REBEL ACTIONS FOR EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS: WITH TEETH..

There is an urgent need to make sure Council Emergency Declarations have teeth.

Extinction Rebellion runs a ‘Climate and Ecological Emergency Group’ which meets weekly (on line). The mandate of this group is:

‘To coordinate and consolidate working groups nationally and locally to support Climate & Ecological Emergency declaration, meaningful policy and action following declaration.

To build and promote best practice and to facilitate sharing locally, regionally and nationally.

To build evidence and action to effectively lobby and influence policy (i.e. Green Industrial Revolution).

To support & facilitate ideas for direct action to hold Local Government to account and to allow Local Authorities to put pressure on Government’

More details on the group are here and its minutes here.

The Group will develop a website section as a one stop site to share information and advice to those aiming to ensure Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations (CEEDs) actually mean something.

Given the urgency of supporting Rebels to ensure council strategy, plans and budgets are effective in late 2019/early 2020 we decided get this document out as fast as possible, accepting that this is an evolving resource with capacity for users to propose changes and offer resources.

PLEASE contact the group at extinctionrebellion.cee@gmail.com with comments, updates and corrections as well as posting on the CEE Basecamp group.

The group’s initial strategic guidance for rebels ‘Strategy to Enable and Enforce Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations of Councils’ can be found here. It is specifically aimed at Rebels looking to support the creation of CEEDs, both by supporting councillors and by taking action to put pressure on those less willing to act.

It covers the following:
1. What is a CEED and why is it useful
2. What sort of council(s) do you have?
3. What can councils do?
4. How best to support, encourage and force councils to take meet XRs demands
5. Top tips for a CEED
6. Lobbying
Use this link for any of those topics.

This document additionally covers:

1. Taking action in late 2019 to ensure the CEEDs already declared actually mean something.

2. Specific top line proposals in key areas of
   - Energy
   - Housing
   - Transport
   - Work
   - Food Production
   - Ecology and Biodiversity
   - Divestment
   - Wellbeing and moves towards a regenerative culture.

For background info, here is the average personal carbon footprint in the UK broken down.... of course this doesn’t link directly to what councils do and do not, have control over, but gives some direction on areas to hit. If a council has any control over airport expansion, for example, that would leap to the top of concerns.

**Taking urgent action in late 2019 to ensure the CEEDs already declared actually mean something.**

Councils – at all levels – agree their plans and budgets in October – January ready for April the next year. New councils often agree 3 or 4 year strategies in their first year. Crucial meetings in late 2019 will decide whether resources (both money and staff time) are being allocated to CEEDs and whether ‘Emergency’ really means anything at all.

Councils are legally obliged to publish agendas and associated papers in good time (usually a week) before any meeting. The public will have a right to attend and speak (and the potential to protest).
Try and get contacts ready to signal the arrival of draft strategy, plans and budgets, or keeping a close eye on what’s coming up on websites.

A cooperative council may be already working with experts and clearly looking into the key areas below (Friends of the Earth’s national guide to how your areas is doing is a crude, but interesting, starting point). If not enough is happening you can:

· Bring together expertise and provide inputs to the council through engagement with meetings and written evidence (see resources, below).

· Demand to know what is being done, using Freedom of Information requests if necessary. If these reveal little action, the council’s own words (from the reply) can be used in publicity. Monday morning is a good time to maximise impact and councils have 20 days to respond. Questions could be such as “X Council you have declared a climate emergency and set a target of 30% reduction by 2030 - what was the councils CO2 emissions in 2018/19 and what year will the reduction figure be measured against ie 1990 emissions?” “You have set a target of 30% reduction - please can you provide a copy of the Carbon Reduction Plan on how this figure will be met (measures) and funded (budget source).

· Consider other actions to pressurise the council.

THE ESSENTIALS

We know it is late in the process to be ensuring councils are doing the right things for their 2020 plans and budgets. With this in mind, we set out below the key areas a Rebel should be looking to ensure are being covered. Refer (again) to the CEE Groups paper on strategy which covers info on powers of differing councils (Section 4 of that document). There are also links to key documents for anyone with time to push even harder, at the bottom of this document.

