

## Item 15 - Liberal Democrat Amendment to the Labour Motion

Full Council – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Council notes that:

- Approximately 230 councils have declared a Climate Emergency, including Merton Council in July 2019. As part of our Climate Emergency declaration, we pledged to support Merton to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.
- Local government is an indispensable partner in achieving net zero, because of our insight into our communities and local circumstances, our service delivery and regulatory functions, and our ability to join up emissions reductions with other pressing priorities, from public health, to inequality to economic development.
- Without direct financial support from the Government and an acknowledgement of the pivotal role they play in tackling climate change, local authorities will struggle to achieve these vital targets
- [That at the Council meeting on 15 September 2021 a Liberal Democrat Motion on ending the holding of shares in fossil fuel companies within 3 years was defeated](#)
- [That at the COP26 Summit the agreement on phasing out Coal was watered down at the last moment](#)
- [That the Council continues to own shares in at least one Coal company](#)

Council welcomes:

The actions Merton Council has already taken to tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis including, by way of example:

- approving Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, including the key actions required to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.
- setting up and supporting the volunteers in the Climate Action Group to develop community-led projects to reduce everyone's emissions, recognising that joint efforts are more effective than individuals' or the Council's alone.
- putting £2 million of reserves towards actions in the Climate Strategy and Action Plan so far
- supporting Merton Garden Streets, a volunteer-led initiative to make our streets greener, and holding Car Free Day events.
- installing 68 innovative Breathe London air quality and traffic sensors – more than any other London borough.
- installing low-energy LED lighting in our buildings and investing £2m in LED streetlights.
- putting in place over 50 PV panel systems on 44 Council buildings, generating 1,000,000 kWh every year, and 100% of the council's energy supply now coming from renewable sources.
- introducing more School Streets than any other London borough per capita, to lower pollution outside schools
- having over 200 electric vehicle charging points, 20 cycle hangars, 10 parklets, and 11 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- Drafting a Local Plan that sets ambitious targets for new development so that new development is net-zero by 2050.

Council resolves:

- To continue to support Merton's communities including the Climate Action Group in their lead and delivery of projects across the borough, recognising that 97% of carbon emissions in Merton are outside Merton Council's control.
- To continue to work with employers in the borough, including businesses, the third sector, charities and the public sector to encourage them to take steps to reduce their carbon emissions and operate in a more sustainable way, and learn from any best practice that they have already put in place.
- To work with the third sector, charities, businesses, and residents across the borough to continue to meet targets set in the Climate Action Plan.
- That the Leader will write to Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove MP to make the case for:
  - Acknowledging local government's pivotal role in tackling climate change, and to share examples of the work already done by Merton Council.
  - To call on the government to agree to a national framework and strategy with local government and business, that provides certainty of funding to enable local government to leverage its unique role and influence and maximize its potential in tackling climate change in the UK.
- To request the Pensions Committee to consider disposing of all shares in Coal companies by the end of 2022 and not to acquire any further holdings
- To request officers to provide a report every 6 months to the Pensions Committee of holdings in fossil fuel companies highlighting any new holdings since the last report

Cllr Simon McGrath