



## **Scottish Green Councillors' response to Glasgow City Council draft Climate Emergency Implementation Plan**

### **Overview**

Scottish Greens councillors have pushed the climate and ecological emergencies to the very top of the Council's agenda.

In Nov 2018, in the immediate aftermath of the landmark IPCC report, Greens brought a motion to Council urging more ambitious targets and climate action. We then led an emergency working group which delivered 61 cross party recommendations within six months. The Council did then declare a climate emergency, and also recognised the ecological emergency after Greens urged on that too. Most recently, we won a £10 million climate fund to kickstart action, and we've exposed where the Council's rhetoric fails to meet reality, such as the 22 oil-fired boilers still in use in the city's schools.

The climate emergency implementation plan has taken too long to produce - nearly 18 months since the working group report. Despite this time, it waters down ambition and fails to identify how actions within the plan will be funded or otherwise resourced. It's also too closely wedded to national targets and continues a worrying lack of democratic oversight.

In this year of COP26, when the eyes of the world will be on Glasgow, we believe a credible implementation plan would drive carbon cuts as far and quickly as possible to achieve net zero as soon as we can; lead beyond the Scottish Government's lack of ambition; set out clearly the resource needed to meet the scale of the challenge, work transparently and with proper accountability, and build on the expertise of local communities in projects that tackle inequalities while also lowering carbon emissions. Climate change will not affect all communities equally, but work to transform our city in tackling climate change is also an opportunity to build a fairer Glasgow.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Act like it's an emergency : one target of net zero by 2030, driving carbon cuts as far and quickly as possible**

- Having two different targets as proposed (2030 for carbon neutral and 2045 for net zero) is confusing, inaccessible and allows a false sense of more time that the earth does not have. We need to act like it's an emergency with one 2030 target for net zero - as cities like Bristol and Edinburgh have done.
- This single net zero target must be supported by an emissions reduction trajectory, linked to policy implementation, which is able to be monitored at least annually, to further aid shared understanding of the task in hand, and to enable effective scrutiny and iteration of policy action.
- The key thing, however, is that the plan drives carbon cuts as far and quickly as possible to achieve net zero as soon as we can. A bold target is a tool to drive action rather than action in itself.

### **2. Glasgow can lead beyond the Scottish Government's lack of ambition:**

- Staying subservient to national targets and national legislation will result in Glasgow failing to deliver its goals. The national 2045 target is, according to the IPCC report, too little, too late.
- Glasgow must be prepared to show true leadership by following the science and setting a more ambitious trajectory than Scotland as a whole.
- The plan should set out how Glasgow can use all existing city powers, and make clear where more powers are needed at local level to achieve the radical change needed.

### **3. The best targets mean nothing without a plan of how they will be met**

- A credible plan would measure where we are emitting carbon now, and report clearly what is needed to get to zero including deadlines for policy or funding interventions needed.
- The plan needs to enable project options to be developed iteratively and strategically, responding to evolving science and technology.
- The plan should set out how current projects, people and money can be (re)directed to achieve change quickly, including the £10 million climate action fund, and what investment, of financial and human resources, is needed to deliver net zero. This isn't just important for the plan's credibility; it's crucial to secure external investment given that the Council does not currently have the means to fund all the changes needed itself.

### **4. This work has to harness expertise from all sectors and it must also be democratically accountable**

- The climate challenge needs 'all hands on deck' - engaging the whole community from scientific and academic; public, third and private sector; using our local and international civic links to share and learn from cities taking up this global challenge. This includes

learning from the expertise of global south communities at the front line of climate change.

- However, the work must be effective locally too, by being transparent and accountable to democratically elected representatives, which is not currently the case.
- The Sustainable Glasgow board, tasked with more than 20 actions in the draft plan, is not democratically accountable, nor are its meetings public or able to be scrutinised. It must be made fully democratically accountable including with cross party political representation and a remit set out within the Council's terms of reference.
- Whilst the City Region Cabinet will have a key role in delivering low carbon infrastructure its membership consists of Leaders of, for the most part, minority administrations, so is not representative of the region's political balance.
- There should be a review of the overall governance arrangements for the climate emergency plan given its significance, including understanding what lessons can be taken from how the Council and partners have responded to the coronavirus public health emergency.
- There should also be consideration of the role of Audit Scotland, the UK Commission on Climate Change, or other appropriate outside bodies to provide external scrutiny and challenge.

#### **5. Climate justice is social justice - this is how we make our city fairer**

- The most vulnerable groups in the city will be the hardest hit by extreme weather, are already the most affected by poor air quality, and have the least access to cars so rely on public transport. A low carbon Glasgow is also a vision of a fairer city, and we need to treat it like that and work constructively with local communities to get there.
- Lower housing emissions means warmer homes and tackling fuel poverty; car-free zones around schools and giving kids access to bikes is good for all families. Projects to transform vacant and derelict land into food growing spaces will give communities more control over access to decent food. Protecting and enhancing our green spaces with different species flourishing is good for all of the city- especially as we need more outdoor spaces in the recovery from covid-19.
- These are examples of how we need to work with communities, especially communities with more poverty, to build on their strength and resilience in tackling inequalities while also lowering emissions. This isn't about sporadic, top down consultations or one-off themed conversations but a commitment to longer term sustainable community development throughout the climate response and beyond.

#### **Contacts:**

Cllr Jon Molyneux, [jon.molyneux@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:jon.molyneux@glasgow.gov.uk)

Cllr Martha Wardrop, [martha.wardrop@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:martha.wardrop@glasgow.gov.uk)

Co-conveners of Scottish Greens Councillor Group, Glasgow City Council.