

Statement from Cllr Joanna Wright

First of all I would like to thank Cllr Butters and Officers that I have worked with in the Transport portfolio.

We've delivered on: the JLTP4, the Clean Air Zone, Residents Parking Zones, Emissions Parking, City Centre Security, Modeshift Stars and the school run, 20mph zones, EV Charging, E-Scooters, the River Line, a Delivery Transport Action Plan for Bath, the Wiltshire Whippet, the A367, Mass Transit and Liveable Neighbourhoods. All these will have a legacy in the years to come. Officers have told me, that Neil and I have positively reframed their workplace and delivered on Climate Emergency action.

We are the last generation to be able to save the Earth from irreversible destruction.

Many think that being green is liking what David Attenborough says, or using your own shopping bag. It is not.

The climate emergency requires cultural change and system change.

The Climate emergency means action today.

On an average day ANPR data shows that approximately 4000 cars make a return journey up the 3 roads that connect Bath with the area around the University of Bath. These return trips, roughly 4km per car, would require 81,120 trees planted to off-set their carbon emissions. Sequestering carbon from newly planted trees takes 2 decades to make an impact.

The European Commission stated that "Older people will have to make sacrifices in the fight against climate change or today's children will face a future of fighting wars for water and food. This is not just an urgent matter, it is a difficult matter."

This "difficult matter" is one that I have repeatedly faced in office.

The Active Travel Schemes are a clear case in point, these simple yet transformative schemes enable safe travel routes for many, significantly reducing carbon emissions and tackling car dependency, yet I have been told recently that despite massive public support I "need to dump the current plans".

In relation to the Transport portfolio many Cllrs only see as far as their ward boundaries and the election clock countdown. I have come up against parochial politics and predatory delay. The need to act now, to deliver significant change has been met with slow motion sabotage. I have been told repeatedly that winning the war, means some battles have to be lost.

What we have is rhetoric versus action. Window dressing versus real change.

Political power is about doing things, not just for the present, or to be re-elected, but more importantly for those in the future who will benefit from the really tough decisions that we made for them now.

Many people sitting outside of this theatrical talking shop, will be frustrated and sceptical about the actions and decision of those inside it. They have good reason to be.

Action today is required.