

TO: Assembly

FROM: Opportunities Officer

RE: Climate emergency

DATE: 3 June 2021

Assembly Notes:

Following ECO DU's motion to Assembly¹, Durham SU declared a climate emergency in November 2019, but Durham University is still to declare a climate emergency. Durham SU also passed a motion to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals². The Opportunities Officer has discussed sustainability policy in many University spaces.³ After speaking to the Vice Chancellor, a series of discussions with UEC were organised which both the Opportunities Officer and the President were invited to, indicating UEC support for acting on the climate crisis, although no firm decisions or outcomes have been made.

At each of the UEC discussions, University staff members directly referred to the campus climate strikes which occurred in 2019/2020 as a reason for the University to act.

With sustainability as a priority, there are multiple projects which the Opportunities Officer has been consulted on.⁴ COP 26, the global climate change conference, is coming up this year and being hosted in Glasgow – many other students unions are running warm up educational events focussed on this.

Assembly Believes:

The University community needs to start prioritising the climate emergency. Student campaigning should be continued and broadened to encompass more student voices. The University should continue to have a clear SU contact to liaise with on the issue of environmental sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Durham SU needs to take an intersectional approach to climate justice ensuring a joined-up inclusive approach towards sustainable development; making sure to include diverse voices

¹ UA/1920/09 [Declaration of climate emergency.pdf](#)

² [Signing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord](#)

³ the Vice Chancellor, the University Executive Committee (UEC), Greenspace, ECO DU and Durham County Council.

⁴ The Green Move Out, the upcoming Greenspace Eco Festival, the Citizens Tyne and Wear Climate Action group, a termly sustainability forum co-hosted with the University; as well as establishing a Durham SU eco hazard reporting tool and running various social media campaigns throughout the year for Earth Day, Hedgehog awareness and SDG.

when creating decisions, to ensure no disadvantaged party is further oppressed. Durham SU needs to review its own operations in line with this.

The University needs to continue to feel the urgency of climate action and work to limit carbon emissions wherever possible in order to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible. The Students' Union should strengthen its commitment to working with ECO DU to share resources and organise campaigning for the University to prioritise the climate crisis.

Assembly Resolves:

- That Durham SU risk assessments should include a question on environmental/social impact, with the intention of causing consideration of the wider impact of certain behaviour
- That Durham SU should advertise and support student-organised climate change demonstrations, advocating an intersectional approach to climate justice by acknowledging the disproportionate impact on the Global South.
- To create a task and finish group within Durham SU with the aim to create a list of actions to implement sustainable practices within the SU and coordinate campaigning for the University prioritising sustainability:
 - The task and finish group membership should include an SU Officer
 - ECO DU should be invited to be represented on this group
 - The task and finish group should be supported by the SU to undertake actions
 - The initial membership should be created based upon individuals emailing the Chair of Assembly to express interest. At the first meeting, a chair should be elected and the group may then create its own terms of reference.