



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr David Worden
North Devon Council
Brynsworthy Environment Centre
Brynsworthy
North Devon
EX31 3NS

26 January 2021

Our Ref: SS11047

Re: Council Motion and the CEE Bill

I am disappointed to see North Devon Council wasting valuable council time in accepting, let alone approving the recent motion from Cllr Pearson to me to support a Private Members' Bill in second reading.

The Bill in question sponsored by Green MP, Caroline Lucas, will not receive Government support. This Government is doing an exceptional amount to support our environment; to put biodiversity and the race to net zero at the heart of its plan to build back better.

North Devon Council under your leadership should be concentrating on what it can do to help the Government achieve these goals. Having declared a climate emergency they are, after all, your goals as well.

I welcome North Devon Council's commitment to the Devon Carbon Plan, working with Devon County Council and other district councils to look what we in Devon can do. Regional data, however, shows we are already lagging behind many cities in making strides towards net zero.

For my part I am working with a Cornish company to bring a green hydrogen production plant to North Devon, as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Wood Panels I am working with the industry to make them sustainable and in Norbord's case, not just net zero, but net negative. I have been pushing the Local Enterprise Partnership to be more ambitious with their own green energy agenda and have formed and now Chair the Celtic Sea APPG to work either side of the Bristol Channel and beyond on multiple projects including Floating Offshore Wind Turbines. I am Chair of the Broadband APPG, working with Openreach and others to bring digital connectivity to rural North Devon and beyond so that we can all work closer to home.

I remain disappointed at the lack of leadership in this critical area.

For example why have plans not been put forward to make council buildings net zero?

Where is the council on encouraging and maybe even financially supporting local businesses to become registered to administer the Green Homes Grant?

In the recent Barnstaple Vision, once again the new cycle and foot bridge over the Taw is discussed. Will the council now commit resources to develop a shovel ready scheme ready for us to apply to the raft of Government funding that is on the horizon?

I am helping with the proposal for the Taw Link, a sustainable, environmentally friendly tourism led transport solution between Braunton and Barnstaple, a project that we need to push now while the Department of Transport are keen, but the Council have yet to commit resources to submit the bid.

My door is always open to hear your thoughts about national issues, however, as a Council you have a duty to provide local plans and discussion that will see North Devon building back better as we move to net zero.

In asking me to support this Bill I worry that you are wasting valuable Council Chamber time when you should be acting.

I will not be supporting the CEE Bill, I have stated this on my website and Cllr Pearson is well aware of this. Private Members' Bills and sitting Fridays have also been withdrawn for the time being due to the current lockdown so this Bill's second reading is not even happening. The last time you contacted me about supporting motions on the Agriculture Bill, a Bill that had already been approved.

The only reason that we can see that this motion was put forward is so that some councillors, when standing for County Council, can cite this motion, and their support of it, for their own election campaign.

I do not believe that this is what North Devon Council meetings should be used for and am even more disappointed that they are then promoted by the communications team after the event, and hope the publicity code will be rigorously adhered to moving forward.

Yours sincerely

Selaine Saxby
MP for North Devon