



Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and
Rural Affairs,
DEFRA
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
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Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
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30 April 2019

Dear Mr Gove

Request for powers and resources to implement appropriate actions in response to the climate emergency

On 18th March 2019, Plymouth City Councillors from across the political spectrum unanimously voted in favour of a motion to publicly declare a climate emergency and bring Plymouth's carbon emissions target forward by 20 years. The motion pledges to make the city of Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030 and comes on the back of recent UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that warned that humanity has 12 years to take emergency action in order to prevent global warming greater than 1.5°C.

I write to you now to highlight our concern about the likely detrimental impacts on both Plymouth's and the UK's economy and on the well-being of our citizens. We must act according to the threat that has been sounded to us loud and clear from the IPCC. As an ocean city, we stand to be on the UK's front line of urban areas impacted by extreme weather events exacerbated by climate breakdown.

We request that powers and resources urgently be made available to make carbon neutrality by 2030 possible.

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1°C from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;

In order to reduce the chance of runaway global warming and limit the effects of climate breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from our current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible.

Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm. Plymouth City Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of climate breakdown, it has already committed to making the city carbon neutral by 2050 with an interim target of reducing emissions by 50% by 2034, has an acclaimed programme of energy efficiency, renewable energy, low carbon transport and climate change mitigation projects.

Unfortunately, our current plans and actions are not enough.

The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050; The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise, and told 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.

We believe that:

1. All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Plymouth, and the UK that cities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;
2. Cities and city regions have a vital role to play in leading the low carbon transition. They consume over two-thirds of the world's energy and are responsible for as much as 70% of man-made greenhouse gas emissions.
3. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority; and,
4. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide).

We have committed to work with other councils with similar ambitions. We will work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C. We will continue to work with partners across the city and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans.

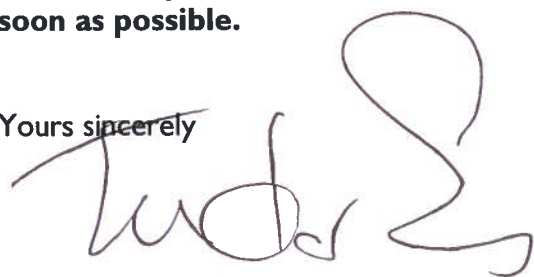
Our Officers will report to Full Council within six months with climate emergency action plan and new corporate carbon reduction plan. This action alone will be a budget pressure.

We now call on Government to commit to the same level of urgent emergency response and allocate powers and resources accordingly.

At the Prime Ministers questions on 20th March, the Prime Minister stated that 'We will be putting policies in place that will enable areas...to achieve their commitment in relation to climate change'.

We call on you to work with all levels of Government to implement effective policies as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tudor Evans', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
Leader, Plymouth City Council