

Public Question Time
Full Council
24th January 2019

Mr John Ranford has asked the Mayor of the Council:

1. Does the Mayor agree with the conclusions of the IPCC report in September that the difference in the impacts of the 1.5-degree and 2-degree scenarios on populations are huge and that emissions should be limited to no more than 1.5 degrees?
2. Does the Mayor agree that the Climate crisis - which begun to flex its muscles during the last summer heat wave when many farmers in the UK suffered food harvest losses of 30% - poses a threat to Swindon residents, particularly in view of our reliance on imported food – since we import 48% of our food from countries where they are also seeing severe disruption to their harvests because of extreme weather?
3. Does the Mayor accept that in the face of the common threat that Climate Change poses to all Swindon's residents, whatever background, ethnicity, religion or party affiliation - is very great and that it demands:
 - Concerted and humble leadership to face this common threat
 - close working with all across party affiliation
 - listening to, and involving many people with expertise to devise responses
 - A clear focus on urgency, starting now to set ambitious targets to be reached by 2030?

The Leader has been asked to respond:

1. As stated in the Motion to Council, the target must be to Limit Global Warming to 1.5C. This requires strictly limiting the total amount of carbon emissions and whilst we note that the IPCC have stated that “Cutting emissions to meet a 1.5C limit would require “rapid and far-reaching transitions” across the global economy and that “These transitions would need to transform the way energy is used and the sources it comes from; the way land use and agricultural systems are organised; and the types and quantities of food and material that are consumed”, this administration is committed to listening to what the scientist tell us and following any relevant advice as best we can within our limited reach.
2. We are aware that climate change is already affecting food security and agricultural growth under all types of agriculture across the globe, and is expected to continue to have an increasingly serious impact on smallholders and large scale agriculture. This administration will urge Government to adopt a well-considered approach that tackles both technical and structural issues in agriculture to help create a prosperous climate-resilient agricultural sector in this country.

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3. I will ensure that we honour our position as outlined in the Motion to be discussed later and will reaffirm our commitment to Pledge 2

Ms Jasjeet Sumal has asked the Leader of the Council:

Does the Cabinet agree that the Climate crisis - which begun to flex its muscles during the last summer heat wave when many farmers in the UK suffered food harvest losses of 30% - poses a threat to Swindon residents, particularly in view of our reliance on imported food – since we import 48% of our food from countries where they are also seeing severe disruption to their harvests because of extreme weather?

The Leader of the Council has responded:

We are aware that climate change is already affecting food security and agricultural growth under all types of agriculture across the globe, and is expected to continue to have an increasingly serious impact on smallholders and large scale agriculture. This administration will urge Government to adopt a well-considered approach that tackles both technical and structural issues in agriculture to help create a prosperous climate-resilient agricultural sector in this country.

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Mr Andy Bentley has asked the Leader of the Council:

Is the Leader of the Council aware that the following changes are required in Swindon over the next 12 years to reduce the catastrophic effects of man-made climate change?

1. A move to renewable energy and smarter management of electricity demand;
2. Improving significantly the energy performance of our existing buildings;
3. Ensuring new build developments achieve their full low carbon potential and contribute effectively to a smarter energy system;
4. Stop relying on fossil fuels to heat buildings, hot water and industrial processes;
5. Switching to walking, cycling and efficient mass transport and electric vehicles;
6. Reducing emissions from agricultural food production and land use;
7. Reducing waste;
8. Increasing carbon capture, particularly through tree planting and land management;
9. To put systems in place to mitigate against the worst effects of climate change, such as flooding and premature death due to extreme temperatures.

The Leader of the Council has responded

Yes, we are aware of the above issues and as part of our low carbon agenda we are addressing them. There are a number of measures already in place with plans to go further. I will also ensure that we honour our commitment to Pledge

