

Motion from Members' Council - Climate Change

Members recognise that we must be commercially successful as a co-operative business in the face of rising inflation, the cost-of-living crisis and challenging market conditions. However, this should not be at the expense of our vital commitments on climate and sustainability as set out in our Ten-Point Climate Plan and Co-operate Report.

Our ethical leadership, Co-operative Values and Principles, and alignment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, ensure we support people and the planet now and in the future. Following COP26, we believe businesses must play a decisive role in ensuring future profitability and development go hand in hand with sustainability. We know that this is something our members and customers expect from us and that buying decisions are increasingly driven by ethical considerations.

Whilst others may roll back on their commitments, we call on our Co-op to demonstrate and amplify its longstanding leadership on climate change and sustainability. We believe this is fundamental to our difference and long-term resilience as a responsible co-operative business.

Specifically, this AGM calls on our Co-op to work with the co-operative retail sector to mobilise colleagues, members and customers to accelerate collective action on climate change and sustainability, establishing the Co-op as an undisputed UK leader in ethical business and sustainability.

Supporting Information

Since the founding of our Co-op in 1844, we have been guided by our co-operative principles. With such a long history our Co-op has had to respond to many economic, political and social challenges and throughout we have come through with our values and principles not only intact but reinforced at the forefront of our identity.

Despite difficult times ahead, with a challenging economic outlook and rising inflation, we will not turn away from the huge challenges for our planet and people. We are at a critical point where change is needed from business, government and citizens to make the necessary progress on sustainability and climate change.

Our pioneering 10-point climate change plan has committed us to reduce our carbon emissions as quickly as possible and in line with the science. This is not something on which we can turn the tap on and off and future generations will not thank us if we were to do so. That's why we were delighted to report that in 2021 we have reduced our operational emissions by 51% and three years ahead of target.

In addition, we remain as committed as ever to our wider sustainability ambition and commitments. We've continued to make great progress on our packaging recyclability and are committed to continue sourcing our products and ingredients in a responsible way, in line with our public commitments.

We will continue our approach to treating people fairly in our supply chains through Fairtrade and our ethical trade programme, with some of these producers and workers already facing into the harsh impacts of climate change in their own environments. We know that co-operation is key to delivering the changes that we want to see. We can do a huge amount as a business but ultimately need to work with our members, shoppers and the wider movement to make the sustainable changes which will have a big impact. So, we will remain committed to helping those who we partner with and who shop with us to make informed and sustainable choices and participate in community-led action on ethical issues.