

NB If a person is not in attendance then their question will not be put unless they have nominated a representative.

Question 1) from Mike Hodgson

The climate emergency is the most urgent and important issue faced by citizens in this country and their representatives.

I am aware that a Climate Action Motion has already been passed by full council, and am concerned about the apparent lack of progress in putting things in place to progress this. I would like a response to the following questions in particular.

Could you please confirm which Cabinet member has been appointed to take responsibility for the delivery of zero carbon activity in Rutland?

Also, the motion committed to creating a Climate Change Partnership group, involving councillors, residents, young citizens, climate science and solutions experts, businesses and other relevant parties. Has this group been created, and- if so- could you please inform me of its membership? If not, could you please identify a date by which it will be created and how people can become involved?

Answer:

*Thank you for this question: it summarises a watershed moment in our time: a time whereby the actions of humans over the last 2 centuries have created extensive damage to the world in which we live, placing it in great jeopardy for future generations. To remind us of this, even in the midst of a pandemic, is crucial.*

*The Cabinet member responsible for Zero Carbon activity is me as the portfolio holder for Environmental Services. As you are aware, RCC passed a motion to address climate change with the aim of zero carbon emissions by 2050. Part of achieving that was to ensure that a 'One County' approach was taken by involving all the groups you mention in your question. At this point this group was established but unable to meet or progress due to the pandemic and simply not having sufficient resources to do so both within RCC and also the partner organisations. This is not to say that work on climate change has not been happening: all departments are aware and sensitive to ensuring that any work considers the impact on the climate and whether or not a different approach can be taken to mitigate against this.*

*You are absolutely right however, silo working will not achieve what we all want: zero carbon emissions by 2050. This can only be achieved with a holistic approach: an action plan that encompasses us all; forming the partnership is the first step on this journey. With that in mind, notwithstanding how this pandemic progresses, the action group will have had its first meeting by April 2021.*

Question 2 from Bridget Hodgson

As a resident of Rutland I would like the following questions to be asked.

In 2017 Edie a sustainability leaders forum, published a report which shows that Rutland 's carbon emissions per head are the highest in the country. Can the council account for this high level and what actions have been put in place since 2017 to reduce carbon emissions?

Currently 300/404 or 74% of District, County, Unitary and Metropolitan councils in Great Britain have declared a Climate Emergency. It is disappointing that Rutland has not yet done so, placing it in a diminishing minority of councils.

Given the urgency of this issue, when is Rutland County Council going to declare a Climate Emergency, to include:

- the words Climate Emergency
- a working group to report within a short timescale on immediate and longer term actions to be taken
- a plan to engage with a cross section of the community?

Answer:

*Again, thank you for this question. It drills into the detail of the first question and further highlights the challenges we face as a modern society.*

*You mention the data from 2017, I would also like to note that since 2005 Rutland, per capita has dropped from 42.3 kT CO<sub>2</sub> to 25.0; demonstrating that we are moving in the right direction; the scene has been set for significant progress to be made: we can and we will.*

*It is also pertinent to note that a significant amount of our carbon emissions come from industrial activity most notably Hanson Cement. If these emissions are removed, using subset data, the emissions for 2005 were 14.3 kT of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita reducing to 8.9 per kTCO<sub>2</sub> / per capita by 2017, which is much nearer the national average. To reassure you on the subject of carbon emissions from Hanson Cement: this business has set very aggressive targets to reduce their emissions including the use of energy produced from solar panels and using waste material, some of it from Rutland to produce the heat required in cement production.*

*Clearly we do not wish to ignore our per capita domestic carbon emission rates but it must be noted that we are the most sparsely populated county in the country; this comes at a cost, not just in terms of the fiscal cost of living but in terms of carbon emissions; this is not to say that we should not drive reduction of emissions, rather that we acknowledge the greater intensity of challenges we face. We will simply need to think bigger and better.*

*So since 2017 the actions that have been put in place: an increasing number of our reports contain a consideration of environmental impact, our draft Local Plan offers vision for an expectation to protect and enhance our natural environment, our Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny committee is completing its work on Bio Diversity, some initial engagement has taken place with local schools and the Youth Council, we are trialling an electric car in our pool of cars used for essential work by our staff; our car parks have electric charge points, our contractor delivers repairs to our highways network that are using new technologies to reduce carbon emission, for example by using products that require a lower temperature to be effective, our property services team are collecting baseline data across our property portfolio with the view of using 100% clean energy as soon as is practicable, the environmental impact assessment for the 4<sup>th</sup> Local Transport Plan is just about to go online, and we continue to work on Home Energy Conservation, to give a small snap shot of meaningful and carbon emission reducing activity.*

*Clearly, as alluded to in my answer to the first question, we need to join up and develop all of this work. This is not just an authority problem but one which each and every one of us must take responsibility for hence the commitment for the Climate Change Partnership group to meet and develop a cohesive action plan as outlined in the Climate Change motion.*

*I note that those authorities that have passed motions declaring a state of emergency site drawing up an action plan as the first crucial task; our Climate Change motion offered the*

*skeleton for this: actions are preferred to words. This work has been delayed by the pandemic; not in the sense of climate change being left fallow by individual departments as mentioned with examples of actions taken since 2017, but rather in the sense of joined up, holistic action. That is our next stage as outlined in my previous answer.*

*I thank you sincerely for your question and I look forward to having the opportunity to work with you and other likeminded residents over the coming months to deliver on our commitment to zero carbon emissions by 2050.*

**Question 3 from Ms Jennifer Blockley**

1) It is noted that the County Council appointed a young white male for the position of PM for the feasibility study. Could council members please comment on why the post was not advertised and clarify how a female candidate or a candidate of ethnic minority might have applied?

2) Could the Council members please clarify how the £50,000 of taxpayer's money will be allocated?

**Answer:**

*Thank you for your question Ms Blockley.*

*I do note that you have also provided to all Councillors a copy of your complaint and the reply that the Council has provided. You have also said that you intend to take this further. Both you and Councillors will be aware that this process includes an independent view from the Local Government Ombudsman and so I will not comment further until that process has concluded.*

**Question 4 from Ms Nurse (she has nominated Ms Jennifer Blockley to ask her question)**

Having allocated £50,000 of tax payer's money to a feasibility study to look into the viability of the setting up of a new radio station, how can the County Council justify this when an article in the Rutland Times states that a former presenter Jennifer Lee has been working on a project to create a new station for Rutland and Stamford since May without any county council funding?

**Answer:**

The County Council is interested in working with everyone who wants to see a Radio station that provides truly local information for the County and I know that Ms Blockley have been invited to present your proposed business case to the indepen board when established. The project that was started by the last Chief Executive is intended to ensure that such a Station can be re-created and this will hopefully involve all who want to see this happen.

**Question 5 from Ms Sylvia Matthews (she has nominated Ms Jennifer Blockley to ask her question)**

If the radio station feasibility study finds that it will go ahead, when and where will the post of station manager be advertised.

**Answer:**

Please pass on my thanks to Ms Matthews for the question

That would be a decision for whatever organisation is formed to manage the platform. This will be independent of the Council.