



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Ruth Bell, Head of Parks and Countryside

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Report of: *Ajman Ali, Executive Director – Operational Services*

Report to: *Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee*

Date of Decision: *13th March 2023*

Subject: *Task and Finish Group for the Response to the Council’s Declaration of a Nature Emergency*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>				

Purpose of Report:

This report seeks approval to appoint a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to respond to the declaration of a Nature Emergency in Sheffield. Membership will be drawn initially from the Communities, Parks, and Leisure Policy Committee.

The Terms of Reference of the Group are appended to this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:

1. Approve the appointment of a Task and Finish Group on the terms of reference at Appendix A to oversee work to respond to the Nature Emergency declared by Sheffield City Council on 16th June 2021

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Link to Council motion declaring a Nature Emergency in Sheffield: [Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Council on Wednesday 16 June 2021, 2.00 pm](#)

Appendix 1 - Terms of reference for Task and Finish Group

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
		Legal: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
		Climate: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Ajman Ali, Executive Director – Operational Services</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Richard Williams</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Ruth Bell</i>	Job Title: <i>Head of Parks and Countryside</i>
	Date: <i>02/03/23</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Sheffield City Council declared a nature emergency in June 2021. Work has been ongoing across the Council since that date to both continue our work which has a strong focus on nature and biodiversity and also understand the implications of new and future legislation on this agenda.

It is proposed that a Task and Finish Group review the action taken within the Council to improve biodiversity and nature recovery and set out the proposed approach to ensure that nature recovery and the environment are considered throughout the Council in decisions and policy setting going forwards.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 The Council's response to the nature emergency, it's approach to nature recovery and the environment need to be at the heart of the decision-making process and policy setting in the future. The Task and Finish Group will enable issues, challenges, links to other key agendas and how the matter can be approached to be debated by Members from across political parties.

The links between the nature emergency and climate change emergency are key and need to be strengthened. This group can work to understand and set out the links and future overlap to strengthen both agendas.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 No consultation has been undertaken at this stage however the Council formally declared a nature emergency following a petition to Council and with support from all political parties.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 The Task and Finish Group will have Member representation from the 3 largest political parties, ensuring that advice is reflective of the political makeup of the Council.

Members will have the opportunity to discuss equality and inclusivity relevant to each of the session topics.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no direct financial and commercial implications because of

creating a Task and Finish Group. However, the group will consider the financial implications of policy advice provided.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 Policy committees may form Task Groups to assist in the completion of their duties. Policy committees may have no more than one appointed Task and Finish Group at any time.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no direct climate implications as a result of creating a Task and Finish Group. However, climate implications and the links between the two emergencies and overlap in the response to them will be one of the areas the Group will consider. CIAs will be completed as required throughout the process and for any resulting actions.

4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 The Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee can establish limited Task and Finish Groups each year. Setting up a Task and Finish Group for the Nature Emergency will leave lower opportunity for the Committee's remaining annual work plan.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 An alternative would be to deliver a series of Knowledge Briefings for the Policy Committee. This was rejected as it would not enable constructive debate and advice to be provided to officers.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Task and Finish Group will bring together a small, focused group of members to examine key challenges around the nature emergency and provide clear advice and direction to officers developing an action plan for the Council and city. Cross party representation will mean that political agreement is reached at an early stage of the process allowing the strategy to progress.

The group will feed back advice given, and progress on the work programme to the Policy Committee, so the Committee can make informed decisions on any future actions.

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