

On Wednesday this week our Council's Cabinet unanimously gave approval for our transformational plans for St Helens and Earlestown town centres to go to public consultation starting on 1st November.

The plans were published last Tuesday and there's been a huge amount of interest. The St Helens website even crashed due to the numbers visiting, and the site developers had to purchase extra bandwidth which they say they've never had to do before! It just shows the demand for this to happen.

The consultation will last for 6 weeks, ending on Monday 13th December. You can submit comments from 1st November via the websites www.sthelenstowncentre.co.uk and www.earlestown.co.uk and there will also be events held across the borough including in both town centres. Keep an eye on the local press and social media for more information.

One of the key priorities for the town centre developments and indeed for the council as a whole is the urgent need to address the Climate Emergency and make sure new developments are sustainable and future-proof.

Last week I spoke at a major event in Liverpool with over 200 industry representatives about the challenges and opportunities we have, and we had great news on Tuesday this week with confirmation that HyNet – a significant project to decarbonise the local economy and move to use hydrogen as well as natural gas – has been approved by government to move to the next phase of development.

HyNet will begin to significantly decarbonise the North West and North Wales from 2025, reducing annual CO2 emissions by 10m tonnes by 2030.

And later this month we'll be holding two special family-friendly festivals to highlight the action we're taking to address climate change and the things we can all do to help.

Organised with funding support from the Liverpool City Region's Town Centre Fund, the Green Festival will take place in Earlestown on Friday 29 October and St Helens town centre on Saturday 30 October, both running from noon-4pm.

Our council is committed to reaching net carbon zero by 2040 and we will be making further announcements in the coming weeks leading up to COP26, the 2021 United Nations climate change conference in Glasgow where St Helens will be well represented with events highlighting Glass Futures and other major regional schemes.

Find out more at www.sthelenslabour.org/climatechange.

Best wishes to all Star readers.