

Supporting Cheshire East with its Carbon Neutral Ambition

Lead Organisation:

Sustainability West Midlands

Project Manager: Alan Carr (Senior Sustainability Adviser)

Customers:



Project Duration:

July 2019

The Project

Cheshire East Council (CEC), along with many other local authorities, are increasingly concerned about climate change and how it could impact on its services and local communities. As a result, the council declared a climate emergency back in May and set a new ambitious target: to be carbon neutral by 2025. As such, CEC sought support from SWM to help facilitate a workshop for Councillors and senior council leaders to invite them to propose ideas for how this target can be achieved.

Aims

- To outline to Councillors and senior managers the scale of the challenge to become carbon neutral by 2025.
- To hear their ideas on projects and interventions to ensure this target is achievable.
- To provide an initial starting point to developing a series of activities that can be taken forward by CEC to reflect the magnitude of change that is required.

Challenges

The workshop took place on Tuesday 23 July 2019, when temperatures in Cheshire were hovering above 30°C. A fitting backdrop one could argue to the types of challenges that climate change is increasingly giving us. So, SWM endorses CEC's ambitious carbon neutral target



and indeed the level of enthusiasm and understanding at Councillor and senior management level.

The biggest challenge comes next: how can CEC ensure that this enthusiasm is bottled up and applied to actual, tangible projects and activities? This workshop was the first step towards achieving this and we await with anticipation the next tranche of activities.

The Outcome

Results

SWM was invited to participate in this workshop due to our extensive track record in supporting local authorities and our expertise in supporting such events. We were able to bring a fresh perspective as well as an element of focus to proceedings. This enabled the workshop to:

- Provide useful examples of why achieving carbon neutrality is important aside from tackling climate change, e.g. through benefits to reducing fuel poverty, improving air quality and economic growth.
- Provide a platform for attendees to express their views on what the council needs to do to adequately reflect the importance of climate change.
- Enable the generation of ideas to take forward to ensure the ambitious carbon target will be met via the implementation of projects.

In the Future

The 'what next' bit is crucial. CEC's leaders have drive, determination and enthusiasm, as well as a recognition that doing nothing is not a viable option. This is the first step. The next step is to apply this into real, game-changing projects that not only ensure the council's emissions rapidly reduce over the next six years, but that local residents can follow suit and be empowered by the council's approach. SWM is keen to see what happens next and, as ever, we are happy to support wherever we can.



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Accolades

"CEC was pleased to invite SWM to participate in the facilitation of our Carbon Neutral workshop. We recognised their track record in running similar sessions and supporting local authorities, as well as their engaging and organised approach to facilitation. SWM's support in the workshop has helped us to determine a series of next steps that will enable CEC to achieve its ambitious carbon neutral target and tackle climate change." – Ralph Kemp, Head of Environmental Services, Cheshire East Council.

Contact Details

If your authority has recently declared a climate emergency or set ambitious carbon neutral targets, we are here to support you in many different ways. For further information, please contact the SWM team on 0121 237 5890 or enquiries@swm.org.uk.