

TO: Assembly

FROM: Tom Pymer

RE: Declare a Climate emergency and Transform the University's Environmental Identity

DATE: 7 November 2019

Assembly notes:

That across the country and the world, local councils and national governments (including Durham County Council and the Parliament of the United Kingdom) have declared climate emergencies in reflection of their dedication to tackling the environmental crisis

- A statement of belief and a resolution to act by the Students' Union is important as it provides a framework for general action

Assembly believes:

There is no greater threat to our planet than climate change and its related environmental threats

- The SU and the University both have the responsibility and duty to help fight the problem
- Actions by the SU are important

Assembly resolves:

- To declare a state of climate emergency
- To endeavour to change the culture of the University by professing itself as green and environmentally-conscious as one of its main strands of identity.
- To support University-wide campaigns promoting sustainability undertaken by individual students.
- To demand that the University consider of vital importance the issues of sustainability and the environment in any and all new and ongoing University projects.
- That the SU shall itself consider of vital importance the issues of sustainability and the environment in any and all new and ongoing SU projects.
- To encourage students to "think globally, but act locally" - an awareness of University-wide issues whilst also acting within college.
- Change our culture by promoting environmental-awareness and environmental action, and doing what we can in our everyday individual choices.

- To campaign for the University to reinstate the Greenspace Group in full, as per the report created by the ECODU, as a fundamental part of their consultancy on the environment.
- That the SU shall in future publicise and improve on those areas where things are being done to protect the environment both within the SU and at a University level.
- To consult ECODU, who shall maintain their independence as a student think tank, on future matters pertaining to the environment.
- To adopt as a list of potential actions the attached list in the appendix of this motion, entitled 'List of Recommended Actions' as potential responses to the declaration of emergency, as suggestions off which the SU may base its future actions.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

These actions are a suggested list off which to base action: they do not seek to prescribe the total action that the SU should take nor to stifle any projects the SU may itself come up with. They are to be considered subject to change as to what would work best within the confines of SU policy or decision-making.

The SU will commit to campaigning a doubling in funding in the next edition of the University development plan for clean energy research and development

The SU will promote and support those projects which already exist

Additional bursaries and funding priorities be given to postgraduate students who wish to undertake ecologically-focused projects

The SU shall push for the creation of a series of new cross-departmental project dedicated to selling Durham-developed clean, renewable, and emission-free energy technology, with ideas of projects including (but not limited to):

- The Effects of Climate Change in the World (Departments of Anthropology, Geography and Sociology)
- Protecting the World's Trees (Departments of Biology and Geography)
- Developing New Sources of Green Energy (Departments of Physics, Chemistry and Engineering)
- The Ethics of Climate Change (Departments of Philosophy, Biology and Theology)
- Building Green Cities (Departments of Biology, Engineering, Geography, Sociology and Anthropology)
- Biodiversity in Durham (Departments of Biology and Geography)
- Building Green Vehicles (Departments of Chemistry and Engineering)
- Preparing for Climate Change (Departments of Engineering and Geography)
- Changing Government Policy on Climate Change (Departments of Philosophy, Politics, International Relations and Economics)
- Saving Endangered Species (Department of Biology)
- Creating a Green Economy (Department of Economics, Politics and Chemistry)
- Green Energy in Transport (Departments of Chemistry and Engineering)
- Contact the SUs of other universities, especially those in the vicinity of Durham (Newcastle, Sunderland, York to be used as primary examples) to promote these projects cross-university and to encourage other universities to follow our example, maintaining Durham's status as truly world-leading
- Where these projects already exist in other universities, to follow their example and offer to participate in these projects
- All new buildings undertaken by the SU shall be carbon neutral and that the SU shall campaign to mirror this in the University
- To commit to making new constructions out of materials other than concrete, whilst ensuring that the materials remain fully accessible to all students
- The SU shall look into projects that make building materials out of recycled materials, such as the possibility of making roads out of plasphalt (a material made of grains of unsorted plastic waste used to replace sand and gravel in asphalt), bricks out of plastic bags, wood out of newspapers and so on
- Sign up to the Children's Rainforest programme which allows a tree to be replanted in Costa Rica for every tree felled elsewhere in the process of future building projects

