SAMPLE EMAIL TO LOCAL ELECTION CANDIDATES

Subject: Will you commit to protecting local pensions and the planet?

Dear ***[insert name of candidate]***,

I am writing on behalf of ***[your divestment/climate group, if you are a member of one]***. We are a group of residents of ***[insert your area]*** that have been campaigning for the council to divest its pension fund from fossil fuels.

[Insert name of your council's pension fund (you can find this here)] invests ***[insert figure, which you can find here]*** of local money in planet-wrecking fossil fuels. We think it's time to change this by divesting.

Simply put, divestment is the opposite of investment; it means selling assets. The fossil fuel divestment campaign asks that institutions such as local governments pension schemes move their direct and indirect investments out of the fossil fuel industry over a period of usually between three to five years.

Cardiff, Waltham Forest, Southwark, Islington and the Environment Agency have already committed to divesting their pensions. We think this election is the perfect time for our council to take their impressive climate leadership plans to the next level by committing to stop investing in the biggest polluters in the world, and plan how this money can be invested in the local economy instead.

We are writing to you to ask that you agree to publicly back the following pledge:

"If elected, I pledge to support the council divesting its pension fund from fossil fuels and investing in renewables and the local economy over an appropriate time-scale. I promise to do everything in my power to make sure this happens within the first year of my term in office"

Here are three reasons why now is the time to commit to divestment:

1. **Climate emergency:** Over three-quarters of local councils have declared a climate emergency. For the majority of councils, their largest carbon emissions will come from their pension fund investments. To divest from fossil fuels, all you have to do is get your pension fund committee to pass a motion and tell your asset managers what to do.

2. **Financial risk:** Oil prices have been trending downwards ever since they peaked in 2008. COVID-19 and the faster-than-expected transition to renewables has only accelerated this trend. By November 2020, UK local government pension schemes had lost over £2 billion over the previous four years by not divesting from oil investments. Divesting poses no financial risk whatsoever. Why take the chance on an increasingly volatile fossil fuel market?

3. **UN climate talks:** The UK has the privilege of hosting the global COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow this November. This has renewed the national focus on the potential the country has to be a world leader on climate issues. Divestment is a meaningful way that local government can play its part in the UK meeting our ambitious climate targets.

To register your pledge, please:

Reply to this email, copying in ukdivest@gmail.com, to be added to the public pledge list on www.divest.org.uk.

If you would like to show your support for the pledge publicly you can do so by:

1. Download and print out the pledge card.

2. Take a photo of yourself holding the pledge.

3. Share the photograph on your social media channels using the hashtag: **#2021divestpledge**.

4. If you don't have access to a printer, you can show your support by sharing a social media graphic online and on your website (click here for Twitter, or Facebook/Instagram)

If you have any further questions on this, please do not hesitate to contact me, I would be delighted to talk to you in more detail about it.

Should you be elected we would welcome continuing this dialogue about how we can work together to make our council a climate leader.

Yours sincerely,
[Your name, role and name of your group]