1. Energy:-

Local Authorities can significantly influence the overall energy usage and the energy mix in the area under their control.

All local authorities have seen budgets shrink drastically in recent years so it is important to identify straightforward and fundamental actions that they can take without incurring significant cost.
**Top Level Demands- Energy:-**

There are two top level demands that can be made to both engage your local authority regarding energy use and to get a measure of just where they stand and what progress they have made. These demands can be met at (near to) zero cost to the authority.

1) Carbon Footprint & Energy Usage:

It is fundamental that any local authority that is concerned about climate change should know what the carbon footprint for their area is. This should be a figure for the total carbon emissions for all activities carried out in the area broken down by sector.

Any local authority that does not have an up to date measure of its carbon footprint cannot pretend to be taking climate change seriously. It should be willing to publish its carbon footprint along with a detailed and quantified plan to reduce emissions against time in order to achieve net zero carbon by its declared target date. It should then issue regular progress reports to show it is meeting targets on these commitments.

In order to do this the authority will need to have calculated a total carbon budget – this being the total amount of CO2e that it can emit between now and it’s declared zero net carbon date and then established the reduction year on year required to stay within this.

There are established software tools (such as SCATTER¹) which are available free of charge to local authorities to assist them in assessing their carbon footprint and presenting the results in a uniform manner.

The CO2e emission by the council’s own operations should be relatively simple to determine if the council has good accounting procedures and can access energy bills for the buildings it owns and fuel use by council vehicle fleet and any contractors.

Top level data on each local authority area is published by BEIS (Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy) See:-

2017 Carbon Emissions *(Beis 2019)*

Annual Electricity Consumption *(Beis 2017)*

Annual Gas Consumption 2017 *(Beis)*

This can give a useful overview and a means to independently monitor progress in the longer term.
So, to summarise, as a top level demand you can ask that the council immediately publishes:

- How much CO2 was emitted during 2018-19
- A detailed action plan to reach carbon neutral by its declared zero net carbon date
- A detailed progress report every six months

2) Ask your local authority to immediately shift to renewable energy suppliers

- There are many energy suppliers who can provide energy from 100% renewable sources. These should be from energy companies that invest in new renewables and aren’t just traders:- see latest which report:-
  https://www.which.co.uk/news/2019/09/how-green-is-your-energy-tariff/

Whilst this may seem an immediate easy win it is essential that the council has carefully investigated different suppliers rather than using an agent who will get a fee for finding a so-called “Green Energy Supplier” which may in fact merely be a company backed by venture capital just buying and selling Green energy certificates and not investing in new renewable energy developments.

Typically local authorities will be contracted to one supplier via an agreement such as a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). Longer term agreements with renewable energy supply companies can be effective at stimulating investment in renewable energy sources. Some renewable energy suppliers can also enter into joint investment programmes (known as Merchant Power schemes) that allow the Local Authority to benefit from direct involvement in the development of renewable energy production in their area.

These two initial demands should provide some indication of both the willingness and readiness of your Local Authority to take action on Energy.

In order to achieve the sort of rapid reductions in CO2 emissions that are needed each local authority will need to dramatically change the source and usage of energy throughout all sectors that are under its control. (Note that different councils have different levels of authority and control over budgets and development plans. (See the section: ‘Strategy to Enable and Enforce Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations of Councils’ for more information)).

Once the initial engagement has been established, (there is likely to one councillor with the specific portfolio for Energy), the following proposals can be put to the council, either in the form of demands or in the spirit of support and guidance.
Secondary Demands - Energy:

The following are low or no cost actions that the local authority can take to address climate change.

- Identify areas suitable for renewable energy in the local plan.

