

## **To Val Oldaker – Friends of the Earth**

Thanks for your letter and enclosure. You ask for my response to 4 questions. The reply which follows comprises some personal views and actions along with comments on the Labour Groups stance.

### **Question 1**

I chaired the Council's joint task and finish group on climate change. This comprised members of the Economy and Environment Panel (which I chair) and the Corporate Support Services Panel (chaired by Labour Group deputy leader, Phil Box).

The Group began working to review the Council's own responses to climate change but, at my insistence, widened it's brief to include the wider community within its remit.

The final report, which was accepted by the Cabinet and hence, is in place for the new council and can be found here:

<http://alanmosley.co.uk/5.html>

We stand by the plan as representing a significant step forward in thinking and actions for the new council. However, there are inevitable compromises and we would have wished to secure additional resources for mitigation and adaptation, along with greater investment in education, advisory services and community based initiatives. We will be forceful in seeking this within the new council's budgeting and prioritisation processes.

### **Question 2**

Yes we do believe that climate change should in the list of the Council's top ten priorities.

We did try to ensure that this was the case and I, on behalf of my group, proposed a change in the draft Corporate Plan. This would have had to effect of putting climate change at the very top of the Council's list of priorities: one of 7 identified.

The amendment was lost at the meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. Details of the amendment and the recoded votes of those present can be found here:

<http://alanmosley.co.uk/5.html>

You may wish to compare the voting record of those at the meeting with their comments in response to these questions, where they are standing as candidates.

A 'keynote' in our manifesto states, "Climate change is happening and we must make it a top priority to reduce Shropshire's impact and adapt to it: for our young people and their children.

We hope that all will join us in continuing to press for a change of priority. We will seek change when the Plan returns following consultation.

### **Question 3**

The Climate change report identifies countywide and community based efforts to raise awareness. Clearly, making things as easy as possible for people to play their part is vital.

It also identifies how awareness will be raised within the council so that each and every decision must be evaluated against climate change implications.

In this the Council must act as a champion and exemplar at all times and where it is not doing so it must be taken to task.

For example, we recently found that there had been a change in the procurement of energy away from renewable sources. Clearly, some value for money criteria had been applied by officers to override the newly adopted Sustainable Procurement Strategy. There was no democratic control of this. I questioned the relevant cabinet member about this and he knew nothing. The panel I chair strongly objected to the change and I took the matter up with senior officers. The Council is again purchasing from renewable sources!

In my capacity as Scrutiny chair, I was very pleased to be able to provide a forward to the FoE's local 'Green Guide', this year. This sort of grass roots, community based initiative must be encouraged. The solution is local not just through central organisation efforts.

Clearly, playgroups, schools, voluntary organisations, businesses and community venues, such as pubs, all have a part to play in helping to ensure that environmental issues are consistently explained and discussed. We believe that greater emphasis on community based initiatives will be particularly fruitful.

### **Question 4**

It was the Panel I chair which proposed the changes which led to the creation of the Shropshire Link bus service and Group members have been at the forefront of overseeing implementation.

Whilst believing that a thorough review of school funding is necessary we also recognise the importance of schools in the sustainability of some rural communities. We will take this into account in evaluating our response to the report of the Primary Schools Commission.

We strongly supported local joint working arrangements within the unitary business case and now their implementation. We trust that these will develop to have a substantial role in local action planning and substantial inputs in representing the needs of the communities they serve.

We await with interest the results of consultation on Sustainable Communities and the consequent feed into the LDF. Indeed, we will be seeking to incorporate the general thrust behind your question into all elements of the LDF. Efforts which encourage sustainable rural economic development, particularly so-called green businesses, and minimise the environmental impact of work/home travel, will be supported.

Supporting and sustaining communities and their levels of service is not only a rural issue since employment, shops, post offices and other services have declined in many

more urban settings. This causes hardship and increase the need to travel while undermining valuable community coherence. We have fought such trends, where possible, and will continue to do so.

We strongly support the Affordable Housing Strategy and the related planning policy and guidelines which relax some restrictions on the provision of exemption sites. This provides clear guidelines for the consequent development of affordable housing which will have a beneficial impact on the sustainability of some rural areas.

**Furthermore:**

You ask about views on the proposed incinerator. Mine are in line with our Manifesto keynote statement: - "We cannot see, based on available evidence, how an Incinerator for Shropshire will help our efforts to reduce waste or encourage recycling and the proposal may result in health hazards."

I would also just add that when I took over as chair of the E & E Panel I insisted, against opposition, that a representative of 'environmental interests' should be one of the two co-opted members. Hence, Dave Green's highly valued membership.

I have registered a similar comment in a submission on the planning application

**Alan Mosley**

Member for Castlefields and Ditherington  
Leader of the Labour Group