

Joint Motion: South Gloucestershire Council to declare a Climate Emergency and sign the UK100 Pledge

This Council notes:

1. That runaway climate change constitutes an existential threat to human society and life on Earth;
2. That humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world;
3. That average global temperatures have now increased by 1°C above pre-industrial levels;
4. That, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report published in January 2019, the world is now on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050 – the consequences of which would be dire and irreversible;
5. That, consequently, it is no longer adequate to think of climate change as a potential future threat, but rather, it must now be treated as a real and present danger to the lives and life-chances of people now living as well as to those yet born, and to the natural world;
6. That the IPCC report tells us that limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible – but only with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, and local communities;
7. Earlier this year, the Committee on Climate Change has said that the UK can reach Net Zero by 2050 and set out the required steps to achieving this;
8. Governments and Councils are declaring a 'Climate Emergency' across the world and are committing resources to address this emergency;
9. That South Gloucestershire Council is now the only constituent authority within WECA not to have declared a Climate Emergency and signed the UK100 Pledge.

This Council further notes that:

1. This South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy 2018-2023, which was published on the same day as the IPCC report, currently outlines an emissions reduction of 80% by 2050, which at that time was in line with existing UK Government targets;
2. On June 12 2019 the government announced to amend the current UK greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of an 80% reduction by 2050 to cut greenhouse gas emissions to almost net zero by 2050;
3. In 2016, South Gloucestershire's emissions were measured to be 41% lower than in 1990, which is in line with the national decline in emissions;
4. The Council's direct emissions are now 50% lower than in the baseline year 2009/10;
5. The Council's direct emissions represent 1.32% of the total emissions for South Gloucestershire, but the Council has the ability to have significant influence over around

- 40% of emissions through planning for housing and transport, waste management and through demonstrating leadership and partnership working with the wider community;
6. The emissions for South Gloucestershire are equal to 4.4 tonnes for each resident, 35% of emissions came from industry and commercial sources, 32% from domestic sources, and 33% from road transport (excluding motorways);
 7. The Government currently uses the independent Climate Change Committee - a strong model that is signed up to by all political parties to offer guidance which can be emulated at a local level through Scrutiny Commission;
 8. Action plans are currently being compiled, meaning any further improvements to targets could be integrated into future work – for example, existing procurement frameworks have a social value, which looks at environmental benefits, among others, but this could be given further weight.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Declare a Climate Emergency;
2. Pledge to provide the leadership to enable South Gloucestershire to become carbon neutral by 2030;
3. To lobby the Government and DEFRA, through the Council and our MPs, to reassess policy and investment to provide the tools to achieve Net Zero by 2030 and to provide assistance in the delivery of the Council's timeline through new powers and resources;
4. Sign up to the UK100 Pledge to provide the strategic community leadership needed to enable our communities to achieve 100% clean energy across all sectors;
5. Request that the Cabinet takes steps to identify work streams and budgets with the aim of making South Gloucestershire Council carbon neutral by 2030, across all functions, as our contribution to fighting climate change;
6. Request Cabinet to work with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and our West of England partners to produce an ambitious delivery plan for the West of England Energy Strategy to use as a key tool for seeking Government funding to help us deliver our 2030 target;
7. Update the South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy to reflect the increased urgency and ambition outlined in this motion, and, with our partners across the community, to develop an action plan and 'route map' to a sustainable, low carbon future for our community and also to reflect the new proposed national target of net zero by 2050;
8. Request an initial progress report to the December 2019 meeting of Council with an annual report on progress to full Council thereafter;
9. To task Scrutiny Commission with forming a Task & Finish group to assess how South Gloucestershire Council can reach Net Zero by 2030 and feed into the initial report to Full Council. This would include producing an additional report analysing the gaps within our current plans to enable the area to meet net zero emissions.

