# Newry, Mourne and Down council first in Northern Ireland to back global fossil fuel treaty



In a significant step towards environmental sustainability, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has emerged as the first local authority in Northern Ireland to endorse the ambitious Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. This initiative aims to achieve a net-zero carbon footprint by committing to the cessation of fossil fuel utilisation while exploring alternative energy sources. The motion was put forth by Mournes Alliance councillor Jill Truesdale, who argued for a binding plan to curtail the expansion of coal, oil, and gas projects, asserting that "we need a tangible binding plan that will end the expansion of coal, oil and gas projects and manage the global transition away from fossil fuels."

The treaty is not merely local in its implications; it is a global agreement championed by climate-vulnerable nations, particularly in the Pacific, advocating for a coordinated worldwide transition from fossil fuels. So far, it has received backing from sixteen national governments and several prominent cities across the UK, such as Birmingham, Glasgow, and London. The initiative calls for collaborative efforts to phase out existing fossil fuel extraction and expedite the shift towards cleaner energy solutions, a sentiment echoed strongly by climate advocates around the world.

In addition to its overarching aim, the council will implement a framework for monitoring air quality to detect harmful pollutants, particularly targeting PM2.5 particles, which pose serious health risks including respiratory and cardiovascular issues. As part of this initiative, the council plans to assess the effectiveness of current air quality management strategies, seeking to expand area coverage for pollutant monitoring. This is especially pertinent as the ongoing discourse surrounding air purity increasingly links it to public health, reinforcing the necessity for proactive environmental measures.

However, the move has not gone unchallenged. Concerns were raised by Mournes DUP councillor Henry Reilly, who cautioned against the rapid promotion of green energy solutions. He highlighted failures in solar energy systems in Europe, notably a major blackout in Spain attributed to an over-reliance on solar power during extreme conditions. "I have long held the view that we are going too quickly on this," he stated, advocating for a more measured approach to transitioning energy systems.

Despite differing viewpoints, support within the council remains robust, with members voting overwhelmingly in favour of the motion—11 in favour, three against, and one abstention. Newry City SDLP councillor Doire Finn suggested that the council share its findings with other local authorities to broaden participation in this pivotal treaty. This collaborative spirit echoes the sentiments voiced by numerous environmental groups worldwide, including a collective of Nobel laureates who have called for such treaties, highlighting the moral obligation of leaders to act decisively against climate change.

As the world grapples with the pressing realities of climate change, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's pioneering commitment to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty not only positions it as a leader in Northern Ireland but also aligns it with a broader international movement questioning the sustainability of fossil fuel dependency. The path ahead may be fraught with challenges, but the commitment to a net-zero future could serve as both a beacon and a roadmap for other local authorities across the region and beyond.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[5]](https://thebulletin.org/2023/12/at-cop28-vanuatu-and-tuvalu-lead-the-call-for-a-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty-to-address-climate-crisis/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil_Fuel_Non-Proliferation_Treaty_Initiative)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil_Fuel_Non-Proliferation_Treaty_Initiative)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[5]](https://thebulletin.org/2023/12/at-cop28-vanuatu-and-tuvalu-lead-the-call-for-a-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty-to-address-climate-crisis/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/council-becomes-first-in-north-to-sign-net-zero-global-treaty-NOWIPX5WCBCFPE6AZYOFEUXJHM/> - Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has become the first local authority in Northern Ireland to sign the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, aiming for a net-zero carbon footprint. The initiative includes ending fossil fuel use and monitoring air quality for health-risk pollutants, particularly PM2.5 particles. The treaty, led by climate-vulnerable Pacific island states, has been endorsed by 16 national governments and several UK cities, including Birmingham, Glasgow, and London. Councillor Jill Truesdale emphasized the need for a binding plan to phase out coal, oil, and gas projects.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/21/101-nobel-laureates-call-for-global-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty> - In April 2021, 101 Nobel laureates from various fields called for a global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to address the climate crisis. They urged world leaders to end the expansion of oil, gas, and coal production, phase out existing fossil fuel extraction, and invest in renewable energy. The initiative has garnered support from environmental groups and think tanks worldwide, emphasizing the moral responsibility of leaders to take bold actions against climate change.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/d9918a86-87ba-4f36-a96f-87619221de51> - Nearly 80 Nobel laureates and former world leaders criticized the removal of references to fossil fuels from a draft UN climate pact. The initial draft aimed to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels, aligning with agreements made at COP28. However, revisions omitted specific mentions of fossil fuels, calling for climate action based on the best available science. Critics, including former Irish president Mary Robinson and Nobel laureates, expressed concerns that this omission could signal uncertainty about phasing out fossil fuels, jeopardizing critical climate goals.
5. <https://thebulletin.org/2023/12/at-cop28-vanuatu-and-tuvalu-lead-the-call-for-a-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty-to-address-climate-crisis/> - At COP28, Vanuatu and Tuvalu led the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to address the climate crisis. This treaty aims to end the expansion of oil, gas, and coal production, phase out existing fossil fuel extraction, and accelerate the transition to clean energy. Colombia, a significant coal and oil exporter, also recognized the need for such a treaty during COP28. The initiative seeks to align global efforts with the 1.5°C temperature limit set in the Paris Agreement.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil_Fuel_Non-Proliferation_Treaty_Initiative> - The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative is a diplomatic and civil society campaign launched in 2020, aiming to create a treaty to stop fossil fuel exploration and expansion and phase out existing production in line with the Paris Climate Agreement targets. The initiative has garnered support from 15 national governments, the World Health Organization, the European Parliament, Nobel laureates, academics, researchers, activists, and a growing list of governments and individual parliamentarians.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Powering_Past_Coal_Alliance> - The Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) is an international environmental organization formed in 2017, comprising 186 countries, cities, regions, and organizations aiming to accelerate the phase-out of coal-fired power stations. It has been described as a 'non-proliferation treaty' for fossil fuels. The project was undertaken with financial support from the Government of Canada, through their environmental department known as Environment and Climate Change Canada.