



<b>Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee</b>		Agenda Item
<b>11 March 2024</b>		<b>3</b>
Title:	Public Questions	
Public Report:	Yes	

**Question 1 – from Chris Pointon, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Climate Action Coalition**

To	Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Regarding agenda item 8 - Climate Action Plan Review:</p> <p>We understand there is £1m unspent from the Net zero villages investment programme and £2.25m from the MTFP to spend by March 2025 - the period covered by this plan. The main changes to the plan seem to be reducing its ambition and pushing out deliverable dates.</p> <p>We note the following items have new delivery dates of March 2025:</p> <p>WS 1.3: By Oct 2022 collectively build local capacity and capability to assemble suitable projects ready for these opportunities. Build up project pipeline.</p> <p>WS 2.2: By July 2022 set up a fund for small scale community projects to access to build local momentum and awareness 'Net zero villages investment programme'.</p> <p>WS 2.1 sets out a revised engagement plan including "COP input" and an "information website". These outcomes show a distinct lack of ambition for "collectively building local capacity and capability". There is no mention of space being opened up for listening to the community, convening stakeholders, supporting initiatives, providing training and resources. Without this it is hard to see where the WS1.3 "project pipeline" is going to come from to enable impactful deployment of the available funds.</p> <p>What will be done differently in the next 12 months that hasn't been done in the past two years that will mean WS 1.3 and WS 2.2 can now be delivered?</p> <p>Thank you, Mr Pointon, for your question. You raise some of the same questions that we as members of this Committee have raised in the past and will be raising again today.</p> <p>On the Net Zero Villages investment Program I am expecting us to have some debate on that today that will hopefully give you some confidence in the acceleration of this and the fact that none of us like money sitting in the bank that actually should be being spent on, and benefiting, our communities. We are working very closely with all the partner councils and there is some very interesting emerging work coming up out of the Oxford Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership as well. I think it is important that as a Combined Authority we work in partnership both with our own members but also on a wider level, particularly through the Pan Regional Partnership.</p> <p>You also made comment that you feel there is a lack of ambition, but I would like to reassure you that there isn't a lack of ambition in this room, and I hope that the refresh that we're going to be doing of the Climate Action Plan and the additional funding programme to 2028, convinces you of that. We are actually becoming more ambitious rather than less ambitious and will have significant wide-ranging engagement with partners to achieve our shared ambitions.</p>

The whole political agenda on climate is quite difficult at the moment and we need clarification about this government or the next government's intentions regarding Net Zero and, very critically, biodiversity net gain which we have seen some rowback on recently and which does not align with our own ambition. We have already stated that our intention is to double nature in recognition of the natural capital deficit in this area. In our plans for a rapid and ambitious review of the Climate Action Plan you will see that we are proposing allocating funding to Natural Cambridge who is our key partner in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. In addition, we have made significant progress on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and a move to more decarbonization of the public transport fleet and getting cars off the off roads, all of which should have a serious impact on reducing carbon emissions.