

Response to Local Plan: 4 Economy Mark Hancock 17 Dec 22

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/media/ymnbgyn/4-economy.pdf>

General Comments

Where in the Plan is the Green Economy even mentioned let alone developed and encouraged?

Looking at LP through the lens of a Climate Emergency referenced at the start, the Economy should be transforming itself rapidly into a genuinely “Green Economy” but in 22 pages ‘green’ as an adjective is mentioned only once at the end of para 4.26, And then nothing is explained as to how green growth is defined or to be obtained.

Green Industry is possible and needed now.

We know we need to bring all homes up to the highest insulation standard and electrify heating. Where is the encouragement for this industry?

There is at least one example of a large green industry in the area employing many 100's of people locally in Vestas and GE and many small spin-offs today and it is still growing. It started locally in a garage at the back of a progressive civil engineering partnership 40 years ago.

The University has solar energy expertise and there are many with electronic firms – can we somehow attract an efficient solar industry to set up here (as we don't want to be dependent on China). Can we semi- guarantee a substantial local market? Electric and Hybrid ferries have a natural home here. Can we build on the proposed local ferry network?

Avoid Supporting fundamentally Unsustainable Industries

As a principle we shouldn't be building our economy on unsustainable industries, really ‘building our house on sand’. It's difficult to hear for Southampton but:-

- The Cruise Liner Industry is very unlikely to be other than a very high impact activity both in GHG emissions and effects local to port, and needless to say it's not vital to the world. How many years will it be until that is generally recognised and severely curtailed? ‘Estimates from Nabu put the average fuel usage of each of these ships at 150 tons of fuel a day, which releases as much particulate matter into the air as about 1 million automobiles each day’. **One billion** gallons of sewage dumps into the ocean each year from cruise ships. Because of AQ and sewage applications for dedicated cruise terminals are being refused by powerful cities eg London & Sydney.
- Air travel is also nowhere near a sustainable transport solution, also has a very high climate impact per passenger and most of the damage is done by a minority of wealthy users. The majority of flights are again optional and not supporting any business but the polluting industry itself
- P75 Section 5 Infrastructure Policy IN1 (S) 1), envisages much more retail space. How does this chime with a necessary circular economy, in para 1.16 ‘to conserve resources’? Online shopping has already hit the old retail model hard.
- Section 6 Environment Para 6.8, Hydrogen economy P131 generally is a mirage, and will almost certainly be ‘found out’ in years to come for

fundamental physics reasons. Generating hydrogen loses much energy in conversion, loses more when burnt in an IC engine or fuel cell. It compares very poorly with making electricity from the grid and using it directly in highly efficient electric motors. (Batteries, also relatively efficient, are improving steadily). Hydrogen is not transportable in the existing gas grids except in small percentage concentrations. It would occupy half the passenger volume on a medium haul jet so does not really work well for aircraft. It is not a solution to the Climate emergency.

- I am also very concerned by the influence of the recently formed 'Solent Cluster' including Exxonmobil and their ideas on hydrogen and Carbon Capture which is for them business as usual. It appears to ignore much faster and more proven technologies such as very clean wind and solar available today, conservation of energy at the point of use. We simply need to get off the deadly hook of fossil fuel use as fast as possible.

Detailed comments on Section 4: Economy

P56 Para 4.4 I welcome the recognition that home working is much more common and there is uncertainty in future use. Therefore, reuse and repurposing should be a consideration in accepting plans. Building structure needs to be durable long term & adaptable and not designed for a few decades. It is noted the number of shopping centre developments which have had a short life, for example East Street and the Bargate Centre, both built and demolished while I have lived here. This is particularly important for achieving Net Zero (see below)

P58 Key Policy Options. All Options envisage substantial development. How can development take place without a big hit on Net Zero? This seems to conflict with the statements on embodied energy in P236 Para 8.111 of Section 8: Development Principles.

As stated above there should be a policy mandate to use existing buildings first unless there is a compelling reason not to. A particular developer's profits is not a reason to proceed by demolition and new build. The Climate Emergency trumps that.

P65 The Port

P65 Para 4.26 Whilst I welcome paragraphs where there is recognition of the balance benefits and disbenefits between Port & local people I do not agree that a Freeport is beneficial to the city as there is a built-in democratic deficit. It makes it much harder to find the balance. A Port which was under democratic control can be more integrated and mutually beneficial. Citizens breathe the air if it is polluted by the Port's activities as noted in Para 4.35. It is not breathed by the owners of the Port living in the Middle east.

I therefore support Key option 1b on P67 more than 1a but it does not offer removing freeport status and bringing it under democratic control!

P65 Policy EC4 Granted that the port is important locally & nationally but the Council seem unduly servile in Policy EC4(S).

1. Why should the Council blankly agree to support the growth of the port when this is likely to conflict with the Climate Emergency. The test is not any growth but good – sustainable, net zero growth. Why not say – let's agree the right size for the Port – not just go for growth? Cancers also go for growth.

2. In what sense can road transport be improved sustainably, particularly when by BEIS figures it is the biggest source of greenhouse gases in Southampton? There need to be qualifications here to demonstrate that the Declaration of a Climate emergency is not just greenwashing words. Rail transport for goods and people and bus links for people are substantially less damaging.

P67 Para 4.32 brings up what sounds like an unfortunate philosophy of ‘Agent of Change’ which, if I understand it, means that if scientific knowledge changes, say on air quality or chemical pollution limits, that standards have to be tightened, established firms need not comply if they claim it makes their business less viable. That does not apply in industry generally to, say, Health and Safety Standards within business which are continually being updated for good reasons. As a non-specialist in planning (like most members of the public) I think this paragraph is poorly explained and I might have completely misinterpreted it. Please reword it so that it is accessible and more transparent for normal people.