
BIODIVERSITY & NATURE UPDATE

REASON FOR THE REPORT

1. To provide the Committee with an update in relation to actions that have been undertaken to address the nature emergency that was declared in November 2021 and progress in relation to the development of the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Plan.

BACKGROUND

2. In November 2021 Cllr Derbyshire proposed the following motion to Council, which was seconded by Cllr Henshaw:

This Council Notes:

That the World is already warming at an alarming rate leading to more extreme weather conditions.

The 'Special Report on Global Warming of At a 1.5°C warmer world, 6% of insects 8% of plants and 8% of vertebrates would be lost; increasing to 18%, 16% and 8% respectively at 2°C warmer.

- *Approximately 4% of the global terrestrial land area is projected to undergo a transformation of ecosystems from one type to another at 1°C of global warming, with 13% at 2°C.*
- *Biodiversity-related factors such as forest fires, extreme weather events and the spread of invasive species, pests and diseases also need to be taken into account. Many of those are already happening.*

The latest State of Nature report published by RSPB and other partners in 2019 found that:

- *Of 3,902 species assessed in Wales, 666 (17%) are threatened with extinction from Wales, and another 73 (2%) have gone extinct already.*
- *The average abundance of butterflies (33 species) has declined in Wales by 52% since 1976.*

This Council further notes:

That Biodiversity was raised as an issue within the Council's decision to declare a Climate Emergency and forms a key part of our One Planet strategy.

The recommendations from the Environmental Scrutiny Committees exercise 'Managing Biodiversity in Cardiff', resulted in the Council accepting a wide range of recommendations aimed at protecting, enhancing, and promoting biodiversity.

The wide range of actions being undertaken as part of the council's Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty {BRED} Forward Plan, which will be updated in 2022.

That bold action to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Cardiff can deliver benefits in terms of wellbeing, in new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities.

The exciting new Coed Caerdydd project and that Cardiff Council has committed to working with partners to become a National Park City.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- i. Declare a Nature Emergency in Cardiff.*
 - ii. Place biodiversity with equal prominence to climate change at the heart of decision making in Cardiff Council.*
 - iii. Make representations to the Welsh and UK Governments, as appropriate; to provide the necessary powers, resources and technical support to local authorities in Wales to help them successfully achieve this aim.*
 - iv. Continue to work with partners across the county, region and nationally to develop and implement best practice methods that can protect Wales' biodiversity. Including seeking a joint approach with neighbouring authorities.*
 - v. Work with local stakeholders including Councillors, residents, young people, businesses and other relevant parties, to develop a strategy aligned with One Planet and Coed Caerdydd with a target of no net loss of biodiversity. This will also explore ways to maximise the local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, agriculture, transport and the economy.*
3. Amendments to the motion were proposed , although the votes on these were lost so the original motion was carried.
 4. Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 states that public authorities have a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems.
 5. To comply with the duty public authorities must prepare and publish a plan setting out what they propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience. The first of these plans was required in 2019 and then every three years and therefore due in 2022.

6. Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) have been established in all Local Authorities and National Parks in Wales through the 'LNP Cymru' project funded by Welsh Government. The Cardiff Local Nature Partnership was formed in 2020 with the appointment of a Local Nature Partnership Coordinator and the creation of a Local Nature Partnership Steering Group. LNPs are an integral element in addressing the nature crisis in Wales, providing biodiversity advice; seeking funding opportunities and collaborations; supporting community groups to take action; and sharing information about nature-based projects, events and activities. LNPs are responsible for producing Local Nature Recovery Action Plans to complement and reinforce national nature recovery efforts at a local level.

ISSUES

7. Since the declaration of the nature emergency no updates have been received by the Committee and the Committee has been informed that the One Planet Cardiff Strategy and annual reports focus solely on 'carbon reduction'.
8. The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty report has been delayed for a number of reasons including the Ecologist post being vacant, and following appointment to the post the majority of their time being 'reactive'.

PREVIOUS SCRUTINY

9. In September 2019 the Committee undertook a Task and Finish Inquiry in relation to Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff¹ which Cabinet received on 23 January 2020 and a full response was agreed by Cabinet on 19 November 2020²
10. The report made 39 recommendations on which 19 were accepted, 16 partially accepted, 3 not accepted and 1 was noted.
11. No formal updates in relation to the accepted recommendations have been received.

WAY FORWARD

12. The County Ecologist has been invited to make a presentation to the Committee and answer Member's questions.

¹ [Microsoft Word - Biodiversity - Summary Report - 09.12.2019 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

² [Cabinet 19 Nov 2020 Scrutiny Response Biodiversity App 1.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Legal Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to the Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Consider the information in this report, and the presentation and any further information presented at the meeting; and
- ii. Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations on this matter to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change

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10 November 2023