MOTION ON NOTICE

18 March 2019

DECLARATION ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Full Council notes that:

'Climate Emergency' is an internationally recognised declaration being used by Councils and other Local Authorities, predominantly in the UK, Canada, Australia and the USA, to publicly declare concern over the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) findings which recognise the adverse global impact of the changing climate. The declaration also serves as a commitment to take urgent action and aspire towards carbon neutrality. It is a powerful call to action that engages the entire community; it's not just about the practical actions that a Council might take.

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.

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.

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. Plymouth City Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Breakdown, it has already committed to making the city carbon neutral by 2050 with an interim target of reducing emissions by 50% by 2034, has an acclaimed programme of energy efficiency, renewable energy, low carbon transport and climate change mitigation projects.

Unfortunately, our current plans and actions are not enough.

The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050.

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

City Councils around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.

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 Plymouth and the UK that cities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.

- Cities and city regions have a vital role to play in leading the low carbon transition. They consume over two-thirds of the world's energy and are responsible for as much as 70% of man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

- 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

- 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).

The City Council resolves to:

(1) Declare a 'Climate Emergency'

(2) Pledge to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030, and commit to working with other councils with similar ambitions

(3) Request the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible; and commit to working with other councils with similar ambitions

(4) 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

(5) Continue to work with partners across the city and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans

(6) Report to Full Council within six months with a climate emergency action plan and new corporate carbon reduction plan

(7) Request the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer stating the concern of the Council with respect to the above, the likely national impact on the economy and on the wellbeing of citizens, and requesting Government funding be made available to implement swift appropriate actions in response.

Proposed by Councillor Sue Dann 8 March 2019



Signed:

Seconded by Councillor Pam Buchan by email

Dated: 8 March 2019