

Questions for Executive Portfolio Holder for Deputy Leader, Culture, Leisure, Children and Young People regarding the Environment & Economy Select Committee Climate Emergency Scrutiny Review

1. What issues do you perceive to be the main challenges for the Council to address in the Council's Climate Change Strategy to meet Net Zero, and thinking of your Portfolio area:

- (i) what are the main challenges for the plans for the new leisure services contract for 2023? In developing a new leisure facility in Stevenage, as part of Stevenage Borough Council's regeneration goals, are you satisfied that the energy efficiency of the build, and other environment impact consideration (water use, the health food offer in associated food outlets), will be fully considered? Excepting that going forward, SBC has responsibility to be an exemplar in all areas of climate change mitigation and supporting healthy lifestyles. Are you satisfied that the procurement process for Leisure Services for services and goods, has sufficient rigour in highlight the desirability of contractors considering the environmental impact of their business models?

This is a really valid point and something the Programme Board has considered as part of the procurement process for the new leisure contract. We are currently part way through the procurement process but we have specifically invited bidders to consider investments into our leisure stock to mitigate climate change and energy consumption. This will be built into the appraisal of such bids. Alongside this the council has insisted that social value is scored at 10% and assessed through our own social value portal to assess additional value (social, economic and environmental) leveraged through the contract.

Regarding a new leisure facility, we are very keen to fully factor climate impact considerations into the full business case for a new leisure facility. We will be working on the wider business case in the coming months with our regeneration team and I look forward to championing such considerations.

- (ii) regarding culture is there a space for encouraging ideas about climate change in a creative way especially around engagement with local residents?

At a local neighbourhood level I know that this work is already happening through our Creative Schools Network with a number of local schools developing a number of exhibitions and art installations in relation to climate change. We can further facilitate this agenda through the way we utilise our new "Event Island" in our town centre. There will be opportunities for exhibitions and events which we could connect with wider climate change activities. We could also explore future museum programmes linking to climate heritage and sustainability. I'd be happy to explore these opportunities with local cultural partners.

- (iii) regarding Children and Young People what engagement have you been involved in or are aware of regarding young people and climate change? Also, regarding young people and engagement in "Green Issues", there seems to be a heavy reliance on schools to do the heavy lifting on this locally. What is the extent of "forest schools" in Stevenage? What are

other community players doing (Scouts, after school clubs, environmental groups) to engage young people on environmental issues?

We rightly expect the county council to fulfil its responsibility around services for children and young people, including through education, but we also recognise that other organisations in the town support children out of school time. We do not maintain a directory of specific climate change activities undertaken by others, but this is something we could raise with YC Herts. Our play centres have been accessed previously by local Schools wanting to develop Forest School offers. We also know that climate change is a priority focus for our Youth Council. I will be happy to ask the Youth Council and Youth Mayor to consider these issues and would welcome the opportunity for a joint debate in the future

- (iv) Do you feel that SBC is doing enough to ensure that “green” groups, charities, and other agencies are represented at Stevenage Day? Do we have, or are you considering a “climate zone” in future Stevenage Days, informing residents about lifestyle choices, that support climate change mitigation?

The Stevenage Day web page is updated at the start of each calendar year with details of the forthcoming year’s event and a signup form for groups wishing to get involved. <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/town-and-community/stevenage-day> We also maintain a mailing list of local organisations and will be happy to include new “green” groups as the develop. I am happy to explore the options of climate change zone

2. As an Executive Member of the Council do you think the issue yet has the priority it needs?

Clearly there are resource issues to contend with and I know that a number of officers across the council are contributing to this.

With the focus that Cllr Speller is devoting to this urgent matter and the engagement of other portfolio holders as well as the Youth Mayor and Youth Councils interest and input, I think, at the moment, the answer is yes.

3. More generally, what level of public engagement do you think the Council should have for this over the remainder of this decade?

It is absolutely right that we keep a dialogue going with our local communities around climate change. The situation will continue to evolve and we need to continue a joined up approach across portfolios to maximise the opportunities for the council to make a positive difference.

E&E Select Committee Members may have further supplementary questions for you at the meeting.