

Hull City Council Climate Emergency Declaration 21 March 2019

Council notes that humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world with global temperatures already one degree Celsius higher than in pre-industrial times. Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm), far exceeding the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity.

Council further notes that in order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of dramatic climate change, there must be a global reduction in our 'Carbon Dioxide Equivalent' emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes. It is not possible for individuals to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new 'norm' as carbon emissions result from both production and consumption.

Council welcomes recent climate action by the London Mayor and Assembly, leading UK local authorities including Bristol and Manchester, and other city authorities around the world to declare - and commit resources to tackling - our 'Climate Emergency'.

This Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of dramatic climate change by consistently promoting and supporting public transport use and investing in and supporting partnerships to make Hull a 'Green Energy City'. Hull is a member of the Global Resilient Cities wider network and the second most invested city in England in terms of flood prevention and mitigation through the Living with Water Partnership with the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. In addition, Hull has actively assisted others in preparing to resist climate change by advising our twin city, Freetown, on flood mitigation.

Council notes that Kingston upon Hull is uniquely placed to show leadership within the UK, as a result of the city's innovative and growing renewable energy sector. Council welcomes the Government's new Offshore Wind Sector Deal and the recognition that businesses in our region will play a crucial role in meeting the target for a third of all UK electricity to be produced by offshore wind power by 2030.

Council believes, however, that our current plans and actions are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050 and less than 2°C warming by 2100 is unlikely. With the likely increase being between 2.0-4.9°C, Hull is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise, and the current 1°C of warming could result in 2m of sea level rise by 2100, enough to submerge Hull within the lifetime of today's children. A 2°C to 4°C of warming could see sea level rises of 4.7m, to 8.9m.

Council notes that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's "Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C" states 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 and local communities.

Council joins London, Bristol, Manchester and other UK local authorities in declaring a 'Climate Emergency'.

Council believes that all levels of government have a duty to limit the impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local Councils should not wait for Government to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Hull and the UK that cities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.

Cities are uniquely placed to lead the world in reducing carbon emissions, as they are in many ways easier to decarbonise than rural areas and bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities.

Council resolves to do everything within the Council's power to make Hull carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.

Council commits to continuing to work with partners across the city and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans.

Council also resolves to call on the Government to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible, to work with other Governments to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C and to continue to work with partners across the City and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans.

Council requests a report back to Full Council within six months on the actions that will be taken to address and action this resolution.