

COUNCIL – 21 JULY 2021**QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC****Questions to Portfolio Holders**

(A) Question from Mr Jim Borchers

“I was a member of the Stevenage Citizens Panel on Climate Change that met over 4 sessions from 26th to 29th October 2020.

At the end of the process we requested that we be fully involved in future activities on Climate Change and be informed by Stevenage Borough Council on their progress towards introducing policies to address Climate Change.

We were asked if we wanted to join a WhatsApp group.

We were informed that there would be some information forthcoming in January 2021.

To date I have heard nothing.

It is also worth noting that the current website is still advising “**we will also be establishing a citizen’s panel made up of a select group of Stevenage residents**” with no recognition that this has already taken place.

It is now over two years since this Council declared a Climate Emergency, and it is over 8 months since the Citizens Panel met.

Please can the citizens of Stevenage have an update on the priorities that the Citizens Panel voted to be taken forwards and what progress has been made towards putting them into action?”

Answer (Cllr John Gardner):

Following the successful engagement at the early and later parts of last year; and the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy in September last year, the Council has been working at both local and county levels to identify how it can make changes to its own carbon footprint and empower its local residents and businesses to make changes themselves.

Over 1,600 people have had their say, and informed the Council’s Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

At the end of the Citizen’s Panel in 2020, the four conclusions and recommendations of the Panel were highlighted are being taking forward in the work SBC and HCC are doing. Members and officers are working on a formal update to Executive in September / October of this year to detail of the recommendations from the Panel, the work that has been done along with that we are proposing to do, as well as to flag some of the challenges that we collectively continue to face. The Council has an emerging Consultation & Collaboration plan which will include engagement with residents and businesses, youth groups and a Citizen Panel to help identify how encouraging behaviour change can contribute to what is a collective effort.

As part of this work the Council is updating its website and will add further information over the next few months.

I will be happy to meet to discuss this vital topic further.