

## **Nature Emergency Task and Finish Group - update**

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The Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group responding to the Nature Emergency following the May elections – membership of that group is now needed.

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### **The decision to establish a Task and Finish Group was taken in March 2023**

A paper was brought to the March Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee seeking approval to appoint a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to respond to the declaration of a Nature Emergency in Sheffield.

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. The Task and Finish Group are asked to 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. It was suggested that membership for the Group be drawn from the Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee in the first instance.

The Committee discussed policy development, timings around establishing the group membership, measurable improvements, nature emergency, work already undertaken, next steps, working with community groups, ecology team expertise, involvement of LACs and other policy committees, and the established Green and Open Spaces Forum.

It was agreed that the Task and Finish group will be established in the next cycle of committees. It was noted that there may be a change to the date stated in the recommendation in consultation with the Chair.

### **Terms of Reference for the Group**

The Terms of Reference for the Group were agreed in the March Committee (with recognition that the timings would change). They are appended to this update.

### **Membership of the Task and Finish Group (to be agreed)**

It was suggested in the Terms of Reference and agreed in the Committee that the Nature and Biodiversity Task and Finish Group will consist of:

- 5 Elected Members and include 2 from the Labour Party, 2 from the Liberal Democrats party and 1 from the Green Party

The Group will include at least one of the following members of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Group Spokesperson

Councillors from each party will be appointed based on the topic for review. Members of the group may have a special knowledge or interest in the subject being considered.

The Group may co-opt non-voting members who are not elected Members of the Council to assist in its consideration of an issue. This could include other council officers and representatives of other agencies for specific items.

**A suggested work programme was included in the Terms of Reference**

The work programme suggested in the Terms of Reference was agreed in the March Committee but may be subject to change if

1. Setting the scene and understanding the challenges
  - a. What has been done to date?
  - b. The policy context – The Environment Act aims to halt species decline by 2030. All our statutory duties/targets/policies will speak to this target and will require strengthened policy and teams that are resourced, trained, empowered, and motivated to achieve this.
  - c. What would a Council wide approach look like?
  - d. Who will set the agenda for nature and the environment in the Council for the city?
2. Understanding the links to the climate change agenda and Local Plan
  - a. How has tackling climate change been approached in SCC
  - b. What can we learn from the response to the climate change emergency?
  - c. How does our approach to the nature emergency link to the local plan?
3. Who are our key partners in the city and region
  - a. What is their role?
  - b. What are their strengths/weaknesses?
  - c. What are we required to 'own' as a Local Authority, what can we look to our partners to do?

4. How have other authorities organised themselves around this agenda?
  - a. What are the internal structures/decision making processes?
  - b. How have they championed the agenda and what can we learn?
  
5. Future approach and options

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