

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 10</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>27 JUNE 2024</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>SEAN MCBURNEY HEAD OF CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES <a href="mailto:sean.mcburney@southderbyshire.gov.uk">sean.mcburney@southderbyshire.gov.uk</a></b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>THE ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP</b>	
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL WARDS</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>

## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 To approve the Terms of Reference in Appendix 1 for the Ecological Emergency Working Group.

## **2.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 2.1 To outline the purpose of the Ecological Emergency Working Group and agree the Terms of Reference for this Group.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

- 3.1 An ecological emergency was declared at the meeting of Council on Thursday 14 September 2023

- 3.2 The motion passed was as follows:

- 3.3 This Council formally declares an ecological emergency in response to the ongoing threat to wildlife and ecosystems. The declaration recognises the essential role that nature plays and provides a statement of intent, to enhance and restore our natural landscape, local wildlife, rivers, streams, water resources, habitats and trees and resist the destruction of such habitats through a considered and sustainable local planning policy. This motion will see the council add ecological considerations, together with any implications, alongside those for climate, sustainability, and nature recovery in our new corporate plan as strategic priorities embedded within all areas of council engagement. The Council will continue to collaborate with our communities, businesses and other organisations, existing networks, and partnerships to improve ecological literacy, encourage greater biodiversity, increase local sustainable food production in order to protect food security, tree planting and management.

- 3.4 The Working Group has been formed and is an information sharing Group; it does not make decisions on policy; this remains a matter for Committees.

- 3.5 The Terms of Reference are listed in the Appendix 1 to this report.

## **4.0 Detail**

- 4.1 The Ecological Emergency Working Group has been established and is a forum for Members and Officers to discuss themes and focus on creating a Strategy and Action Plan. The Working Group provides an opportunity to discuss ecological issues such as the Biodiversity Net Gain and the on-going work with key stakeholders including neighbouring authorities, The National Forest Company, Forestry England, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.
- 4.2 Establishing strong working relationships between Officers and Members is key for the Strategy and Action Plan production. The Strategy and Action Plan will help to deliver the Council objectives set out in the Terms of Reference and assist the Council in meeting other environmental targets such as Net Zero and Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 4.3 Declaring the ecological emergency and forming this Working Group brings together several key commitments to help restore the natural world, highlighting unsustainable practices and the attention to avert these for future generations.
- 4.4 The Council has adopted a Nature Recovery Strategy in partnership with the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Derbyshire County Council.
- 4.5 The objective for this group will be to develop an Ecological Strategy and Action Plan that links to the County's Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 4.6 Once the Ecological Strategy and Action Plan have been developed the working group will be disbanded and officers will continue to deliver the work through the Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group providing annual progress updates to Environmental and Development Services Committee.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

## **6.0 Corporate Implications**

### **Employment Implications**

- 6.1 None as a direct result of this report.

### **Legal Implications**

- 6.2 None as a direct result of this report.

### **Corporate Plan Implications**

- 6.3 The Strategy and Action Plan will support the delivery of key environmental targets set out in the Council Plan, and enhancement of the natural environment.

### **Risk Impact**

6.4 Delivery of the Action Plan will support Biodiversity Net Gain for the District. Not having a fit for purpose Action Plan could hinder the ability to achieve the requirements of this new legislation.

## **7.0 Community Impact**

### **Consultation**

7.1 None

### **Equality and Diversity Impact**

7.2 None

### **Social Value Impact**

7.3 The outcomes and impact of the work included in the Strategy and Action Plan will further enhance the natural environment, which will improve overall community wellbeing.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

7.4 There are none as a direct result of this report. However, outcomes achieved through delivering the action plan will improve overall environmental sustainability for the district.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

8.1 The Ecological Emergency Working Group will be critical in reversing the downward trend of biodiversity decline in the region.

## **9.0 Background Papers**

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference