

WHPC Meeting
7th November 2023
Agenda item 23/351

Purpose

To consider a recent communication from Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Climate and Ecology Bill, and take a number of actions, if considered appropriate.

Background

Zero Hour are asking Councils to support the Climate and Ecology (CE) Bill, a private member's bill currently before the House of Commons and due to have its second reading on 24th November 2023. 168 Town and Parish Councils across the UK have joined in support of the Bill, as well as a wide range of public and private-sector organisations. The Bill is backed by 180 cross-party MPs and Peers, eminent scientists and 42,000 members of the public.

More information about the Bill can be found here: <https://www.zerohour.uk/bill/>

The Bill is the only proposed legislation before the UK Parliament that ensures a comprehensive and joined-up approach to the climate emergency and nature crisis.

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.

Based on the latest science, the Climate and Ecology Bill aims to align current UK environmental policy with the need to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, which was the goal agreed to at COP15 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.

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.

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.

Councillors are asked to consider the following actions:

1. Support the Climate and Ecology Bill;
2. Inform local residents and local press/media of this decision;
3. Write to our local MP Simon Jupp to inform him that this motion has been passed, and urge him to sign up to support the Climate and Ecology Bill;
4. Write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill, expressing West Hill Parish Council's support (councils@zerohour.uk).

Cllr Alison Carr,
20th October 2023