

Council

18 February 2019

Motions (1 total)

Motion A	Proposed by: Councillor Wilkinson	Seconded by: Councillor Atherstone
<p data-bbox="391 430 906 464">Motion to declare a Climate Emergency</p> <p data-bbox="391 497 659 531">Full Council notes:</p> <p data-bbox="391 564 1299 730">Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO2 levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;</p> <p data-bbox="391 764 1299 930">In order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO2eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;</p> <p data-bbox="391 963 1265 1066">Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;</p> <p data-bbox="391 1100 1224 1134">Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;</p> <p data-bbox="391 1167 1299 1333">Cheltenham Borough Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Breakdown, having led on recycling issues, delivered a local plan with strong environmental policies and through promoting sustainable transport options.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1367 1256 1467">Unfortunately, while current plans and actions locally are making a difference, they are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050;</p> <p data-bbox="391 1501 1278 1703">The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published last month, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise, and told us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities;</p> <p data-bbox="391 1736 1252 1803">Councils around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.</p>		

Full Council believes that:

All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Cheltenham and the UK that all settlements commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

Urban areas like Cheltenham are uniquely placed to lead in reducing carbon emissions, as they are in many ways easier to decarbonise than rural areas – for example because of their capacity for heat networks and mass transit;

The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority; and,

Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide).

Full Council calls on the Cabinet to:

Declare a 'Climate Emergency';

Pledge to make Cheltenham carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;

Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;

Work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;

Continue to work with partners across the town, county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;

Report to Full Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency.

References:

Fossil CO₂ & GHG emissions of all world countries, 2017:
<http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2andGHG1970-2016&dst=GHGpc>

World Resources Institute: <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/8-things-you-need-know-about-ipcc-15-c-report>

The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

Including US cities Berkeley:

<https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/blog/2018/6/13/berkeley-unanimously-declares-climate-emergency> and Hoboken:

<https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/blog/2018/4/25/hoboken-resolves-to-mobilize>, and the C40 cities:

<https://www.c40.org/other/deadline-2020>

Scope 1, 2 and 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol explained:

<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions>