

RESPONSE TO MOTION TO DECLARE A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To declare a Climate Change and Nature Emergency.
- 1.2 To bring a report to the February 2022 Cabinet meeting on the proposed action plan to deal with the Emergency, and the role the Council will play in reducing Carbon emissions.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the Council meeting of 6 September 2021 in accordance with Standing Order 21, Cllr M Wade moved the following motion: -

“This Council notes:

The findings of the IPCC report approved by 195 member governments state: -

- that many of the changes observed in the climate are unprecedented in thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years, and some of the changes already set in motion, such as continued sea level rise, are irreversible over hundreds to thousands of years.*
- The evidence is clear that carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the main driver of climate change, even as other greenhouse gases and air pollutants also affect the climate.*
- The report projects that in the coming decades climate changes will increase in all regions.*
- It also shows that emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since 1850-1900 and finds that averaged over the next 20 years, global temperature is expected to reach or exceed 1.5°C of warming*
- For 1.5°C of global warming, there will be increasing heat waves, longer warm seasons and shorter cold seasons.*
- The report shows at 2°C of global warming, heat extremes would more often reach critical tolerance thresholds for agriculture and health.*
- Climate change is affecting rainfall patterns. In high latitudes, precipitation is likely to increase, while it is projected to decrease over large parts of the subtropics. Changes to monsoon precipitation are expected, which will vary by region.*
- Climate change is intensifying the water cycle. This brings more intense rainfall and associated flooding, as well as more intense drought in many regions.*

- *The report also shows that human actions still have the potential to determine the future course of climate. The evidence is clear that carbon dioxide (CO2) is the main driver of climate change, even as other greenhouse gases and air pollutants also affect the climate.*

This Council believes that: -

- *Stabilizing the climate will require strong, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reaching net zero CO2 emissions.*
- *Limiting other greenhouse gases and air pollutants, especially methane, could have benefits both for health and the climate.*
- *That strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases would limit climate change.*

This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet to: -

- *Declare a ‘Climate Emergency’.*
- *Pledge to make the New Forest district carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.*
- *Report to full Council within six months setting out the immediate actions the Council will take to address this emergency and a plan to measure annual district wide progress towards meeting the 2030 target.*
- *Take into account carbon reduction actions in every aspect of its business*
- *Work with partners across the district and the region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans and drawing on local and global best practice.*
- *Actively lobby the Government to provide the additional powers and resources needed to meet the 2030 target.”*

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Environment Overview and Scrutiny meeting of 13 June 2019 the Panel considered a Motion from Council to declare a Climate Emergency. It was resolved that (a) A Task and Finish Group be established to consider the climate change motion in more detail; (b) That a report of the Task and Finish Group would be presented to the next Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting in September 2019.
- 3.2 At the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting of 19 September 2019 the Panel resolved:
- (a) To request that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services work with partners and relevant Members in the development of an Environment Action Plan

That the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel advise the Council that:

- (a) The Panel does not support the motion referred to the Panel by the Council; and
- (b) Whilst the Panel recognises that other Councils have declared a climate emergency, this Council can achieve more on a local level through the development of an Environment Action Plan, with the ambition of achieving a carbon neutral position for the New Forest District Council by 2050. Once developed the Action Plan should give prominence within the Council’s

Corporate Plan to ensure that environmental issues, including climate change, are taken into account in future decision making.

- 3.3 Since the matter was last considered there has been considerable change at a local, national and worldwide level. The Pandemic has seen the positive impact changes in behaviour brought about by the pandemic has had on the environment. The Agricultural Act and the forthcoming Environment Bill has, and will, set out future land use policy. These changes are referenced and reflected in the revised Corporate Plan with sustainability and the protection of our natural resources, as well as support for the local economy running through the Plan.
- 3.4 It should be noted that whilst Climate Change, Green, Environmental and Sustainability are labels that are often used interchangeably they are different. Environmental or sustainability considerations are wider than climate change alone. It is important in declaring a Climate Change Emergency that the Council does not focus exclusively on climate change and promote actions which compromise wider environmental considerations.
- 3.5 The impact of climate change is having an effect on nature. There are a range of actions that are distinct for climate change and to achieve nature recovery. Action for one emergency will not be sufficient to solve the other.

4. WHAT THE COUNCIL HAS ACHIEVED TO DATE

- 4.1 The Council has engaged in Climate Change issues for many years and through policies and actions have responded making the District more resilient, reducing emissions and providing the infrastructure to enable others to make choices that reduce emissions and provide resilience. The table below sets out some of the initiatives to date (it should be noted that these are only some of the actions):

Organisation Culture	<p>Smart working project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled home working reducing the need to travel • Electronic Document Management system reducing paper and physical storage • Online training sessions reducing the need for travel • Significant number of meetings remain virtual including Councillor briefings, reducing the need for travel • Reduced plastics • Investment in Web to reduce need for customers to travel to Council Offices • Communications with residents and businesses through a range of electronic channels
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of 25 Fast (22Kwh) Electric Vehicle Charging points in 9 of our car parks • 4 more being installed in Lyndhurst by the end of next month. • All use green energy supplied to the grid by the funder of the project. Phase 2 planned so we hope to have 50 or more EVCP's by the summer of 2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 rapid charger (again using green energy) ordered for Ringwood car park which will also use green energy.
Fleet Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any new HGV vehicles purchased to be a minimum of Euro 6 or equivalent. • Purchased 4 electric powered vans
Coastal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westover Urgent works contracted used hybrid machines • Groyne projected used recycled wood • Developing flood defence projects to provide community resilience and protect against the impact of climate change of the next 100 years
Grounds Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new purchases for Ground Maintenance hand tools such as strimmer's and Hedge Cutters are now battery powered • Encouraging biodiversity net gain • 2 for 1 replacement tree planting policy
Civic Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar Panels on Civic Buildings including Lymington Town Hall • Led lights installed • Water refill stations at our public buildings
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering development in the most sustainable locations in the district reducing the need to travel • Ensuring the larger development sites provide employment, recreational and community facilities reducing the need to travel • Ensuring the Council has an up-to-date Local Plan which embeds sustainability at the heart of its strategy by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring all new development delivers environmental net gain and is future proofed for climate change ○ Requiring all new development to achieve energy and water efficiency and provide ○ Delivering green space, additional trees and vegetation to reverse the impact of climate change ○ Delivering improved or new cycling and walking networks to discourage the use of cars ○ Delivering allotments for residents across the district to enable food to be grown locally ○ Delivering Sustainable Drainage solutions on developments ○ Ensuring air quality across the district is either improved or not made worst ○ Remediating contaminated land on development sites • Developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy to improve the natural environment and support nature recovery

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outline business case for the Solent Freeport sets out the ambition to become the greenest Freeport in the Country
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All internal purchasers required to consider Sustainability in their procurement projects • Encourages the supply market to bring forward new or emerging technology that has a proven positive impact upon the environment • Evaluates value for money on a whole life basis with consideration to benefits to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment • The Council investigates opportunities across the supply chain for energy consumption reduction, emission output reduction, recycling, reduced usage, bulk delivery and better packaging • Where appropriate and allowable, Sustainability Criteria are part of the supplier evaluation process and are used in the award of contracts • Where possible and practicable, make requirements in line with known UK environmental standards or allows suppliers to submit offers for environmentally friendly alternatives • Encourages the supply market to bring forward new/emerging design technology that has a positive and measurable impact upon the environment. • Carry out pre-procurement soft market testing to consider the costs and benefits of environmentally preferable materials, systems or services
NFDC Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated the purchase of building materials for repairs from 65 suppliers to one supplier reducing the carbon foot print for the supply chain and our operatives. with both parties committing to sourcing sustainable products and materials. <p>Supply Certified Timber Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber is EUTR (EU Timber Regulation) compliant; • Offer FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) certified products. <p>Installation of energy efficiency measures in the last five years, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the installation of 1330 new heating systems, including 7 air source heat pumps, • 4 large scale Photovoltaic schemes on our Extra Care and housing for older people properties, • 293 homes fitted with new windows and doors and, home insulation.

	<p>Develop a highly energy efficient low carbon housing pilot scheme (Testwood Club) which provides learning for future schemes.</p> <p>Commissioned a full review of carbon reduction retrofit programmes to existing Council stock to inform future capital programmes</p> <p>Joined 'Good Homes Alliance' Networking Group for new build social housing</p> <p>Joined ' SuperHomes' Networking Group for social housing landlords looking to retrofit existing stock</p> <p>Plan to install 50 Air Source Heat Pumps by the end of 2022 to off gas properties.</p> <p>Installation of Dynamic Scheduling software to plan appointments for operatives to Reduce travelling time, costs and vehicle carbon emissions</p> <p>Emerging Greener Housing Strategy is being developed in conjunction with a member Task and Finish Group.</p>
<p>Private Sector Housing Strategic priority 4 – Energy Efficiency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined Portsmouth City Councils (PCC) consortium in a bid for the Sustainable Warmth Grant (SWG) to a value of around £32.7 million (if successful). • Local Authority Decarbonisation (LAD) for on-gas properties (where a property can get up to £10,000 grant funding) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) for off-gas properties (where a property can get up to £25,000 grant funding). • The bid proposes to support 1,660 households with LAD funding & just over 1,000 households with HUG funding. • Partnership with HCC to identify a detailed installation programme including investment and skills requirements • Supporting the awareness of Fuel Poverty alongside Hampshire CC in new staff induction programmes • Working with local partners and Southampton University to collate fuel poverty data to form action planning • Commissioned a private sector Housing survey which has highlighted areas of poorer performing housing and areas of fuel poverty.
<p>Building Control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing advice and guidance to builders and developers on building solutions to improve building installation values reducing overheating, encourage them to embrace green technology • Improving air quality across the district
<p>Waste</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging reuse and recycling

