

Motion for Time Limited Debate - Climate and Nature Bill

Proposer: Jenni Hawkins

Seconder: Paul Stepto

Background information provided by the Green and Independents Group:

Climate change is affecting us all. Kent is facing significant challenges due to climate change, including increased rainfall that leads to serious flooding in areas like Romney Marsh and the Medway Valley. Landslips and coastal erosion are becoming more frequent, especially in Folkestone and other vulnerable areas like Thanet and the North Downs. Extreme rainfall has heightened the risk of such events, endangering homes, infrastructure, and critical transport links like the M20 and key railways. Kent's agriculture has also been severely impacted. Rising temperatures, as seen in 2023 and 2024, are exacerbating droughts and threatening food security, vital ecosystems, and local biodiversity.

The average global temperature has already increased by 1.3°C above pre-industrial levels, and July 2024 marked the thirteenth consecutive month that the world exceeded the 1.5°C threshold. Above 1.5°C, we risk reaching climatic tipping points, meaning we could lose control of our climate for good.

Locally in Kent, the Climate Change Risk and Impact assessment (CCRIA) reported climate change projections for Kent including an increase in average summer temperature of 2 – 3°C by 2040 and 5 – 6°C by 2080, warmer winters with an increase in average winter temperature of 1 – 2°C by 2040 and 3 – 4°C by 2080 as well as drier summers with a reduction in average precipitation of 20 – 30% by 2040 and 30 – 50% by 2080, and wetter winters with an increase in average precipitation of 10 – 20% by 2040 and 20 – 30% by 2080.

Climate change remains a major concern for UK voters with 80% of people expressing they are 'very' or 'fairly' concerned about climate change. The natural world has also reached a crisis point, with 28% of plants and animals threatened with extinction. 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. 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 and Nature Bill

The [Climate and Nature Bill](#), a private member's (ballot) bill currently passing through the House of Commons, would address the challenge that this greatest, long-term, global risk poses by delivering a whole-of-government approach to securing a net zero and nature positive future. Based on the latest scientific evidence, the 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 Global Biodiversity 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; boosting the UK's food and energy security and creating a nature-rich UK.

Kent County Council notes that:

The [Climate and Nature Bill](#) (formerly, 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 on 16 October 2024 by Dr Roz Savage MP. Its second reading will take place on 24 January 2025, and it is now progressing through the UK Parliament with cross-party support. The Bill is backed by **[250]** cross-party MPs and Peers; **[372]** local authorities and the London Assembly; **[1,240]** scientists, such as Prof Sir Partha Dasgupta and Prof Sir David King; NGOs, like The Wildlife Trusts, Doctors' Association UK, Friends of the Earth, The W.I., The Climate Coalition and CPRE; businesses, including The Co-operative Bank, Arup, JLL, SUEZ UK and Ecotricity; and 53,000 members of the public. The Bill would require the UK Government to develop and deliver an integrated climate and nature strategy, as part of:

1. Tackling the intertwined crises in climate and nature in a joined-up way;
2. Reducing emissions fairly and rapidly for the highest chance of meeting the UK's obligation to limiting global warming to 1.5°C;
3. Halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity by setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030;
4. Taking responsibility for the UK's overseas emissions and ecological footprints;
5. Prioritising nature in decision-making, and ending fossil fuel imports and production as rapidly as possible;
6. Ensuring that no-one and no community is left behind in the just transition by providing retraining for those currently working in fossil fuel industries; and
7. Involving citizens in finding a fair way forward via an independent, representative and temporary 'Climate and Nature Assembly', in order to bring public opinion along with the pace of change required.

This Council resolves to request that the Cabinet Member for Environment:

1. Ensures that its policies align with the relevant sections of the Climate and Nature Bill;
2. Inform local residents, and local press/media, of our motion;
3. Write to all elected MPs in Kent to inform them that our motion has been passed, urging them to sign up to support the Bill, and requesting that they vote for the Bill at its second reading on 24 January 2025.
4. Write to [Zero Hour](#), the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill, expressing our official support (councils@zerohour.uk).