

Full Council – 8 July 2019

2nd Motion selected by the Labour Group

Declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency

This Council notes:

Humankind is at an unprecedented point in its history; faced with a stark choice between continuing to live beyond its means, or using all necessary measures to avert catastrophe.

So profound are the changes that man has wreaked upon the world that we live in an age known as the Anthropocene, the age of man. And how is humankind's stewardship of the planet faring?

Our seas are warming, acidifying and choking with plastic.

Our insects, a vital part of our eco-system, are disappearing, whilst globally wild animals are hunted, killed and driven to starvation in unprecedented numbers.

Extreme weather events are occurring more frequently, causing destruction and misery when they strike, whether it be storm or sea-surge, flood or fire.

And the whole world is heating up. Global temperatures have already increased by 1°C from pre-industrial levels. The UN's panel of climate change experts (the IPCC), state it is essential that the rise in temperatures is kept below 1.5°C, as if we fail in this endeavour and the temperature rises by 2°C, the possibility of a 'snowball effect', of problems feeding into and worsening other problems, becomes too risky to even countenance. We have only one planet to sustain us, and no country will be immune from the fallout if our systems fail.

In Brent, the consequences of inaction to address this climate emergency will include:

- Increased risk of flooding and damage to buildings, infrastructure and the local economy.
- Health problems, particularly for children, older people and those with pre-existing conditions.
- Higher living costs including energy, food, travel and insurance costs.
- Increases in social injustice and inequality.
- Financial and emotional consequences for residents with families around the world adversely affected by the impact of a changing climate

The rise of international movements of non-violent civil disobedience such as the Student School Strikes and Extinction Rebellion shows the degree to which ordinary citizens are concerned about our future, and we all have a role to play. Cities and city regions such as Brent must be in the

vanguard of the low carbon transition, as cities consume over two-thirds of the world's energy and are responsible for as much as 70% of man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

This Council further notes:

- Brent Council's Civic Centre is recognised as the greenest public building in the UK – constructed using methods which produced 26% less carbon emissions across the supply chain.
- In the first initiative of its kind in London, the council is sowing 22 urban meadows to create a seven-mile long “bee corridor” of wildflowers to boost the number of pollinating insects and increase the biodiversity of the borough.
- Brent Council has committed to a wholesale ban of fracking in Brent since 2013.
- Research shows, greenhouse gas emissions have reduced in Brent by 26% over the last decade.
- By 2021 carbon emissions from the Council are on track to decline by 60% from 2010/11 levels.
- The Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy recently announced that the Labour Party will launch a Green New Deal, with the goal of decarbonising the UK's economy and creating new jobs in the renewable energy sector in the most deprived areas of the country.

This Council believes that:

That a changing climate will have severe and enduring social, economic and environmental implications, and that tackling climate change is an issue of inequality as the greatest impact will be on the most vulnerable and those least able to protect themselves.

Thus this Council resolves:

- To join our Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan in declaring a Global climate emergency. This is essential to protect our only planet, not only for us, but for all the life on it and, hopefully, all the generations of life to come.
- Do all reasonable in the Council's gift to aim for carbon neutrality for 2030 and work with government to achieve the national 2050 target.
- Develop a Carbon Offset Fund and strategy, to enshrine the principle that developments, could and should fund projects that reduce carbon emissions elsewhere in the borough.
- At every opportunity, redirect our investments into renewable energy projects and carbon free or carbon neutral technologies.
- To continue delivering reductions in greenhouse gas emissions via the development of district energy networks and support for renewable alternatives
- Request that the appropriate scrutiny committee review the actions taken to reduce carbon emissions in Brent and the Council at the end of the municipal year.

- To empower a Lead Member to take responsibility for tackling climate change in Brent and charges that person with the responsibility to produce a report on this subject within 6 months, one that emphasises and promotes the importance of local biodiversity.
- Make representations to national government to urge them to provide the power and resources to the Mayor of London and local authorities to hasten the pace of carbon reduction and to immediately end the £10.5 billion of hidden subsidies with which central government supports the Fossil Fuel industry in this country.
- Explore the viability of there being an annual Green summit for interested parties, where issues can be discussed, good practice shared and ideas promoted.

Councillor Roxanne Mashari (mover)
Welsh Harp Ward