

The Nature & Climate Declaration and Climate and Ecology Bill (2022)

To: Environment and Green Investment Committee

Meeting Date: 7 July 2022

From: Steve Cox - Executive Director, Place and Economy

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: Full Council is asked to approve the signing of the Nature & Climate Declaration and endorse the Climate and Ecology Bill (2022)

Recommendation: The Committee is requested to:

- a. Support the Nature & Climate Declaration and recommend to Full Council to sign the Declaration;
- b. Endorse the Climate and Ecology Bill (2022) and recommend this to Full Council.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [*Sixth Assessment Report*](#) (August 2021) is unequivocal. Unless immediate, rapid, and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions take place, limiting global warming to safe levels will be beyond reach. At the same time, the decline of wildlife species is fast accelerating—human activity is causing the sixth mass wildlife extinction in our planet's history.
- 1.2 Climate change and biodiversity loss are the most significant issues of our time. Decision makers can make choices that conserve a stable and prosperous way of life, with a rich, natural world within the UK or delay action and expose present and future generations to high levels of risk and instability.
- 1.3 In May 2019, the Council declared a Climate and Environment Emergency and acknowledged its role as a caretaker of the environment for future generations. It also recognised that all governments (national, regional, and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of environmental change by cutting carbon emissions, protecting biodiversity, and reducing pollution.
- 1.4 The cross-party Nature and Climate Declaration was launched in Parliament on 10th May 2022, the third anniversary of Parliaments' declaration of a climate emergency. The purpose of the declaration is to demonstrate support for the UK to proceed further and faster in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and restoring the natural world. It is calling on members of the public, elected representatives across all parties and all layers of government to add their names to the Declaration.
- 1.5 Zero Hour, a campaign group promoting the Nature and Climate Declaration, are also behind the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, or CEE Bill. The Bill was written by scientists, experts, and campaigners and was first introduced in Parliament by Caroline Lucas MP in September 2020. It now has the backing of over 150 parliamentarians representing all major political parties.
- 1.6 The outcome of this report is to recommend to Full Council to sign the Nature and Climate Declaration and to support the Climate and Ecological Bill.

2 Key Points

What does the Nature and Climate Declaration cover?

- 2.1 It calls on the UK Government to deal with the risks identified in their Net Zero Strategy published in October 2021 and the 'Leaders Pledge for Nature', including:

"If we fail to limit global warming to 1.5°C, floods and fires will get more frequent and more fierce, crops will be more likely to fail, and sea levels will rise driving mass migration as millions are forced from their homes. Above 1.5°C, we risk reaching climatic tipping points, meaning we could lose control of our climate for good."

“If we fail to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, we increase the risk of further pandemics, rising global temperatures and loss of species.”

2.2 The Declaration is asking the UK Government to deal with these critical risks by:

- Fulfilling the UK’s fair share of emissions reductions to ensure that the average global temperature increase will not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius
- Halting and reversing biodiversity decline by 2030, and
- Delivering a more ambitious and integrated environmental protection and decarbonisation plan.

2.3 Zero Hour is urging the UK government to consider these three recommendations in advance of the UK Climate Change Summit, COP27, in November 2022.

What is the Climate and Ecology Bill and why sign up to support it through Parliament?

2.4 The Climate and Ecology Bill 2022 (formerly the CEE Bill) is a plan for a new UK law that addresses the full extent of the climate change and nature crisis in line with the most up to date science.

2.5 The Bill will look to place a duty on the Secretary of State to achieve both a climate and a nature target. The climate target will be in line with the UK’s commitment under the Paris Agreement limiting the UK’s contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions at a rate consistent with limiting global temperatures to 1.5 degree Celsius. The nature target is to ensure the UK’s contribution to the degradation and loss of nature is halted and reversed and that the abundance of species and habitats must be increased so that by 2030 our natural world is visibly and measurably on the path to recovery.

2.6 The Bill also requires the creation of an emergency Climate and Nature Strategy within twelve months. This must include measures sufficient to achieve the climate and nature targets in line with scientific evidence, whilst also ensuring positive impacts on those with high levels of deprivation, young people, and those protected under the Equality Act 2010.

2.7 The Secretary of State will be required to establish a Climate and Nature Assembly as an independent body, representative of the population. The Assembly must consider expert advice and recommend measures for inclusion in the Climate and Nature Strategy.

2.8 The strategy must include measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions calculated on the basis of UK consumption including international aviation and passenger shipping, as far and as rapidly as possible. It must include measures to end the extraction and use of fossil fuels by the UK as rapidly as possible. Measures must protect, restore, and enhance ecosystems in the UK and beyond, ensuring steps are taken to increase the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, populations, and ecosystems—to tackle effectively the current sixth mass extinction of wildlife.

- 2.9 The Bill would impose duties on two existing UK expert committees, the Committee on Climate Change and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, to evaluate, monitor and report annually on the implementation of the strategy and the achievement of interim targets, including recommending annual carbon budgets for the UK.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 The report above sets out the implications for the following corporate priorities in section 2:

Environment and Sustainability
Health and Care
Places and Communities
Children and Young People
Transport

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

- 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: Recommendation does not directly affect but will promote positive policy decision going forward.

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: Recommendation does not directly affect but will promote positive policy decision going forward.

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats, and land management.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: Recommendation does not directly affect but will promote positive policy decision going forward.

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: Recommendation does not directly affect but will promote positive policy decision going forward.

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability, and management:

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: Recommendation does not directly affect but will promote positive policy decision going forward.

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: Recommendation does not directly affect but will promote positive policy decision going forward.

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: Recommendation does not directly affect but will promote positive policy decision going forward.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes or No

Name of Financial Officer:

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes or No

Name of Officer:

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes or No

Name of Legal Officer:

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?

Yes or No

Name of Officer:

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Yes or No
Name of Officer:

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes or No
Name of Officer:

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?
Yes or No
Name of Officer:

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?
Yes or No
Name of Officer:

5. Source documents

5.1 Source documents

Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report, [Summary for Policy Makers](#)
Parliament UK [Climate and Ecology Bill 2022](#)
[Nature and Climate Declaration - Zero Hour](#)
More information on the bill can be found here - [Climate & Ecology Bill - Zero Hour](#)
14th May 2019, [Council Minutes, Declaration of a Climate and Environment Emergency](#)

5.2 Location

As above.