  The National Planning Policy Framework\(^2\) states that new onshore wind generation cannot be approved outside an area “identified as suitable for wind energy in the development plan” unless it is a community-led scheme. With only around a quarter of new local plans identifying such areas the development of onshore wind, the most cost effective form of renewable energy in the UK, has virtually ceased in England & Wales. It is important therefore that the local authority ensures that as wide an area as possible is specified in its development plan\(^3\,4\) and engages positively with developers.

- Specify renewable energy and low carbon heating systems for all new build.

  Require that local authorities insist on the installation of renewable energy such as photovoltaics and complementary energy storage solutions on all new build housing & business premises. Encourage Local Authorities to work with their District Network Operator to encourage new developments to install large scale community batteries and private wire networks as well as individual house storage solutions such as batteries or PV heated hot water stores. Note that it is generally inadvisable to install wind turbines in urban areas. Authorities should not allow the connection of any new build premises to the gas supply, but instead to use low carbon heating solutions such as heat pumps. See the section on Housing for more information.

- Ensure there is provision for Electric Vehicle Charging

  The lack of widespread charging infrastructure is hindering the transition to electric vehicles. Electric vehicles also have the potential to be used as energy storage to ameliorate the difficulties of intermittency associated with renewable energy and to increase the viability of embedded generation such as PV. All new-build housing and commercial developments should be required to provide the infrastructure to allow EV charging points to be readily installed.

- Divestment from fossil fuels

  Local authorities have substantial pension funds. Usually these will include investments in the fossil fuel industry. Fossil fuel investments are increasingly considered toxic and offer unacceptably high risks to pension funds. Authorities should be encouraged to divest these funds into investments that do not lead to climate change and offer better long term security. Divestment is covered in a separate section, but because it is likely to be a lengthy process it makes sense to raise it as a demand at the earliest opportunity.

- Improve the energy efficiency of the rented housing sector

  Many councils now licence private landlords and carry out regular inspections of premises. Within this licensing system a requirement should be added to ensure all rented properties
achieve an appropriate energy efficiency rating thereby encouraging energy efficient measures such as insulation and low carbon heating systems. See the section on Housing for more information.

- Replace street lighting with adjustable LED lights

   LED street lighting saves energy both through much higher efficiency and through the ability to be dimmed when appropriate. Street lighting can account for a significant proportion of a city council’s direct emissions (15-40%) and offer an opportunity for significant cost savings. Note that savings are likely to be much less in rural areas.

**Longer Term Measures: Energy**

In addition to these relatively straightforward low cost steps there are longer term measures that the local authority could be encouraged to take – especially larger metropolitan or county councils who have the potential to invest in infrastructure projects and widespread retro-fitting of existing building stock. These sort of projects, such as investment in utility scale renewable energy, district heating schemes, transport infrastructure or the production of biogas from waste tend to be very specific to each area and are beyond the scope of this guide.

**2. Housing**

A local authority’s existing housing stock will consist of a mix of owner occupier, private rented and social housing. The authority has different levels of influence over the energy efficiency and CO2 output of each sector with relatively few powers over the owner occupied buildings.

Local authorities own around 7% of housing in England for which they have responsibility for the energy efficiency and carbon emissions.

Local authorities also have significant influence over the design and specification of new build housing through the planning process and the implementation of local plans.

The council should know the energy efficiency profile of all its existing housing stock and be able to identify potential easy low cost wins in terms of insulation and energy efficiency. This will vary widely according to factors such as age & type of construction, whether urban or rural, levels of insulation and type of heating.

**Demands for New Build:**

- All new build housing should be designed to be zero net CO2e in its use with exceptional levels of insulation (ideally to Passivhaus or AECB standards) and to minimise CO2 impact of its build. Highly insulated buildings will require heat recovery ventilation systems to be effective.
· No new build houses should be provided with a gas connection. Instead space and water heating should use air or ground source heat pumps connected to a renewable electricity supply.*

· New building design should optimise the opportunities (through orientation and control of shading) for on-site generation with photovoltaics solar panels.

