

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2020

**Question to Cllr Wilson
Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**

By Cllr Robinson

Question

On Thursday 12th November the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee resolved a recommendation to ask the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture to look again at the consultation which has taken place in relation to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and reconsider whether it was sufficiently robust and inclusive, particularly regarding car parking proposals.

Many members of the public have been in contact with County Councillors to continue to raise their concerns about some of the proposals to significantly relocate parking to other areas. A main concern is the impact that these changes will have on disabled people and their carers.

Can the Cabinet Member please give an update on any progress she has made since the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee meeting in November and can she confirm what action she has taken to ensure all residents are given an opportunity to feed in their concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation?

Reply

Part of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation proposals to spend £7.8m on a 15-year conservation programme includes reducing the number of parking locations in the most sensitive areas of the Chase and increasing parking capacity where the flora and fauna are more robust. In the end, as well as managing recreational pressure, there would more parking capacity overall and 50 free parking locations across the Chase.

As well as those raising their concerns about aspects of the conservation proposals, the council has received correspondence from other people who wholeheartedly support the actions proposed. In relation to access for people with disabilities, we have made clear that access will remain available and should in fact improve. Proposed improvements to the car parks that will remain, and associated paths and tracks, are likely to make access easier. Parking for blue badge holders will continue to be free at SCC sites. As a county council, we are also investing in the repair of our all ability route at Brindley Heath.

Following discussions at Select Committee, I am considering how the proposals should be taken forward and discussing this with key partners and will report back to Select Committee in the new year.