

Green Party/Labour Party Motion to declare a Climate Emergency

Proposer: Cllr Andy Fewings

Seconder: Cllr Sue Graham

Full Council notes:

1 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 350ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;

2 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;¹

3 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;

4 Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;

5 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;^{2, 3}

6 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 communities³;

7 The UK Government declared a Climate Change Emergency on the 1st May 2019 and Councils around the

world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.⁴ At least 43 Councils have already declared a Climate Change Emergency.

Full Council believes that:

1 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 Burnley and the UK that towns and cities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

2 Urban areas are uniquely placed to lead the world 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;

3 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

4 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 Burnley Borough Council to:

1 Declare a 'Climate Emergency' ;

2 Call on the Executive to establish a cross-party 'Climate Change Working Group' (one member from each group) whose remit is to provide recommendations to the Executive, in light of the Climate Emergency, to make the Borough of Burnley carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3)⁵;

3 Call on Lancashire County Council and Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;

4 Call on the Executive to report to Full Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency and detailed reasons with supporting evidence (from within existing resources and expertise without incurring third party expenditure) for the refusal of any recommendation(s) made by the Climate Change Working Group.

References:

1 Fossil CO₂ & GHG emissions of all world countries, 2017:

<http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2andGHG1970-2016&dst=GHGpc>

2 World Resources Institute:

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

3 The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

4 UK government: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48126677> , Bristol, Calderdale, Lancaster, Trafford and other councils:

<https://inews.co.uk/news/environment/climate-emergency-declaration-councils-green-party-un-report/> and overseas in 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>

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

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