- Increasing funding in the next edition of the University development plan for clean energy research and development
- Purchase clean, renewable, and emission-free energy products for general use
- Discuss a long-term view to creating a role for an SU Environmental and Fairtrade Officer
- All chemical usage in groundskeeping shall cease by the end of the academic year 2019-2020 where alternatives exist
- That all new buildings undertaken by the SU shall be carbon neutral and that the SU shall campaign to mirror this in the University
- The SU shall aim to have completely transferred its reliance across from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy upon the elapse of the current contracts possessed with energy suppliers, with a particular emphasis on the usage of offshore wind farms
- In accordance with the targets set by Durham County Council, to decarbonise the University by 45% for 2030, and be carbon-neutral by 2050. Even herein, the SU shall set itself an aim of decarbonising entirely by 2025.
- To use proposals for decarbonisation such as the Buro Happold and Siemens Report as models to guide future policy on the issue (editions of which have been made available to the members of this Assembly and which are freely available from ECO DU).
- The SU will commit to campaigning a doubling in funding in the next edition of the University development plan for clean energy research and development, with reference to the motion presented alongside this one on academic research into the issue
- Every new building built by the SU shall be powered by solar panels
- The SU will encourage the University to undertake the same resolve as per solar panels, with the President taking the primary responsibility for mentioning this to the construction teams of all the new buildings, especially the new Business School
- To reduce the amount of beef sold on SU premises by 50% by the end of the academic year 2019-2020
- To lobby the university to reduce the amount of beef sold on university premises by 50% by the end of the academic year 2020-2021
- To encourage the University to buy from sources which are Fairtrade-certified or Rainforest Alliance-certified
- Lobby the National Union of Students to adopt a similar policies as here described
- The SU will discuss with the University the possibility of introducing “meat-free Mondays” on which no meat will be served in any college nor facility over which the University possesses control over catering
- To create and support campaigns promoting sustainability, such as Waste Awareness Week.
- The SU hereby commits to a 50% reduction in its usage of single-use plastics and shall encourage the University to do the same. This can be achieved by attempting to buy sandwiches in all-cardboard packaging with no plastic film, reducing the number of plastic cups, increasing the amount of reusable cups and decreasing the amount of black plastic
- To ask the University about the progress made on fulfilling the single use plastics pledge with The SU will provide recycling bins on all floors of the SU building to improve access and increase the amount of recycling presence
- The SU will campaign for the University to replace plastic bottles that are used in the meal deals with soda taps, of the kinds that are put in the bars, and reusable cups, thus reducing the amount of plastic produced
- Set up a regular meeting for the Environment Champions of the respective colleges on a monthly or bimonthly basis, which will improve the chain of communication between students, colleges, staff, Greenspace, and the University.

- To strive to create a role on the University Executive Committee based solely upon sustainability and environmental issues, specifically either the nomination of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Sustainability, or the raising of the Dean of Environmental Sustainability to the University Executive Committee
- In addition this, to push the University to reinstate the roles of Greenspace Sustainability Coordinator and Senior Energy and Sustainability Manager, and appoint people with the adequate time to fulfil the duties to the roles of the Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Strategic Planning Group and the Chair of the Carbon Management Team.
- To push the University so that the Greenspace Group contains the following positions:
 1. Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Sustainability/ Dean of Environmental Sustainability
 2. Greenspace Sustainability Coordinator
 3. Senior Energy and Sustainability Manager
 4. Chair of the Carbon Management Team
 5. Sustainability Manager (Travel and Biodiversity)
 6. Environmental Bursar
 7. A Representative of ECODU
- To empower the Environment Reps in colleges to further engage the student body in this through whatever means the individual Reps deem necessary.
- To campaign for the University to reinstate the Greenspace Group as a fundamental part of their consultancy on the environment
- To consult ECODU, who shall maintain their independence as a student think tank, on future matters pertaining to the environment