

REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change met on 14 September 2021. Attendances:-

Councillor Nick Bennett (Lead Member)

Councillors Julia Hilton, Wendy Maples, Paul Redstone, Colin Swansborough and Georgia Taylor

1 Notice of Motion – Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

1.1 The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor Georgia Taylor and Councillor Wendy Maples:

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK and around the world. Global temperatures have increased by over 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm) and continue to rise—this far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity.

Without more significant and sustained action, the world is set to exceed the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit between 2030 and 2040. Therefore, the current UK target of net zero by 2050 is not sufficient. It is too little too late.

The increase in harm caused by a rise of 2°C rather than 1.5°C is significant. This is described by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C published in October 2018. According to the IPCC, limiting heating to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector and local communities. The costs of failing to address this crisis will far outstrip the investments required to prevent it. Investing now will bring many benefits in the form of good jobs, breathable cities and thriving communities.

Council notes that:

- 1) *Many local authorities are playing an important role in the UK taking action to achieve net zero*
- 2) *There is a Bill before Parliament—the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the Climate and Ecology Bill)—according to which the UK Government must develop an emergency strategy that:*
 - a) *requires that the UK plays its fair and proper role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with at least a 66% chance of limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures; this corresponds to the most ambitious global mitigation pathway available according to the 2018 IPCC 1.5C Report.*
 - b) *ensures that all the UK's consumption emissions are accounted for, including international aviation and passenger shipping;*
 - c) *ensures that steps to mitigate emissions do not damage ecosystems, food and water availability, and human health;*

LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- d) ensures that steps taken to increase the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, populations and ecosystems follow the mitigation and conservation hierarchy - avoid, minimise, restore and offset
- e) restores and expands natural ecosystems, and enhances the management of cultivated ecosystems to protect and enhance biodiversity, ecological processes and ecosystem service provision, including optimising the state of resilient carbon sinks;
- f) includes measures to protect, restore and enhance ecosystems in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, where activity is generated from within the United Kingdom that is harmful to ecosystems;
- g) ensures an end to the exploration, extraction, export and import of fossil fuels by the United Kingdom as rapidly as possible; and
- h) sets up an independent citizens' assembly, representative of the UK's population, to engage with the UK Parliament and UK Government to help develop the emergency strategy.

The County Council resolves to:

- 1) Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill;
- 2) Inform the local media of this decision;
- 3) Write to local Members of Parliament, asking them to support or thanking them for supporting the CEE Bill; and
- 4) Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (campaign@ceebill.uk).

1.2 In line with County Council practice, the matter was referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion. The Lead Member also considered information circulated by Councillor Georgia Taylor (attached as Appendix 1 in the Additional Documents).

1.3 The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the Climate and Ecology Bill), was presented to Parliament by Caroline Lucas as a Private Members Bill in June 2021, to replace a version previously presented in September 2020, which ran out of Parliamentary time. A full copy of the Bill is included in Appendix 2 in the Additional Documents. It should be noted that the Bill is still progressing through the Parliamentary process and could be amended when it is debated by the House of Commons and House of Lords.

1.4 The main objective of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill is to set more ambitious aims for addressing climate change and biodiversity loss than are currently committed to through existing legislation and policy. The Bill would:

- Require the government to set a new legally binding climate target in order to contribute to keeping the global average temperature increase to 1.5°C compared with pre-industrial levels.
- Give the Secretary of State a duty to create and implement a strategy to achieve those objectives.
- Establish a temporary Climate and Nature Assembly, representative of the UK population, to work with the Secretary of State in creating that strategy, which would be subject to approval by the House of Commons.

1.5 The Bill would require that the United Kingdom (UK) takes account of the UK's entire carbon footprint, including consumption emissions released overseas as a result of goods

LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

manufactured abroad for use in the UK, rather than just the emissions produced in the UK. It would also require legally-binding annual carbon budgets rather than the current 5 year carbon budgets.

1.6 A Climate and Ecological Emergency Alliance in support of the Bill was launched in September 2020. It currently has the support of 114 MPs, and a number of local authorities and other organisations.

1.7 The urgency of addressing climate change is undisputed. Climate change impacts are linked to and likely to worsen existing inequalities, particularly related to gender and income. The UK government has set a legally binding target under the Climate Change Act to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

1.8 The Committee on Climate Change, which is the independent body that advises government on climate change, has set out how England could get to net zero by 2050. It has concluded that it is technically feasible but highly challenging and is entirely contingent on a number of factors. These include the introduction of clear, stable and well-designed national policies and interventions, the appropriate supply chain able to deliver the required scale and pace of change, and an unprecedented level of public involvement and consent for change.

1.9 At present, the government does not have an agreed national decarbonisation plan, and there is no single agreed pathway to get to net zero. Over the next year or so the government has said that it will produce a net zero strategy, a heat and buildings strategy, an industrial decarbonisation strategy, a hydrogen strategy, a nature strategy, the Environment Act and the Agriculture Act, amongst others. Collectively, these are expected to set out in detail how the UK will transition to net zero and address biodiversity loss.

1.10 The County Council recognises the urgency of addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, as reflected in its climate emergency action plan and its lead role in the Sussex Local Nature Partnership. In October 2019 East Sussex County Council declared a Climate Emergency and since then has achieved year on year reductions in Carbon emissions and with other responsible bodies, addressed a range of environmental and ecological challenges. We recognise that without more significant and sustained action, the world is set to exceed the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit between 2030 and 2040 the consequences of which are set out in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report published in October 2018.

1.11 Given our commitment to net zero and our action on climate change we recognise the intent of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the Climate and Ecology Bill) to ensure the UK sets out its fair and proper role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in an accountable and ecologically responsible manner.

1.12 In the context of the Government's commitment to environmental protection and this Authority's determination to enhance ecology and improve the environment, East Sussex County Council supports the principles of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, and we will express our support for these principle as it makes its passage through the legislative process.

1.13 The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change recommends the County Council to:

☆ (1) support the Notice of Motion, while noting the work done nationally and locally set out in paragraphs 1.10 to 1.12 of the report.

14 September 2021

COUNCILLOR NICK BENNETT
(Lead Member)

LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE
