

Motion calling on Wells City Council to declare a Climate Emergency:

Full Council notes:

1. human activity has already caused irreversible climate change, the impact of which is felt around the world. Global temperatures have increased by over 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are over 406 parts per million (ppm), far exceeding the 350 ppm deemed a 'safe' level for humanity⁶. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2030;^{2, 3}
2. the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C published in November 2018 describes the harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause, and tells us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and regional authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities³;
3. in order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that each of us reduces our CO₂ eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes without delay;¹
4. individuals can accept responsibility for living in a more sustainable way but cannot be expected to make all changes without support. Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption, so Governments - national, regional and local - must change legislation, standards and their approach to meet the need to reduce our CO₂ eq emissions and make low carbon living easier to achieve and the new 'norm';
5. Local Authorities and Councils across the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing to address this emergency. In the South West, many Councils have already taken this step.⁴
6. the Covenant of Mayors, a free network of towns and cities around the globe who have committed to reducing carbon emissions by 2030. The network enables members to share best practice, ideas and funding, and works to create a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) every two years which enables towns and cities to track progress towards meeting their zero carbon targets.

Full Council believes that:

1. All governments have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local government recognises it cannot and should not wait for national government to act.
2. It is important for the residents of the City of Wells that its Council commits to reducing CO₂ eq emissions and works towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

3. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits by way of new jobs, economic savings, market opportunities and improved well-being.

Full Council moves to:

1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency';
2. Pledge to make the City of Wells carbon neutral by 2030, working proactively with others where opportunities arise, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3)⁵;
3. Become a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors;
4. Work with residents, organisations and community action groups across the City to deliver this new goal through all relevant plans and actions;
5. Assist the City of Wells' residents to become more resilient to the impacts of global warming;
6. Report to Full Council before the end of 2019 with the actions the Council has, and will take, to address this emergency.
7. Report to the City of Wells' residents on an annual basis to demonstrate progress in making the City of Wells carbon neutral by 2030.

References:

1. Fossil CO₂ & 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>
6. Assessing "Dangerous Climate Change": Required reduction of Carbon Emissions to protect young people, future generations and nature:
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0081648>