

## Full Council Motion – 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018

### Declare a Climate Emergency

#### 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 CO<sub>2</sub> levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm 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 CO<sub>2</sub>eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;<sup>1</sup>
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. Bristol City Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Breakdown, having met its corporate carbon reduction target three years early, published the City Leap prospectus and committed to making the city carbon neutral by 2050;
6. 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;<sup>2,3</sup>
7. 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<sup>3</sup>;
8. City Councils around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.<sup>4</sup>

#### 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 Bristol and the UK that cities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;
2. Cities 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. As Bristol is the only UK city that has been a European Green Capital, we have a particular duty to be a leader on environmental issues in the UK;
4. 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,
5. 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 Mayor to:

1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency';
2. Pledge to make the city of Bristol carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3)<sup>5</sup>;
3. Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
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 the actions the Mayor/Council will take to address this emergency.

References:

1. Fossil CO<sub>2</sub> & 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. 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>
5. Scope 1, 2 and 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol explained:  
<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions>