A well insulated house saves money. We can attract people by providing well-paid jobs as retrofitters.

Questions from the Audience:

1. Asked whether the target (for green house gases reduction) was scope 1,2 or 3 (the 3 different scopes are to do with the source of the emissions, eg scope 3 includes those released by contractors employed by WAFC).

GA: That will have to be discussed.

2. Asked about Pension Schemes (as to whether they were ethical and were not involved with companies that increase green house gases).

Answer: Fossil fuels are a dying technology. The shares involved in this will plummet. We will not be continuing to invest in fossil fuels.

3. Asked about Housing and the lack of Sustainable Equipment on Housing Developments (Solar Panels, Heat Pumps etc)

VT: It has been established that developers have a right to their profit. They can argue that they cannot afford to install solar panels. If the Planning Committee opposes the development, the

developers appeal and they usually win. The profits that these developers make are absolutely outrageous. It is very frustrating. If housing continues to be seen as a very good way of making yourself very rich, we will continue to be locked into a pernicious system. With our Local Plan, we would want affordable housing to increase.

Audience member: The Lake District National Park has adopted a very high level of zero carbon requirements (on new housing).

Judith Derbyshire (JD, LD, Housing Portfolio): Unless the government stipulates that there is a high standard, we are being constantly pushed back.

J Murray (JM, LD, Chair of Eden Locality Board): Discussed the Locality Board. We haven't got much money : £250k for sustainable transport of which £20k has been assigned for Community Transport. He discussed his fellow Conservative councillor for his area and read an extract from The Cumberland and Westmorland Herald where the councillor described Net Zero as an obsession of WAFC.

4. Asked about Hydro-Power (we have a lot of it)

GA: In Norway, 99% of their sustainable energy is from water. He said this will be looked into.