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) • Draft Waste Strategy
Investment Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in employment at Ringwood with PV panels, electric vehicle charging points and BREEAM 'very good' status for buildings • Investing in the local economy to maintain supply of employment within local communities
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the local economy to ensure that there is a range of employment opportunities close to where people live • Supporting SME to reduce the need to travel • Supporting tourism to provide local jobs for local people • Supporting the food/food growing economy reducing the carbon footprint of what our residents eat • Providing training and development opportunities for young people so that they can work/access employment locally
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and responding to changes in air quality • Taxi Policy to ensure that vehicle pollution is minimised • Proactively Working with landowners of contaminated sites to remediate sites • Working with food businesses to reduce food waste • Emergency planning co-ordination to build resilient communities • Working to reduce emissions that lead to air pollution

5. RESPONSE TO MOTION

Pledge to make the New Forest district carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;

- 5.1 The UK Climate Change Act 2008 sets a statutory target to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 1990 figures by 2050. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its October 2018 report warned that it would take an international effort to limit global warming to 1.5C.
- 5.2 In May 2019 the UK Committee for Climate Change recommended that the UK Government respond by increasing their target to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Government has ~~now~~ adopted this target and on 1 May 2019 the House of Commons passed a motion declaring a national climate change emergency.
- 5.3 It must be recognised that climate change is being caused by a lot of matters outside the direct control or influence of this Council. There are however, matters that we have direct control over, and other matters that we can influence.

Report to full Council within six months setting out the immediate actions the Council will take to address this emergency and a plan to measure annual district wide progress towards meeting the 2030 target.

- 5.4 Given the significant work that is already progressing the recommendation sets out a timescale for an initial report to set out future actions.

Take into account carbon reduction actions in every aspect of its business

- 5.5 The Council is already doing this but to date has not articulated this in a single place. The report to Cabinet in February 2022 will confirm how the Council will demonstrate that carbon reduction actions are being considered in every aspect of its business.

Work with partners across the district and the region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans and drawing on local and global best practice.

- 5.6 There is a lot of partnership working already taking place, for example working across the County on the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, working with HCC for LTP4 and working with the PFSH authorities and Solent Transport towards a new Spatial Framework. Reference will be made to all partnership working in the future report.

- 5.7 The Council is currently working closely with partners such as the Environment Agency on flood defence infrastructure projects, as well as land owners across the District to explore opportunities for habitat creation, carbon capture and rewilding.

Actively lobby the Government to provide the additional powers and resources needed to meet the 2030 target

- 5.8 Further consideration should be given as to how this is best achieved.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The revised Corporate Plan has sustainability and the protection of our natural resources, as well as support for the local economy, running through the Plan. The importance of sustainability is recognised with the Leader of the Council having this as a key activity within his Portfolio. The recently adopted Local Plan has sustainability at the centre of all aspects with development not being permitted unless it can be demonstrated that it is sustainable development.

- 6.2 At the Cabinet meeting of 1 September 2021, it was resolved that the Council support the revised version of the National Park Partnership Plan 2021-2026. The District Council is a key partner to the Partnership Plan and will play a key role in delivering the actions that come out of the Plan. The Plan sets out a revised vision as a national beacon for a sustainable future, where nature and people flourish. It should be noted that the Plan takes the wider view around sustainability with a clear reference to Climate Change and Nature Emergency.

- 6.3 Given the changes that have been made to the Corporate Plan with increased emphasis on sustainability, the protection of our natural resources and support for the local economy, the emphasises throughout the recently adopted Local Plan on creating and delivering sustainable communities together with the key role of the District Council in delivering the Partnership Plan it now seems appropriate for NFDC to declare a Climate Change and Nature Emergency.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There will be financial implications to address within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as a result of declaring a climate change and nature emergency. The associated actions that result from the declaration will need to be identified and agreed and estimates produced on the financial viability and aligned to the financial resources available to the Council.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Reducing emissions is a global priority and it is essential the Council plays its part to protect and enhance the environment within and around the district.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None arising directly from this report.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None arising directly from this report.

11. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 11.1 In declaring a Climate Change and Nature Emergency, this Council continues its long-standing commitment to the environment. Section 4 of the report sets out some of the actions the Council has taken over many years to increase its environmental sustainability and reduce the organisation's carbon footprint. The Council has not only undertaken considerable work internally, for example through the efforts of the 'Green Audit' working group that I was privileged to chair for many years, but it has also acted as an exemplar through projects such as the Ringwood Gateway, constructed to BREEAM Excellent rating for its sustainable design. I commend the recommendations set out in this report and look forward to Cabinet approving a stretching but realistic action plan at its meeting in February 2022.

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Background Papers: