

Signing of C40 “Divesting from Fossil Fuels, Investing in a Sustainable Future” declaration approved, after division.

6 Councillor Bell, City Treasurer, presented a report regarding the proposed signing of the C40 “Divesting from Fossil Fuels, Investing in a Sustainable Future” declaration, advising that

- (1) C40 was a network of nearly 100 of the world’s leading cities who were working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a new future where everyone, everywhere could thrive, with C40 supporting cities to collaborate effectively, share knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change;
- (2) at Climate Week NYC 2020, 12 cities had signed C40’s declaration, “Divesting from Fossil Fuels, Investing in a Sustainable Future”, committing to lead the way by divesting from fossil fuels and championing investments in the green economy wherever possible and signatories had pledged to use their financial might to promote a just and clean energy transition through concrete actions at the city, national and international levels, with each city having developed an action plan upon which they would report regularly;
- (3) cities and local authorities across the world had been invited to sign up to the C40 declaration to take all steps to divest city assets from fossil fuel companies and call on city pension funds to do the same and increase financial investments in climate solutions to help promote decent jobs and a just and green economy, with this Council on 1st April 2021 (Print 1, page 10) having called on Strathclyde Pension Fund to make a formal commitment to fossil fuel divestment and to reinvest the Pension Fund to drive a green recovery for the wider Strathclyde region;
- (4) becoming a signatory to the C40 declaration would give prominence to Glasgow’s role in realising the vision for a Global Green New Deal, announced in October 2019 at the C40 World Mayors’ Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark, and would signal the Council’s ambition to deliver transformative actions in order to achieve the aims and ambitions set out in the Climate Emergency Plan; and
- (5) that the declaration was voluntary, non-binding, had no legal status and did not place any additional asks on the Council however, all potential signatories would be subject to a short vetting process to authenticate their representation and upon endorsement of the C40 declaration, the Council would develop and share an action plan with C40, continuing to build upon its previous efforts and deliver transformative actions.

Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Aitken, moved that the committee

- (a) agree that the Council sign the C40 “Divesting from Fossil Fuels, Investing in a Sustainable Future” declaration; and

- (b) note the advice of the International Energy Agency in May this year that there can be no new investments in fossil fuel exploration if the Paris commitments are to be met and therefore believes that this should be a significant consideration directing our approach to divestment going forward.

Bailie Thornton, seconded by Councillor Blockley, moved as an amendment that the committee

- (i) notes that the broad wording of the declaration would potentially put the Council in a position of seeking divestment from fossil fuel companies who were actively developing, and investing in, renewable energy solutions;
- (ii) further notes that the transition from oil and gas production to clean energy would require significant investment both from public and private partners; and
- (iii) considers that divestment from companies which were investing in the transition away from oil and gas hampers the push to Net Zero, therefore, the Council is regrettably unable to sign the C40 declaration.

On a vote being taken by calling the roll, 2 members voted for the amendment and 21 for the motion, which was accordingly declared to be carried.