A movement starts with a why, not the how. When I ask people *why* they joined the Labour party few ever claim it was for the meetings or leaflet rounds. Most talk inspiringly of wanting to see a different world and being part of making that world a reality.

How we manage our environment will determine the world we will leave for our children and their children, their quality of life and their opportunities. It is vital that Labour pursues progressive solutions in this area to protect our planet for their sake. As a movement we must show we have answers on how best to do this, supporting sustainable development policies that can transform society, reform restrictive cultures and create opportunities for all through political activism.

I am proud of Labour’s track record on environmental action, and in particular the impact of the Climate Change Act that brought forward a government-wide plan on lowering carbon emissions. However, the experience of the last Government and this new one is that we must never rest in the fight to ensure Britain takes a sustainable and progressive approach to protecting our planet. Indeed, in office it is clear David Cameron’s Arctic Adventure was simply a publicity stunt, words that haven’t been backed up with actions.

This year’s Paris summit offers the chance to show that governments and countries can still be a major force for (or against) making change. Labour must continue to be a strong voice to ensure that this Government lives up to its responsibilities. In particular, we should put our ability to address concerns such as climate change through collaboration with other countries at the heart of our campaign to ensure Britain stays in Europe. So too we must use our capacity and leadership within local and regional government to show how as Labour we would make different choices in how resources are used and how we would invest in renewal energy and sustainable development.  In Labour-run councils we have seen initiatives that others can learn from on environmental issues such as replenishing habitats, improving recycling facilities and reducing emissions.

I'm not interested in sitting in a back office in Westminster - I want to be a Deputy Leader out on the frontline with our members helping to develop new leadership not just at the top of the party, but throughout our movement. We should put real power and resource into grassroots campaigning and policy-making to help reconnect with members and supporters, building relationships with all those who may share our values but not our membership cards. As a member of SERA, I am determined that it has a key role to play in this process and look forward to working with other members to ensure our commitment to the environment and sustainability is at the heart of Labour’s future policy and campaigns.

**Stella Creasy**

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