

Statement to WECA Committee meeting - agenda item 5: Motion - Climate Change Emergency - Councillor Clive Stevens, Clifton Down, Bristol

“Dear Mayors and Council Leaders

Unfortunately I cannot be with you today to read this out, on a day of such good news too.

I am delighted to read that you will be declaring a climate emergency. And only a month after your Overview and Scrutiny Commission, incidentally chaired by my Green colleague Stephen Clarke, recommended you do so. Also, coincidentally, a month after I and my fellow Bristol Councillors Carla Denyer and Martin Fodor urged you to do so too. And I see South Glos have declared one. That is extremely quick work certainly befitting of an emergency.

I am now wondering which of your policies you will urgently review following your declaration.

Perhaps it will be the Joint Transport Plan which I understand still predicts absolute numbers of car journeys to stay the same even by the end of its time period. And if those journeys are to be by drivers and passengers in electric vehicles what are you going to do to incentivise the switch across and put in the necessary infrastructure.

Or perhaps the first one you will look at will be the West of England Energy Strategy which was deemed so short on detail or action just a few months ago, despite the expensive studies with all their recommendations. That of course was before the latest round of local elections. It was the Joint Committee meeting delayed by the snow when the then Leader of North Somerset Council took exception to my statement about demonstrating good leadership. I realise that Councillor Nigel Ashton might well be back one day so will keep further thoughts to myself.

Or perhaps it will be the seemingly blind support for Bristol Airport expansion.

Maybe you will choose something else to tackle first. But one thing’s for sure, once you have declared an emergency you will need to act like there is an emergency.”

Thank you - Councillor Clive Stevens (Bristol - Clifton Down)