

North Yorkshire Council

Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30 January 2025

Notice of Motion on Support for Climate and Nature Bill

Report of the Corporate Director of Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present information in response to a Motion at Full Council in November 2024 seeking support for the Climate and Nature Bill, that was subsequently allocated to this committee. The committee is asked to agree a way forward for Full Council to consider at its next meeting on 26 February 2025.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At Full Council on 13 November 2024, a number of Motions were received, and it was agreed they would be referred to the Scrutiny Board to consider and allocate to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the intention of recommendations being brought back to the next meeting of full Council in February 2025. (See Appendix A).
- 2.2 On 15 November 2024, the Scrutiny Board considered this Motion, and it was agreed that it should be considered by the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 MOTION – SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE AND NATURE BILL

- 3.1 The Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Steve Mason (and seconded by Councillor Bryn Griffiths) stated:
- 3.2 North Yorkshire Council notes that: The Climate and Nature Bill is backed by 372 local authorities, 250 cross-party MPs and Peers, alongside the support of eminent 1250 scientists and has passed first reading in the house.
- 3.3 The Bill requires the UK Government to develop and deliver a new environmental strategy, which would include:
1. Delivering a joined-up environmental plan.
 2. Reducing emissions in line with our 1.5°C commitment.
 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 emissions and ecological footprint.
 5. Prioritising nature in decision-making and ending fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible,
 6. Ensuring that no-one is left behind, by providing retraining for people currently working in fossil fuel industries.
 7. Giving people a say in finding a fair way forward through an independent and temporary Climate & Nature Assembly,

- 3.4 This council therefore resolves to:
1. Support in principle the Climate and Nature Bill.
 2. Write to all North Yorkshire Members of Parliament asking them to support this bill.
 3. Inform residents, and local press/media of this decision.
- 3.5 Direct relevance to the UN SDGs of the motion:
1. Climate Action (SDG 13):
 2. Life Below Water and Life on Land (SDGs 14 & 15):
 3. Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12):
 4. Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8):
 5. Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17):
 6. Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10):
- 3.6 The Climate and Nature Bill is a Private Members' Bill introduced by the Liberal Democrat MP for South Cotswolds, Dr Roz Savage. The Bill passed its First Reading in the House of Commons on the 16 October 2024, with the Second Reading scheduled for 24 January 2025, which is after the publication of the agenda papers but prior to our meeting. This is seen as a key stage in the parliamentary process, before potentially moving into Committee stage as it makes its way through the House of Commons and then into the House of Lords, with a hope that it could come onto the statute book by October 2025.
- 3.7 At the time of writing this report, the Bill has not been published in full, but the long title of the Bill suggests it will legislate to include:
- A requirement for the United Kingdom to achieve climate and nature targets (such as reducing emissions to meet the 1.5 degree Celsius temperature rise)
 - To give the Secretary of State a duty to implement a strategy to achieve those targets
 - To establish a Climate and Nature Assembly to advise the Secretary of State in creating that strategy
 - To give duties to the Committee on Climate Change and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee regarding the strategy and targets; and for connected purposes.
- 3.8 Campaign Group 'Zero Hour' have produced a [briefing paper](#) which provides their view of the key purposes, targets and benefits of the Climate and Nature Bill. In general, it sets more inclusive and ambitious environmental targets to drive faster and more effective behaviour change, enabling the UK to meet its objectives around net zero carbon, climate change adaptation and nature recovery.
- 3.9 As noted in the motion text, the Climate and Nature Bill is said to be backed by "372 local authorities, 250 cross-party MPs and Peers, alongside the support of eminent 1250 scientists". According to the Zero Hour campaign group website, notable supporters of the Climate and Nature Bill from North Yorkshire include Tom Gordon, Liberal Democrat MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough and David Skaith, Mayor for York and North Yorkshire. In recent months, Calderdale Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and South Gloucestershire Council have all pledged support for the Bill. It should be noted that some statements of support relate to previous iterations of Private Members Bills on this topic, with the Climate and Nature Bill (March 2024), the Climate and Ecology Bill (2020, 2022 and 2023) all falling at various stages of the parliamentary process. However, the contents of the previous Bills are expected to remain substantially the same as the current one tabled when it is published.
- 3.10 If the Bill is passed into law, the Government is expected to be required to publish within 12 months a strategy to achieve the agreed objectives. Until such time that the strategy is drafted however, we do not know what impacts the proposed Climate and Nature Bill will have at a local level or what it will achieve in practice (i.e. how actions will be implemented,

enforced and monitored; when changes will take effect; what the costs will be; if this changes the physical and/or financial risk for the council).