· New buildings should have provision for the incorporation of energy storage (thermal or electrical) in order to optimise the use of on-site generated energy (either from solar thermal, photovoltaic or micro wind (in rural areas only)). This provision should be in the form of space for energy storage systems and appropriate cabling & metering to allow electricity to be exported to the grid. Where developments are of adequate size the energy storage solutions should also include a community battery and private wire network to ensure full utilisation of the energy storage solution.

· New buildings should allow the connection of electric vehicles to ensure they can be charged at times of low demand on the national grid and to feed back into the grid at times of high demand. This reduces the overall grid capacity required, increases the viability and feasibility of renewable generation by smoothing intermittency and also provides a useful income to the householder due to the differential pricing between peak & off peak electricity.

· New buildings should be designed with due regard for potential advantages from passive solar gain from glazed areas orientated towards the south.

· No new buildings should require energy inputs to provide cooling in summer. This should be achieved by appropriate passive ventilation arrangements and through the use of appropriate shading techniques which could be in the form of deciduous tree planting as this will not shade in the winter when passive solar gain is required.

· Where possible new build solutions should include adequate growing space in the form of gardens or shared allotments.

Demands for Existing Housing Stock:

· Licensing requirements can be introduced for the rented sector that demand minimum levels of insulation and energy efficiency.

· Retrofit all council-owned social housing, schools and other council properties to Energy Performance Certificate c or higher. This should include fitting eco-heating/heat recovery ventilation and developing heat networks where appropriate.

· All possible assistance should be offered to owner occupiers and landlords to improve energy efficiency and insulation standards. It is recognised that councils are unlikely to have budgets that allow for this so they should be encouraged to provide advice and guidance and to lobby upwards to acquire additional funding from central government.
3. Transport

Transport accounts for around a quarter of energy use. All levels of councils can take important actions. The lowest can work to encourage greater bicycle, walking and public transport initiatives, by lobbying higher levels if they don’t have resources. Whilst larger Local Authorities such as Metropolitan or County councils have much more influence over transport strategy. For all, the connecting between most radical transport initiatives on health benefits and the improvement in quality of life as well as carbon reductions, makes this an area of crucial importance to target.

Where a local authority does not have existing powers to take control of infrastructure, traffic restrictions or public transport systems they should still be encouraged to lobby those higher authorities that do have the power to take action.

Measures to reduce transport emissions:

Local Authorities should take steps to actively discourage personal car use and in particular that of high CO2 emitting diesel and petrol cars and goods transport.

This could include:-

- Congestion charging: i.e. a charge on all vehicles except public transport and EV’s that enter the specified area
- Introduction of a work-place parking levy
- The declaration of Ultra Low Emission Zones where higher polluting vehicles pay higher rates to enter the zone (this is in place in central London).
- Introduction of differential charges for parking permits with higher emission vehicles and second and third cars at the same address being charged more.
- Review all projected road and transport strategies to ensure they are aligned with a low carbon future

Measures to encourage low CO2 transport systems:

Just as importantly local authorities need to put in place attractive and efficient alternatives to personal car use and in particular petrol & diesel cars. Therefore all income raised by the new charges would be used to fund measures to improve public transport and to encourage a switch to low CO2 vehicles and cycles.

These measures could include:

- Ensuring that Public Transport is efficient, quick, low cost and safe and (as soon as possible) is low carbon (electric or fuel cell powered).
Providing convenient, secure and efficient Park & Ride schemes located to complement rail & peripheral city transport hubs with intelligent design and timetabling to provide journey times and costs that are competitive with personal car use

Provisions for Electric Vehicles (EV’s) such as adequate charging infrastructure (powered by renewable electricity) and preferential parking.

Use of differential taxi licensing to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles and eliminate the worst polluting diesel vehicles

Reprioritising road systems to encourage cycling and the use of electric bikes and cargo bikes through the provision of cycle lanes, secure bike parking and charging infrastructure.

Development of goods transport hubs to allow the use of cargo bikes for inner city deliveries.

Clearly transport considerations and opportunities will differ widely from area to area and between urban and rural locations. It may well be necessary to significantly modify the above demands to make them appropriate to a particular area.

Hopefully however this will have provided useful pointers – it’s important not to worry about lobbying a local authority about issues that are outside of their control. They will not hesitate to let you know they are not responsible, and you can then move on to lobbying whoever is!

4. Work

Introduction

We need to create and maintain high quality green jobs for unskilled, semi-skilled and knowledge workers as part of the transition to a fair zero carbon future.

Larger councils will have key strategic roles in this area. They can focus industrial strategy and related plans on building a ‘circular economy’ aimed at minimising environmental impacts and improving wellbeing rather than just maximising economic growth, and on creating high quality green jobs that benefit all workers alike. Develop local procurement plans as an incentive for rapid carbon reduction by focusing their purchase of goods and services on local businesses that meet agreed carbon reduction targets and / or have a clear social / environmental purpose such as cooperatives. Create (with partners) a local Green Infrastructure Bank to provide investment finance for economic projects with ambitious carbon reduction targets

5. Food Production

Introduction
Globally, food production systems account for around 25% of emissions, with half of that from livestock production. Changing what we eat and how it is produced will help achieve our zero-carbon target. Eating more locally grown food, fruit, vegetables, grains and pulses, and less meat, will also benefit our health, our economy and our countryside.

Councils should be taking initiatives including: Ensure that all schools, hospitals, care homes and other institutions deliver meals that accord with the ‘Eatwell’ ‘Livewell’ guidelines on healthy eating and that the majority of options on menus are healthy and plant-based, with less and better meat. Retain existing land holdings and make these available where suitable for community-supported agriculture and food businesses. Require food growing provision (such as roof gardens, community orchards and edible landscaping, including nut and fruit trees) to be incorporated into all new developments; and support moves to retrofit existing developments with such provision.

6. Ecology and Biodiversity

Introduction

We tend to forget the Ecological bit of CEE declarations, forgetting the speed with which the 6th mass extinction is removing species from the planet. All levels of councils can take actions, some will be simple easy and free. There is enormous popular support and engagement with the environment in the UK with huge potential for XR to better link to RSPB, National Trust, Nature Trust and other membership organisations to apply pressure as well as councils significantly influencing the Biodiversity within their areas particularly if they work in close partnership with all the nature conservation bodies within their area. This may include the local wildlife trust, local conservation charities, local bat group and, regional RSPB offices.

All local authorities have seen budgets shrink drastically in recent years so it is important to identify straightforward and fundamental actions that they can take without incurring significant cost.

Top Level Demands- Biodiversity :- net Gain in biodiversity

All council owned buildings, land, parks, amenity land, farmland and woodlands should be managed to ensure a net gain in biodiversity. This may range from installing swift nesting boxes, bat roost boxes or Peregrine Falcon nest boxes on inner city offices to rewilding country parks, woodlands or council owned farmland.

To ensure this baseline level of biodiversity, surveys need to be conducted prior to granting planning permission or planning any in-house developments. Every development requires an enforceable plan to ensure net biodiversity gain with an accompanying ongoing monitoring programme.

This first requires no developments either within, or that would effect, nationally or locally designated wildlife sites.

All new developments should include clear and measurable targets for biodiversity gain.
All new developments should include green infrastructure for both humans and wildlife and in particular habitat links and corridors to allow wildlife to move throughout the district.

All new developments should include lighting strategies to ensure nocturnal species sensitive to light can move throughout new developments.

**Secondary Demands - Biodiversity**

The local development plan requires strong policies to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the council area. These should include retention of habitat specific to your council area and may include trees, woodlands, species rich grasslands, hedgerows, ponds, heaths, peatlands.

All development plans should require all new developments to ensure net biodiversity gains and to comply with Building With Nature guidelines [https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about](https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about).

Council should work with community groups and nature conservation organisations to develop city/town/area-wide conservation initiatives including reducing grass cutting frequency to allow covers and flowers to flourish and to encourage the development of “hedgehogs republics” which are projects to join urban gardens by cutting gaps in fences to allow hedgehogs to move between gardens, stopping use of slug pellets toxic to mammals and installing hedgehog boxes in various gardens.

