

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 23 JULY 2020

Question to the Leader of the Council

By Charlotte Atkins

Question

What actions has the County Council taken to tackle climate change since it declared a Climate Emergency a year ago?

Reply

Since the County Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2020 the authority held an all member workshop to consider potential suitable actions which could form part of a future climate change action plan. All suggestions were considered by the newly formed All Party Climate Change Working Group with the aim of creating a prioritised list. Whilst this work has been temporarily paused due to Covid-19 activities I can confirm that we are looking to approve and publish the plan in the autumn. This will provide a framework to spend the £2.43m of resources that were approved in the current MTFs last February.

Whilst some elements of the climate change work have had to be temporarily paused as the Council responds to the Covid-19 pandemic, I am pleased to report that since declaring a Climate Change emergency a number of activities have still progressed:

- the local authority has switched to green electricity for buildings, street lighting and traffic signals;
- undertaken a full review of the authority's carbon baseline so we can track progress made since our carbon reduction strategy, Green Shoots, was published;
- supporting Engie to ensure the Rugeley site is as sustainable as possible and unlocking innovation;
- jointly commissioned a climate change study to support the refresh of local plans;
- started a review of possible locations for solar farms on county land;
- launched the Waste Savvy Staffordshire campaign;
- worked with SCVYS to capture the views of younger people for our Action Plan;
- ensured climate change is a golden thread of our Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy; and
- Restarted the Climate Change Working Group with its next meeting on 29th July to consider a comprehensive action plan of deliverable items which will be taken through Cabinet.

Work, of course, has continued on many fronts on the numerous activities that support a sustainable Staffordshire such as sustainable transport planning, active travel, building energy management and smart working to name a few.