- 3.11 North Yorkshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2022, which rolled over to the new North Yorkshire Council in April 2023. Following this, in July 2023 the Council agreed a new Climate Change Strategy 2023-2030, setting out the ambitions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, preparing for the changing climate and supporting nature to thrive. The key aims of the strategy include working with partners to achieve the ambition to reach Net Zero by 2030 and to be the first carbon negative region by 2040, in doing so encouraging residents, businesses and visitors to take climate responsible actions. Progress with the strategy is monitored within the Council through the Climate Change Delivery Pathway and reported to the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice a year.
- 3.12 In summary, given the information available, the principles of the Climate and Nature Bill (set out at section 3.3) and the obligations it would put on national government seem to align with the operational and behavioural changes that the Council has committed to in our Climate Change Strategy and the underlying Climate Change Delivery Pathway. On the other hand, until the Private Members' Bill has passed through the parliamentary process into law, and the underlying strategy and implications of this on local authorities such as North Yorkshire Council are known, pledging support may be too premature at this stage.
- 3.13 Following the full text publication and if the Bill passes its second reading stage on 24 January 2025, it will move into Committee Stage and continue its legislative journey through the Commons and into the House of Lords. There may be appetite for members to recommend back to Full Council that the motion be revisited at a later point in the parliamentary process when more detail is known.

4.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 4.1 This falls under the 'Place and Environment' ambition of the Council Plan 2024-2028.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None at this stage. This report is in response to the motion text submitted.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No financial implications are associated with the Council supporting or rejecting the motion. It is not possible at this stage for the Council to clearly understand the financial implications of the Bill as proposed, and therefore there is some unquantifiable financial risk in the absence of clarity of how any additional burdens would be funded. Once more information is known, reports will be brought forward at the relevant time setting out any detailed financial implications.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No direct legal implications have been identified with the Council stating its support or rejecting the motion and writing to the Members of Parliament for North Yorkshire in regard to the Private Members' Bill.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Taking quicker and more effective climate action could better support residents adversely affected by climate and environmental quality issues and reduce inequalities between groups of people.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The main purpose of the Climate and Nature Bill is to drive faster and more effective environmental improvements. Supporting the motion will not have direct environmental implications but could add weight and show sector support for the changes proposed within the Bill, particularly given the leadership position of the Council to influence residents, businesses and visitors across the county.

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To enable a response to be reported back to Full Council at its meeting on 26 February 2025.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION

11.1

Members are asked to consider the information contained within the report and agree a way forward to report back to Full Council at its meeting on 26 February 2025.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Copy of Motion Received

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[House of Commons Library – Research Briefing – Climate and Nature Bill 2024-25 \(Added 28/01/2025\)](#)

Karl Battersby
Corporate Director – Environment
County Hall
Northallerton
15 January 2025

Report Author – Will Baines - Senior Scrutiny Officer
Presenter of Report – Shaun Berry - Head of Sustainability & Environment
Will Baines - Scrutiny Team - Democratic Services

Motion Text: Support for the Climate and Nature Bill

Proposer: Cllr Steve Mason

Seconder: Cllr Bryn Griffiths,

North Yorkshire Council notes that:

The Climate and Nature Bill is backed by 372 local authorities, 250 cross-party MPs and Peers, alongside the support of eminent 1250 scientists and has passed 1st reading in the house.

The Bill requires the UK Government to develop and deliver a new environmental strategy, which would include:

1. Delivering a joined-up environmental plan.
2. Reducing emissions in line with our 1.5°C commitment.
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 emissions and ecological footprint.
5. Prioritising nature in decision-making and ending fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible.
6. Ensuring that no-one is left behind, by providing retraining for people currently working in fossil fuel industries.
7. Giving people a say in finding a fair way forward through an independent and temporary Climate & Nature Assembly,

This council therefore resolves to:

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2. Write to all North Yorkshire Members of Parliament asking them to support this bill.
3. Inform residents, and local press/media of this decision.

Direct relevance to the UN SDGs of the motion

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3. Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12):
4. Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8):
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