

## Rother District Council

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	26 February 2024
Subject	-	Motion to Council – Climate & Ecology Bill motion

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### **Motion submitted by Councillor Simon McGurk, seconded by Councillor Polly Gray**

#### **Preamble**

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK, and across the world. The average global temperature has already increased by 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and alongside this the natural world has reached crisis point, with 28% of plants and animals threatened with extinction. In addition, the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world as more than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline. Climate change remains a major concern for UK voters with 66% of people (according to YouGov) expressing they are 'worried about climate change and its effects'. Alongside this, the popularity of Sir David Attenborough's Save Our Wild Isles initiative demonstrates public concern that UK wildlife is being destroyed at a terrifying speed.

#### **Climate & Ecology Bill**

The Climate & Ecology Bill (CE Bill), a private member's bill currently before the House of Commons, seeks to address the challenges that this situation poses by creating a whole-of-government approach to deliver a net zero and nature positive future. Based on the latest science, the CE Bill aims to align current UK environmental policy with the need to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, which was goal agreed to at COP15, via the Kunming-Montreal Framework (22 December 2022); and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the UK's fair share of the remaining global carbon budget to give the strongest chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C, which was the goal agreed to at COP21, via the Paris Agreement (12 December 2015). By bridging the gap between the UK Government's current delivery, and what has been agreed at international levels, Britain has a chance to be a world leader on climate and the environment; seizing the opportunities of the clean energy transition, including green jobs and skills; reduced energy bills; and boosting the UK's food and energy security.

**Rother District Council notes that:** The Climate and Ecology Bill has been introduced in the UK Parliament on four occasions since 2020, including most recently in the House of Commons 10 May 2023. The Bill is backed by (at the most recent count) 180 cross-party MPs and Peers, 237 local authorities, alongside the support of eminent scientists, such as Sir David King; NGOs, such as the Wildlife Trusts, the Doctors' Association, Oxfam, the W.I. and CPRE; businesses, such as The Co-operative Bank, Riverford and The Body Shop; and 42,000 members of the public. The CE Bill would require the UK Government to develop and achieve a new environmental strategy, which would include:

1. Delivering a joined-up environmental plan, as the crises in climate and nature are deeply intertwined, and require a plan that considers both together;

2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5°C to ensure emissions are reduced in line with the best chance of meeting the UK's Paris Agreement obligations;
3. Not only halting, but also reversing the decline in nature, setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030;
4. Taking responsibility for our overseas footprint, both emissions and ecological;
5. Prioritising nature in decision-making and ending fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible;
6. Providing for re-training for those people currently working in fossil fuel industries; and
7. Giving the British people a say in finding a fair way forward via a temporary, independent and representative Climate & Nature Assembly, as part of creating consensus and ensuring that no one and no community is left behind.

**Rother District Council therefore RESOLVES to:**

1. Support the Climate and Ecology Bill;
2. Inform local residents and inform local press/media of this decision;
3. Write to Sally Ann Hart and Huw Merriman to inform them that this motion has been passed, and urge them to sign up to support the CE Bill—or thank them for already doing so;
4. Write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the CE Bill, expressing Rother District Council's support ([councils@zerohour.uk](mailto:councils@zerohour.uk)).

Proposer, Councillor Simon McGurk, Labour Group.

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**Background Information for Context**

The Bill was first developed with members of the successful 'Big Ask' campaign which led to the Climate Change Act 2008, and is now led by a coalition of UK campaigners, world-leading scientists, academics and members of the public. The Climate and Ecology Bill was first introduced to Parliament in September 2020. The updated Bill was [introduced](#) in the House of Lords in June 2022.

The Climate and Ecology Bill has received backing from a wide range of supporters from different fields including Liz Bonin, Ben Fogle, Kumi Naidoo (Director, Greenpeace International, 2009-16); musician, Thom Yorke; environmentalist, Bill McKibben; Volans co-founder, John Elkington and actor-playwright Sir Mark Rylance. It has support from across the political spectrum.

The Climate and Ecology Bill makes sure the UK does its bit to keep global warming down to 1.5°C, which gives us a chance to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. This means cutting down greenhouse gas emissions really fast.

While the existing Environment Act only offers to halt the decline of nature by 2030, the Climate and Ecology Bill commits to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.

Weaning ourselves off fossil fuels means big changes. So it's important that everyone is on board with them. That's why the Bill also calls for a climate and nature assembly to help Government and Parliament develop an emergency strategy on the way forward.

The Bill, which was written by scientists, experts and campaigners, was first introduced in Parliament by Caroline Lucas MP in September 2020 and now has the backing of over 150 parliamentarians representing all major political parties.

The bill is promoted by Zero Hour and championed by Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall, further details can be found here: <https://www.zerohour.uk/>

The bill can be read here: <https://www.zerohour.uk/downloads/climate-and-ecology-bill.pdf>