

Motions

The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Sarah Dyke:
Seconder: Councillor Oliver Patrick

CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY BILL AND JOINING UK100 AND COUNTRYSIDE CLIMATE NETWORK

This Council notes:

This Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in May 2019 and is working towards Carbon Net Zero by 2030. It is committed to delivering on this declaration through its Environment Strategy and pledges to continue this work, with the aim of embedding it in the creation of Somerset's new unitary council. There is no doubt that our ambition is high, but our goals are achievable with the right leadership and partnership, both locally and nationally.

There is a Bill before Parliament - the **Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill** (published as the "Climate and Ecology Bill") - according to which the Government must develop an emergency strategy to ensure the delivery of targets on carbon emissions and limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels, which are currently aspirational.

There is an urgent need for Government action to ensure progress is achieved. The Government must support local authorities by driving policies that will have an impact at a local level, including the allocation of funding to Councils with ambitious environmental targets.

The evidence of effects on climate change are becoming ever more evident in the UK and worldwide. Inaction is unacceptable.

Atmospheric CO₂ levels are now above 400 parts per million (ppm) and continue to rise. This far exceeds the 350ppm 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. The increase in harm caused by a rise of 2°C rather than 1.5°C is significant.

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.

The UN Climate Summit, known as COP26, is in the UK this year, offering a fantastic opportunity to advocate for national changes that will enable local authorities to reach



South Somerset District Council

Net Zero as soon as possible and to remove the barriers that local authorities are currently facing when trying to implement ambitious climate action.

UK100 is a coalition of the most ambitious local leaders in the UK committed to achieving Net Zero further and faster than national targets. UK100 brings together local authorities, from cities to the countryside, making it easier to share knowledge, to collaborate, and to lobby the government with their collective power. Working closely with elected representatives and policy experts to develop solutions to the challenges all local leaders face, and to build public support for the transition to Net Zero.

Rural communities are at the frontline of climate change impacts. More extreme weather brings longer droughts and wetter winters affecting and damaging our food production for the nation. Two-thirds of people live outside the largest urban areas, and climate change brings distinct challenges to our villages and towns that we need to make sure we are addressing.

Rural communities can also be at the forefront of climate action. To meet the UK's goal of becoming Net Zero our rural communities need to be heard and their challenges need to be understood.

To this end, the **Countryside Climate Network** (CCN) is the rural wing of the UK100 network, currently consisting of 28 member Councils. As members of UK100, the CCN are committed to delivering climate action in their communities and amplifying the rural voice as part of our national policy advocacy - bringing the best from cities and the countryside together. Were this Council to commit to joining the CCN today then we can rest assured that our rural voice will be heard.

It costs nothing to join UK100, and the benefits of shared experience, knowledge and support should be plain for all to see. South Somerset should play its part in the building of a network across the UK as we work together to challenge each other and the Government to move quickly and effectively towards addressing climate change.

To date over 110 local authorities have taken the UK100 pledge. Somerset County Council have taken the pledge, but South Somerset would be the first District Council in the county to do so.

Council therefore agrees in principle to:

- Committing to delivering on the UK100 declaration through its Environment Strategy and pledges to continue this work and embed it in the creation of Somerset's new unitary council
- Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill
- Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill; and
- Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (campaign@ceebill.uk)
- Continue work on mitigating climate change by pledging to join the UK100 the alliance of local government leaders for cleaner, more powerful communities
- To join the Countryside Climate Network



South Somerset District Council

- Write to UK100 to confirm the above membership@uk100.org
- Inform the local media of these decisions

Supporting Information:

If it became law the **Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**, would require the government to develop a strategy to address the emergency that would ensure:

- the ecological emergency is tackled shoulder to shoulder with the climate crisis in a joined-up approach;
- the Paris Agreement is enshrined into law to ensure that UK does its real fair share to limit global temperature rise to the most stringent end of the Paris agreement –1.5°C.
- the Leaders Pledge for Nature is enshrined into law to ensure that the UK's ecosystems are protected and restored with a focus on biodiversity, soils and natural carbon sinks;
- the UK takes full responsibility for our entire greenhouse gas footprint (ie consumption emissions plus shipping, flights and land-based transport) by accounting for all of the emissions that take place overseas to manufacture, transport and dispose of the goods and services we import and consume;
- the UK takes full responsibility for our ecological footprint so that we protect health and resilience of ecosystems along both domestic and our global supply chains;
- an independent, temporary Climate and Nature Assembly is set-up, representative of the UK's population, to engage with the UK Parliament and UK Government to help develop the emergency strategy.
- <https://www.ceebill.uk/>

UK100 Membership Pledge:

- As local leaders across the UK, we see the challenges our communities face. We recognise our responsibility to tackle the climate emergency and protect our environment to secure the future for them and for people around the world.
- In 2019, the UK Parliament passed legislation to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050. This was to keep in line with international commitment in the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. But science tells us we need to start now and make rapid reductions much sooner.
- We will do everything within our power and influence to rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We will bring our council emissions to Net Zero by 2030 and we will work with our residents and businesses to bring our



South Somerset District Council

wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible (and by 2045) at the latest).

- We will continue to lead the UK's response to Net Zero, going ahead of the government goal and taking the first steps with urgency. We will make substantial progress within the next decade to deliver Net Zero. With greater powers, we would go further, faster.
 - We will be bold and brave, carrying out strong climate action now and building prosperous, secure and more resilient communities that are healthier, cleaner and safer, in ways that follow the science and are practical and achievable.
 - We pledge to assess our largest impacts on climate change, prioritise where action needs to be taken and measure and monitor progress towards targets. We will reduce our emissions at source and limit the use of carbon offsets as part of the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
 - As local leaders, we are uniquely placed to help tackle the climate emergency. We are closer to the people who live and work in our communities, so we have a better understanding of their needs. This means we can collaborate with them to build consensus for the solutions we need to transition to a Net Zero society that delivers multiple benefits and is fair, just and works for everyone.
 - We have come together from local authorities across the UK to share knowledge and collaborate with each other, with businesses and our residents to deliver action now. And we will also use our experience of our ability and achievements to advocate to the UK government in order to accelerate the transition to a Net Zero society.
 - As a nation, we have demonstrated throughout our history that we are able and willing to lead on finding solutions to the challenges the world faces. The success and prosperity of our nation has largely rested on our ability to harness the power of dirty fossil fuels. It is now our shared responsibility to turn this ingenuity to solving the climate emergency in a way that has a positive impact on our communities. We need to ensure our future is better than our past.
 - <https://www.uk100.org>
-