

URGENT

St Cuthbert's Out Parish Council, Wednesday 5th December 2018

Statement from Sustainable Wells regarding application for approval for the construction of 220 houses Ref 2018/2626 on the A371:

According to the latest report from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, published in October of this year, we have just 12 years to make massive and unprecedented changes to the global energy infrastructure to limit global warming to moderate levels.

From rising sea levels to more devastating droughts to more damaging storms, the report makes it brutally clear that warming will make the world worse for all of us in the forms of famine, disease, economic tolls, and refugee crises.

As expected, the IPCC report doesn't pull any punches: Staying at or below 1.5°C warming, requires slashing global greenhouse gas emissions 45 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030, and reaching net zero by 2050.

So when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions, we can't just take our foot off the accelerator; we have to slam on the brakes.

Everything we do matters for the global climate, which in turn matters for us but the greatest difference would be to nature and we hear daily how the apocalypse has already started for wildlife.

As well as an emerging climate crisis, in the UK we have a chronic housing shortage and we do not oppose the plan to build more houses. However, households are responsible for over 20% of the UK's total climate emissions and since 2012 there has been a failure to maintain momentum to improve the overall energy efficiency of homes.

We are disappointed that there are no plans in the Resource Efficiency document, to include renewable energy on the site. Solar thermal in particular is much easier to fit during construction and is one of, if not the lowest carbon form of energy.

Furthermore, the Resource Efficiency document is not specific and does not list exact targets and uses the term "where possible" 6 times, potentially diluting the overall impact of planned energy efficiency measures. The Hackitt Review recently concluded that 'What is being designed is not what is being built' and went on to say that 'It is critical that stronger compliance and enforcement procedures, with heavy penalties where appropriate, extend beyond fire safety to building regulations and policy more widely.'

At every opportunity we must act to reduce carbon emissions and we demand that each new house is zero carbon, not where possible, but on every occasion and without fail. Specific targets must be stated and regularly monitored, to include data collection on cost and performance and learning disseminated with the public.

Building an average house to Zero Carbon standards is not expensive. The additional costs are estimated by those who know as being less than £5000 per house.

Mendip's Local District Plan stipulations under DP7 Design and Amenity of New Developments are not met by this application, which includes the requirement to maximise opportunities for renewable energy on site.

In addition, the authorities should ensure that the landscaping is appropriate, and that it is completed according to the agreed plan. Too often a developer fails to implement it, and the authorities never seem to ensure that they do. The housing development next to Morrisons is a good example of non compliance.

In conclusion, it is our view that the Resource Efficiency Statement is a green-wash of statutory and practical minimums rather than committing to do anything significant above and beyond.

We therefore urge the council to take up our proposal and recommend the MDC to only approve if all new builds are zero carbon and that they monitor and enforce accordingly.