Climate Emergency

"This Council notes:

1. Human activity has already caused irreversible climate change, the impact of which is felt around the world, that global temperatures have increased by over 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels that atmospheric CO_2 levels are over 406 parts per million (ppm), far exceeding the 350 ppm deemed a 'safe' level for humanity[6], and that the world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature increase limit before 2030;[2, 3]

2. The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C published in November 2018 describes the harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause, and tells us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities[3];

3. In order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that each of us reduces our CO_2 eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes without delay;[1]

4. Individuals can accept responsibility for living in a more sustainable way but cannot be expected to make these changes on their own, that carbon emissions result from both production and consumption, and so Governments - national, regional and local - must change legislation, standards and their approach to meet the need to reduce our CO_2 eq emissions and make low carbon living easier to achieve and the new 'norm';

5. Local authorities and councils across the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing to address this emergency.

This Council believes that:

1. All governments have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local government recognises it cannot and should not wait for national governments to act.

2. It is important for the residents of Aberdeen that the council and other public authorities commit to reducing CO_2 eq emissions and work towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

3. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits by way of new jobs, economic savings, market opportunities and improved well-being.

This Council agrees to:

1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency';

2.   Pledge to work proactively with others to make Aberdeen carbon neutral by 2030;

3.   Continue to work with partners and community groups across Aberdeen to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;

4.   Assist communities to become more resilient to the impacts of global warming, particularly to flooding and to drought;

5.   Instruct the Director of Resources to report to Full Council before the end of 2019 on how carbon budgeting could be introduced into the council's budget setting processes;

6.   Instruct the Chief Executive to report to Full Council before the end of 2019 with the actions the Council has taken, and proposals for action to be taken, to address this emergency.

References:

1.   Fossil CO_2 & GHG emissions of all world countries, 2017:

http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2andGHG1970-2016&dst=GHGpc

2.   World Resources Institute:

https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/8-things-you-need-know-about-ipcc-15-c-report

3.   The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5ºC:

https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/

4.   Including US cities Berkeley:

https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/blog/2018/6/13/berkeley-unanimously-declares-climate-emergency

and Hoboken:

https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/blog/2018/4/25/hoboken-resolves-to-mobilize

and the C40 cities:

https://www.c40.org/other/deadline-2020

5.   Scope 1, 2 and 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol explained:

https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions

6.   Assessing "Dangerous Climate Change": Required reduction of Carbon Emissions to protect young people, future generations and nature:

https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0081648

7.   Climate Local

https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/environment-and-waste/climate-local