



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Council

29th February 2024

Councillor Rhys Baker, Joint Cabinet
Member for Waste and Environment

Climate and Ecology Bill

Report Author

Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

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Purpose of Report

Following introduction at Full Council on 23 November 2023, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the motion on 12 December 2023 to support the Climate and Ecology Bill.

Recommendations

That the Council:

1. Support the Climate and Ecology bill and write to all MPs who have constituencies within the District of South Kesteven.

Or

2. Recommend not supporting the Climate and Ecology bill.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Clean and sustainable environment

Which wards are impacted?

All wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no direct financial implications surrounding the decision to support the Climate and Ecology Bill. The Council has a separate work programme for projects addressing climate change.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no direct governance implications from choosing to support, or not to support, the Climate and Ecology Bill. Councillors have received updates on the implications of the current Environment Act 2021 on the work of the Council, principally at Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If the Climate Change and Ecology Bill becomes law, it may place requirements on the Council through the Government's subsequent climate change strategy.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

Climate Change

- 1.3 South Kesteven District Council have recently published a Climate Action Strategy which sets out the Council's ambitions for addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation within the district. Support for the Climate and Ecology bill would not have an impact on the work of the Council regarding climate change, but could signal support for strengthening national targets and aspirations.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Climate & Ecology 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.
- 2.2 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).
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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. It is backed by 180 cross-party MPs as well as 237 local authorities. These authorities can be seen on the webpages of Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign, at: [Supporting Councils \(zerohour.uk\)](https://www.zerohour.org.uk/supporting-councils)
- 2.5 South Kesteven District Council was one of the many councils to recognise the magnitude of the issue of climate change through declaring a climate emergency in 2019. The Council has also developed a finalised Climate Action Strategy for the district, reviewed by Cabinet in late 2023.
- 2.6 Councillor Vanessa Smith introduced the motion to Council on [23rd November 2023](#), where it was agreed to refer the motion to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 2.7 The motion was added to the agenda for Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th December 2023. Following discussion on the Bill and implications for South Kesteven District Council, a majority of committee members agreed to recommend to full Council to support the Climate and Ecology bill and write to all MPs who have constituencies within the district of South Kesteven.
- 2.8 If Council are minded to support the Climate and Ecology bill, it will undertake to inform local residents and press of that decision, to write to all MPs who have constituencies within South Kesteven to urge them to support the Climate and Ecology Bill, and write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill formally expressing South Kesteven District Council's support.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 Council is requested either to support the Climate and Ecology Bill and write to MPs to express that support, or not to support the Climate and Ecology Bill.