

Liberal Democrat Group – Notice of Motion

Council Meeting

19 June 2019

Climate Change

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°C from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are over 400 parts per million (ppm), far exceeding the 350ppm deemed a ‘safe’ level for humanity. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C limit before 2030;
2. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 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 sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous people and local communities;
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 CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes without delay;
4. Individuals can accept responsibility for living in a more sustainable way but cannot be expected to make these changes on their own. 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 CO₂eq emissions and make low carbon living easier to achieve and the new ‘norm’;
5. Councils across the world are responding by declaring a ‘Climate Emergency’ – making a commitment to address this emergency. In the South West, Bristol, Cornwall and Somerset Councils have already taken this step;
6. Torbay, with its coastline and large low lying areas, especially in Paignton, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Full Council believes that:

1. All governments have a duty to limit the negative impacts of climate breakdown, and local governments that recognise this cannot, and should not, wait for their national government to act;
2. It is important for the residents of Torbay that its Council commits to reducing CO₂eq emissions and work towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

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

Full Council resolves:

Cabinet be recommended:

- a) That Torbay Council recognises the scale and urgency of the global challenge from climate change, as documented by the latest Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and declares a climate emergency;
- b) That the Overview and Scrutiny Board be requested to review and recommend what further corporate approaches can be taken through Torbay Council's Energy and Climate Change Strategy and to facilitate stronger Torbay-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level;
- c) That all relevant outside organisation member representatives, Cabinet Members and senior officers work with partners, including the Heart of the South West LEP, individuals and community action groups across Torbay to identify ways to make Torbay carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;
- d) That the Leader of the Council be requested to write to the Secretaries of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy; Transport; Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; and Housing, Communities and Local Government calling for the creation, provision or devolution of powers and resources to make achievement of the 2030 target possible in Torbay;
- e) That the Interim Director of Place be requested to update the Council before the end of 2019 with the actions the Council has and will take to address this emergency; and

Council be recommended:

- f) That £25,000 be allocated from the Council's 2019/20 contingency budget and authorise the Interim Director of Place to utilise this funding to resource the work necessary to support the Overview and Scrutiny Board and to assess any specific recommendations and financial implications, with any unspent allocation being carried forward into 2020/21 to continue the work.

Proposed by: Councillor Howgate
Seconded by: Councillor Heyse