

BRIEFING NOTE

MOTION: TO SUPPORT THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY BILL

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK and around the world. The global temperature has already increased by 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels, and the natural world has reached crisis point, with [28% of plants and animals](#) threatened with extinction.

Lancaster City Council declared a Climate Emergency in January 2019 and have taken significant action towards reducing their own carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. However, unless we drastically change course, the world is set to exceed the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit - the Met Office predict [Met Office predict](#) that there is a 50:50 chance of this happening in the next 5 years. Pledges, such as the Paris Agreement and Glasgow Pact—and updated emissions targets—are not legally-binding. This gap between pledges and policy leaves the world on course for catastrophic warming of [near 3°C](#).

Following the “now or never” Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [report](#) in April 2022, the UN Secretary General António Guterres stated that “we are on a fast track to climate disaster. This is not fiction or exaggeration. It is what science tells us will result from our current energy policies”.

In addition, the UK Government's [Net Zero Strategy](#) stated that “if we fail to limit global warming to 1.5°C, we risk reaching climatic tipping points, we could lose control of our climate for good”. The 1.5°C goal is ‘on life support’ and only ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector and local communities will help us realise it.

Biodiversity loss

The UK is [one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world](#). More than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline. We therefore welcome the [Leaders' Pledge for Nature](#), signed by the UK Government, which states that—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. In order to achieve this, the UK needs a legally-enforceable nature target so that, by 2030, nature is visibly and measurably on the path of recovery—in line with the [Global Goal for Nature](#).

Lancaster City Council notes that:

There is a Bill that was introduced into the current UK Parliament in May 2022—the [Climate and Ecology Bill](#)—which, if it becomes law, would require the development of a strategy to ensure that the UK's environmental response is in line with the latest science. The strategy would ensure that:

- the ecological crisis is tackled shoulder to shoulder with the climate crisis via a joined-up approach;
- the Paris Agreement aim is enshrined into law to ensure that the UK does its full and fair share to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C;

- we halt and reverse biodiversity loss, meeting the Government's target of protecting 30% of nature by 2030, to ensure that the UK's ecosystems are protected and restored;
- the UK takes responsibility for its greenhouse gas footprint, including international aviation and shipping—and by accounting for consumption emissions related to the goods and services that are imported and consumed in the UK;
- the UK takes responsibility for its ecological footprint in order to better protect the health and resilience of ecosystems—including along domestic and global supply chains; and
- an independent, temporary Climate and Nature Assembly is set-up—representative of the UK population—to engage with the UK Parliament and UK Government to help develop the strategy. This would be set up on broadly similar lines to the Climate Assembly 2020 which was very successful and very well received on all sides of the political divide.

Lancaster City Council therefore resolves to:

1. Support the Climate and Ecology Bill;
2. Declare an 'Ecological Emergency' and include actions to address this in addition to their Climate Action Plan
3. Write to David Morris and Cat Smith letting them know that the motion has been passed — urging them to sign up to support the Bill, or thanking them for already doing so; and
4. Write to [Zero Hour](#), the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (joinus@ceebill.uk).

PROPOSERS:

Cllrs Frea, Black, G. Knight, Matthews, Wood

OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE

The motion is consistent with the Council's agreed priority of 'a sustainable district'.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.