

This week is Net Zero Week, and it's the perfect time to remind ourselves of the importance of this issue.

It's been confirmed that last month was the hottest June in the UK ever, with the average mean temperature the highest since 1884.

Because of man-made climate change, the Met Office calculates the chances of exceeding the previous record has at least doubled since 1940. If trends continue as expected, that means that we can expect more record-breaking temperatures in the years ahead.

The environmental and health impacts of climate change are potentially drastic and that's why many of us are trying so hard to take action to stop it. Achieving net zero carbon emissions is key, and we'll all need to work collectively and quickly.

As a Council and as a member of the City Region we've declared a Climate Emergency, and like many other socially-responsible organisations and businesses we are taking targeted, local action on hundreds of different aspects of the climate challenge.

Cllr Andy Bowden has led work on our Climate Action Plan, and next week the City Region will be agreeing our Five Year Climate Action Plan. From large projects like Glass Futures, HyNet and Mersey Tidal, to purchasing hydrogen-powered buses, our EV-charging strategy and more, we're doing all we can.

While others increasingly look to St Helens for examples of good practice we're always keen to look around for new ideas and investment. So last week, as City Region Deputy Metro Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Net Zero and Air Quality, I was pleased to host a senior delegation from South Korea at Glass Futures for discussions about hydrogen power and innovation, and Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham signed an agreement with them to work together on new technologies.

The fight against climate change is of course a huge threat, but in choosing to act we can also seize new opportunities. By investing in clean energy and transport we can not only address the climate emergency but create thousands of new jobs, grow our local economy, and protect our energy security and affordability too.

In our City Region we have all the ingredients to lead the way in the UK's journey to net zero, and along the way we can build the sustainable and fair future that our communities deserve.

Best wishes to all Star readers.