All new social housing developments should include bat roosting boxes and bird nest boxes.

**Longer Term Measures: Biodiversity**

All councils should work with their local wildlife conservation bodies to develop biodiversity recovery strategies which may range from developing wildflower meadows on road verges to re-introduction of beavers on council owned wetland systems to restore habitats, clean water and reduce flood risk.

These strategies should look restore both wildlife and ecosystem function and ecosystem services across the council area.

Every council should have a strategic plan for the development of habitats to sequester carbon and in particular the development of woodlands, wetlands and permanent species-rich grassland.

**7. Waste**

Introduction

10% of global emissions come from food waste.

Simple projects like the [Community Fridge](https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about) can save over 140t of greenhouse gasses a year.

-------- MORE CONTENT TO FOLLOW IN DUE COURSE --------
8. Democracy

This is not an obvious area to cover in a CEE Declaration – here is why it’s important: We don’t live in a democracy. However, it is clear that greater engagement and genuine participation of the people is more likely to lead to the changes we need to see in relation to averting climate and ecological catastrophe.

Is this reflected in council plans? Are their plans and resources to implement Participatory Budgeting and/or similar initiatives? Are versions of Peoples Assemblies or Citizens’ Assemblies planned?

Tell the Truth kicks in here – we are currently heading for 3-4 degrees of warming. Where does the council get the information guiding its plans? Is this information being shared with the public? What are their plans for public education to back up the CEE?

Note XR’s Future Democracy Hub has a whole range of ideas and resources to help move towards a real democracy.


Councils at all levels can play a role in divestment. Even the smallest have bank accounts which can be moved and the largest often invest huge sums and/or use banks that are investing in carbon fuels and allies atrocities.

There is a lot of good information and campaign material out there....

To repeat, this document has been sent out uncompleted because of the urgency to get the basics out there: PLEASE contact the group at extinctionrebellion.cee@gmail.com with extra information you have as well as comments, updates and corrections and as well as posting on the CEE Basecamp group.

10. Wellbeing and moves towards a regenerative culture

Again, not an obvious area for action on a CEE Declaration, BUT as it becomes clear that the impact of climate change and ecological collapse is ALREADY impacting on our lives (especially of the most marginalised and poorest people), what is the council doing to prepare for this?

Along with obvious areas of disaster relief and prevention, initiatives to build community cohesion and engagement are welcomed at all levels.
Resources

The Centre for Sustainable Energy’s Climate Emergency Support programme for local authorities is working to provide ongoing support and guidance – exactly how far they have got and what they offer can be obtained by contacting their Climate Emergency Programme team on climateemergency@cse.org.uk.

Climate Action Co-Benefits Toolkit  Ashden has developed this toolkit, in collaboration with our City Region Sustainability Network, to support local authorities and others on their climate change ambitions. It demonstrates how action on climate change can deliver many local benefits, including improved health, increased equity and social cohesion, economic opportunities and increased resilience.

A Peoples’ manifesto for wildlife – by Chris Packham – was conceived to publish a set of informed ideas from a parliament of strong, independent voices. Ideas which, if implemented today, would make a huge difference for wildlife tomorrow.

Friends of the Earth’s Climate Action Plans for Councils is simple to use and fits into the work above, even if it is less ambitious than we actually require (there is an obvious risk that by doing something, we miss doing enough). And their similar doc (same reservations) for Town and Parish Councils.

Fast Forward Oxfordshire - by Friends of the Earth Oxford - is a clear, relatively short guide to how to reach carbon zero with an emphasis on Council actions.

Working Together Networks

Climate Action Network

Takeclimateaction.uk

SEclimateallianceuk

XRLondon

XRLondonlocalpolitics whatsapp

Climate Ecological Emergency Base Camp - its working lets build on it..

Climate action network W Midlands

UK Green buildings Council
Background reading.

Share Actions report for UNISON on investments in Local Government Pensions.

References:


