

**PUBLIC QUESTION RECEIVED for Place Scrutiny Committee – 18 June 2019  
from Bridget Walton**

**Question**

Given the declared emergency and the need to make real progress without further delay, will the scrutiny committee stipulate a date by which the Zero Carbon Mandate Group (now the carbon-neutral mandate group) should report with firm, actionable and appropriately timetabled actions to achieve the declared aims in all sectors?

**Response made by** Councillor Sutton, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Climate & Culture (italics).

*The Carbon Neutral Mandate Group was a critical part of the recommendations that were set out. We want to ensure that a group is created to validate, challenge and endorse the roadmap produced through Exeter City Futures. This Group will hold the city (collectively) to account and ensure that the outcomes that we aim for are right for our residents and businesses as well as addressing the challenges of climate change at the pace needed.*

*The Carbon Neutral Mandate Group will be convened by Exeter City Futures, Community Interest Group and will likely include Exeter's global expertise in climate science from the MET Office and University of Exeter, Key Politicians (the Leader and also her role as the Portfolio Holder for Climate & Culture) and other key stakeholders from the wider community e.g. but not exclusively youth, faith, and activist groups.*

*We recognise the urgency required and do not intend to delay the mobilisation of this Group. However, it was important to take note of the wider regional activities and ensure that we define the terms of reference of this Group so that it adds value to and aligns with other emerging regional initiatives, such as the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, and the proposed Citizens Assembly.*

*Once the terms of reference have been set then we will be able to be clear about the reporting mechanisms of the Carbon Neutral Mandate Group.*

*We do have a choice to make about whether to wait until the regional groups are established or whether to push on and then seek engagement at a later stage to ensure alignment. Exeter City Council is committed to delivering a carbon-neutral City and believe that we can act as an exemplar to the wider region of what can be achieved.*

*Work has already commenced on the preparation of the baseline status report as outlined in the recommendations and a significant amount of analysis of the types of outcomes we will need to include in the roadmap has been done. From this we will be able to understand the technical, financial, political and behavioural challenges that need to be addressed to achieve carbon-neutrality.*

Bridget Walton responded to the reply and wished to draw Members' attention to the lack of a definition relating to carbon neutral and referred to the IPCC report which offered a definition, and she suggested that a correction be made in the report. She commented on the lamentable progress over the last three years and was concerned that Exeter City Futures and Exeter City Council had not defined the baseline for Carbon Emissions. She also commented on the reliance in the report of the 12 goals

some of which could increase admissions. She wished to ensure that Exeter City Futures does not become a green fig leaf to cover little or grossly inadequate action by the Council.

She said that Councillors had acknowledged that they faced a crisis, but must now also deliver change and be ready to make difficult decisions and be bold and decisive to find ways to make change happen urgently. She asked that they not be tempted to wait for new technology and solutions for the problems we face now, but consider simple things like insulating homes, and as a planning authority the new housing being built presented the ideal opportunity. It also related to public transport and cycling, moving away from the single occupancy car alongside all of the issues relating to fossil free fuel. She stated that these things overlapped with Exeter's need to address congestion and pollution and inactivity and were a win for the city to go on and deliver. She invited this to be done with the urgency that the climate emergency which you have declared, demands. She ended by stating that our children and grandchildren would need to live in this world that we leave them, and we should act to leave them a sustainable and healthy world.